

**A Clash of Cultures: Exploring the perceptions and experiences of South  
African youth towards the military as an employer of choice**

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## DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

With the shift to an all-volunteer force and the end of the Cold War, armed forces across the globe are finding it increasingly difficult to attract, recruit and retain the right quantity and quality of recruits in the ranks. Similarly, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has expressed difficulties with recruitment but more so with the ability to attract ‘high calibre’ recruits in order to staff a defence force that is disciplined and technologically advanced. Although this is a consequence of various economic, social and political factors, one of the greatest challenges facing recruiters is the changing work values and preferences of the new millennial generation. As the title of this thesis postulates, evidence from the West suggests a ‘clash’ in values between millennials, who are individualistic, protected, ambitious and self-centred, and the military, which requires conformity, obedience and structure. While there is a vast amount of literature regarding the all-volunteer force and youth values of military service in the West, there is no study of this kind in South Africa.

In this study, I aim to fill this void by exploring young South Africans’ perceptions and experiences of military service. As there is no existing literature on the propensity to enlist in South Africa, focus groups and interviews were conducted with high school learners, Military Skills Development System (MSDS) members who have completed one year of military service and recruitment officers who come into contact with school-leavers from across South Africa. These discussions were framed around two broad questions, namely what are the work values of young South Africans and what factors attract young people to or deter them from the military job.

The conclusion is reached that the SANDF is not an employer of choice because of various institutional and societal factors. The military job is largely unappealing to young South Africans, who are risk-averse, individualistic and wish to be in close proximity to their families. The culture of the military is also unattractive to the majority who are not receptive to authoritarian regimes that expect unquestioning obedience and discipline and emphasise hegemonic masculine ideals. Besides this, two societal forces have a significant impact on the ability of the SANDF to attract recruits. The decline in the prestige of the military job and the presence of an ever-growing civil-military gap indicate that youth are neither informed about the military nor see the military as a high status job in society. Consequently, the inability of the SANDF to meet recruitment targets can be detrimental to the ability of the SANDF to fulfil its mandate.

## OPSOMMING

Sedert die verskuiwing na weermagte wat geheel en al uit vrywilligers bestaan en die einde van die Koue Oorlog vind gewapende magte wêreldwyd dit steeds moeiliker om voldoende rekrute van die regte kwaliteit te lok, te werf en te behou. Ook die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Weermag (SANW) ervaar probleme met werwing, maar veral met die vermoë om 'hoëkaliber'-rekrute te lok na 'n weermag wat gedissiplineer en tegnologies gevorderd is. Hoewel dit die gevolg van verskeie ekonomiese, sosiale en politieke faktore is, is een van die grootste uitdagings vir werwingspersoneel die veranderende werkwaardes en werkvoorkeure van die nuwe millenniumgenerasie. Soos die titel dit stel, dui getuienis uit die Weste op 'n 'waardekonflik' tussen hierdie generasie, wat individualisties, beskut, ambisieus en selfgesentreerd is, en die militêr, wat konformiteit, gehoorsaamheid en struktuur vereis. Hoewel daar 'n magdom literatuur oor vrywilligersmagte en jeugwaardes van militêre diens in die Weste bestaan, is geen studie van hierdie aard nog in Suid-Afrika onderneem nie.

Met hierdie studie wil ek hierdie leemte vul deur jong Suid-Afrikaners se persepsies en ervarings van militêre diens te verken. Aangesien daar geen literatuur bestaan oor geneigdheid om by die weermag in Suid-Afrika aan te sluit nie, is fokusgroepe gehou en onderhoude gevoer met hoërskoolleerders, MSDS-lede wat hul eerste diensjaar voltooi het en werwingsoffisiere wat met landwyd met skoolverlaters in aanraking kom. Hierdie gesprekke is afgegrens deur twee breë vrae, naamlik wat die werkwaardes van jong Suid-Afrikaners is en watter faktore jong mense na of van die militêre werk lok of afstoot.

Die gevolgtrekking is dat die SANW om verskeie institusionele en maatskaplike redes nie 'n voorkeurwerkgewer is nie. Jong Suid-Afrikaners, wat risikoweersinnig en individualisties is en naby hulle familie wil bly, vind 'n militêre loopbaan breedweg onaantreklik. Die militêre kultuur spreek ook nie die meerderheid aan nie, wat nie ontvanklik is vir outoritêre regimes wat onverbiddelike gehoorsaamheid en dissipline eis en hegemoniese manlike ideale beklemtoon nie. Hierbenewens is daar twee samelewingsfaktore wat 'n beduidende impak het op die SANW se vermoë om rekrute te werf. Die kwynende prestige van 'n militêre loopbaan en die teenwoordigheid van 'n steeds groeiende kloof tussen siviël en militêr dui daarop dat jongmense nóg oor die militêr ingelig is nóg dit as 'n werk met status in die samelewing beskou. Gevolglik kan die SANW se onvermoë om werwingsteikens te behaal sy vermoë om sy mandaat uit te voer nadelig beïnvloed.

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In loving memory of my dad,  
William Jeffery Meyer,  
*‘i carry you in my heart i carry your heart with me’*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

UDF	Union Defence Force
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
ANC	African National Congress
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
SAP	South African Police
TDF	Transkei Defence Force
CDF	Ciskei Defence Force
VDF	Venda Defence Force
BDF	Bophuthatswana Defence Force
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
DOD	Department of Defence
PMG	Parliamentary Military Group
MSDS	Military Skills Development System
AA	Affirmative Action
EO	Equal Opportunity
RSA	Republic of South Africa
STATSSA	Statistics South Africa
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In 1973, the United States of America became the first country to abolish conscription and officially implement an all-volunteer system, but it was not until the end of the Cold War that most other Western states, including South Africa, shifted over to this force structure. The volunteer system meant that militaries now had to compete in the civilian labour market for high quality recruits (Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 1998; Harries-Jenkins, 2001; Tresch, 2008). This immediately evoked problems of recruitment, both in terms of numbers and in attracting the candidates with the desired qualities and abilities to the military. This is particularly evident in the core and specialised supporting units such as engineering, medical and the signal corps (Soeters, 2001). Added to this, many of the more economically advantaged in society chose not to volunteer, which means that in terms of race, class and gender, they struggle to remain representative of society (Zinman, 2010). This is important as it affects not only the legitimacy of the armed forces, but the status of the profession as well.

A number of societal forces have influenced the willingness to serve in the military. The first was the end of the Cold War, where the armed forces were perceived to no longer have a clear mission. Second, was the greater emphasis on tertiary enrolment as a means to obtain meaningful employment; and third, a growing disconnect between the military and the society, as fewer and fewer people had contact with the military (Warner, Simon, & Payne, 2003; Dandeker & Mason, 2010). To meet recruitment targets, militaries have had to lower enlistment standards, relax age restrictions, and offer larger bonuses and incentives (material rewards) to attract potential recruits (Korb & Duggan, 2007:468). Adding to these challenges has been the shift to a more flexible force, which has meant that employment in the military is no longer a secure long-term career, which for many, was an important service benefit. Many are now employed on a short-term contract, knowing that they may have to leave if this contract is not renewed, or in mid-career if employed on a medium-term contract. Collectively these, as well as the shift to operations other than war and peacekeeping, which have become more perilous, have added to the problems of recruitment and retrenchment, and meant that military personnel often struggle to achieve work/life balance (Dandeker, 2003).

Similar to the Western armed forces, the structure of the South African Defence Force underwent a number of changes attributed firstly to the end of the South African Border War (1988) and secondly, the demise of the Soviet Union, signalling the end of the Cold War (1989). The SADF was made up primarily of white male conscripts who were trained and geared towards conventional armed warfare

and defence of the white homeland. The SADF's mission was based on the paradigm of '*Total Strategy for Total Onslaught*' that referred broadly to the threat of the Soviet Union and the rise of communism (*rooigevaar*) in the sixties and seventies, as well as in support of police to maintain the supremacy of the white apartheid state against internal aggressors (*swartgevaar*)<sup>1</sup> in the late seventies and eighties (Sass, 1996; Cilliers & Heineken, 2000; Winkates, 2000). The deployment of the SADF internally to suppress rising black resistance in the black townships, affected not only the legitimacy of the SADF.

During this period of '*Total Onslaught*', the manpower procurement system underwent a massive expansion, in the light of growing isolation from the international community - due to its racial policies - and increased external and internal threat (Dorning, 1987:19). Already in the seventies, the SADF struggled to meet recruitment targets in terms of attracting and retaining 'high calibre' white personnel (DOD, 1973; 1977; 1986). It was established that the ballot system used by the Union Defence Force as a means of recruitment, was no longer suitable for the manpower requirements of the SADF. Following this, National Service for all white male citizens over the age of eighteen was made mandatory and over the years, length of service was extended to two years, with associated compulsory military camps of three months (Dorning, 1987). The growing internal and external threat continued to exacerbate manpower shortages. To augment this, women were recruited to serve in non-combat positions, such as the medical, administrative, logistics, communication and catering branches (Sass, 1993) as well as blacks, Indians and coloureds. They were not conscripted, but could volunteer for military service and in terms of race, served in separate ethnic battalions.

With the end of Border War brought on by the signing of the New York agreement on the 22 December 1988 and the implementation of the United National Resolution 435 on 18 May 1989; the independence of Namibia in 1990; the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War; as well as internal political and economic constraints; the South African state was forced to enter into a period of social, political and economic restructuring. This had a major effect on the South African military, as it brought forth not only a change in the security environment, but ushered in a new political era for South Africa. Political reforms led not only to an end of apartheid, but to conscription and the shift to an all-volunteer force with the establishment of the new newly-integrated South African National Defence Force.

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<sup>1</sup> This included the armed wing of the African National Congress the Umkhonto we Sizwe and the Pan Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Liberation Army.

With the formation of the SANDF, the SADF was combined with other statutory and non-statutory forces, i.e. the Transkei Defence Force (TDF), the Ciskei Defence Force (CDF), the Venda Defence Force (VDF), the Bophuthatswana Defence Force (BDF), Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), to establish a defence force that is legitimate and representative of the South African society. The integration of the different forces altered the demographic profile of the military quite radically. This also marked the beginning of an all-volunteer system. Similar to the West, this meant that the SANDF had to compete on the civilian labour market in order to attract the ideal quantity and quality of recruits. However, the ability of the SANDF to meet recruitment targets has been challenged by the historical, social, political and economic transformations in the broader South African society.

Firstly, based on the Constitutional imperative, Section 9(3) that no organisation or person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, or sexual orientation, the force structure underwent a number of radical changes (RSA, 1996:2, 14). In order to correct the racial imbalances in the military and to establish social equality within the ranks, radical corrective policies like affirmative action and equal opportunity were implemented in order to meet the quotas stipulated in the Defence Review of 1996 (DOD, 1996). Twenty years since the formation of the SANDF, the military has met and even exceeded these targets, and what is apparent is that the SANDF is now largely representative of the demographics of South African society.

Consequently, whites are now in fact under-represented in terms of rank (DOD, 2013). According to Heineken (2013:9), the white officers who left the military have felt 'that their skills and knowledge were no longer needed', and those who have remained feel isolated, alienated and frustrated. Many recruits that enlist in the military come from military families, and this often serves as an indicator of how those serving in the military judge the organisation in terms of future career prospects. In this regard, Heineken (2013) found that few white officers would now encourage their children to join the military, whereas approximately half the black and coloured officers said they would. This is also evident in the composition of the Military Skills Development System recruits, with fewer whites, coloureds and Indians joining (PMG, 2011). In terms of recruitment, what this means is that the SANDF is losing out on a pool of recruits due to the perception that they have no future in the military because of affirmative action. Moreover, this pool of recruits tends to be more educated due to advantaged backgrounds.

With the SANDF becoming more involved in peace missions on the continent, the need to establish a highly skilled, professional, technologically advanced defence force that is able to handle a diverse and evolving set of challenges, became even more of a prerogative (Heinecken, 2005; DOD, 2014:25). Van Dyk and George (2006) assert that SANDF officers must have skills, knowledge and attitude to develop human potential, to lead joint operations in Africa, to develop a vision for the country and the continent and to deal with the security challenges of the future on a strategic level, and to meet shifting mission demands. This means having a more flexible force that is able to deploy at short notice on expeditionary missions. Moreover, it is imperative for the SANDF to have the right quantity, as well as the right quality, of recruits who are skilled, healthy, fit and disciplined (DOD, 2014). While the SANDF does not battle to attract sufficient recruits, it does battle in terms of recruitment and retention of personnel in specific technical positions (PMG, 2011).

According to Wessels (2010), in 2009 there were only 20 fighter pilots left in the military. Only 52 out of the 122 engineering posts had been filled, and only 763 of 1630 technical posts. The SANDF now faces the reality of being inundated with young unemployed school leavers desperately seeking a job, who do not meet the basic requirements in terms of Grade 12 qualifications, the health, physical and psychological requirements (DOD, 2004). The inability to attract sufficient young people with an appropriate Grade 12 pass affects the ability of the SANDF to fulfil its defence mandate. Defence and Military Veterans Minister, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, was quoted as saying that, ‘We need to pay close attention to the kind of people we should be recruiting, where they are and how best to attract them in the SANDF’ (eNCA, 2014). The Minister emphasised that, in order to meet the tasks laid out in the Defence Review of 2014, the SANDF needs to ensure that it can successfully attract and recruit the right quantity of ‘high calibre’ new members.

Ideally, the following characteristics should be ticked off by recruiters: school leavers with a satisfactory Grade 12 qualification with Mathematics and Science, between the ages of 18 and 22, preferably single, not area-bound, compliant with medical standards and the institutional ethos of the military (discipline, civic education, professionalism), as well as keeping in mind the demographic requirements of the SANDF, and that recruits should come from both rural and urban areas (DOD, 2004). However, the question is, are the school-leavers who meet these criteria interested in joining the military? What is their perception of the military as an employer of choice?

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to explore young people’s perceptions and experiences of military service in South Africa. Although there is a large body of research regarding youth work values and attitudes towards military service in the West, no such study has ever been conducted in

South Africa, and for this reason, this investigation is considered both pioneering and important in terms of future research.

## 1.2 Literature review

A review of the literature indicates that one of the greatest challenges facing military recruitment is the decline in the propensity of young people to enlist, and that those who do, are not motivated to serve on altruistic values, but because it is a job, or an opportunity for social upliftment (Asch & Orvis, 1994). This has evoked a whole body of literature, prompted mainly by the work of the leading military sociologist Charles Moskos (1977), who developed what became known as the ‘institutional/occupational drift model’ (or theory). What Moskos argued is that many of those joining the military are motivated to do so based on occupational values, namely pay, working conditions, benefits and incentives, and not on institutional values that include duty, loyalty, commitment, selflessness, readiness and sacrifice (Eighmey, 2006). According to Cole (1999), most American youth enlist for occupational motivations of pay and opportunity to study, and this has been confirmed by other studies. Woodruff, Kelty and Segal (2006), for example, found that there is declining interest and a lower propensity among youth to serve because they have different career motivations.

A review of studies on youth career motivations indicates that most youth aspire to high salaries, job stability, a social working environment, and opportunities for advancement and promotion as desired qualities in a job (Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan & O’Malley, 1998; Segal, Bachman, Freedman-Doan & O’Malley, 2000; Segal, Bachman, Freedman-Doan & O’Malley, 1999; Warner, Simon & Payne, 2003). Youth also express the desire to be close to the family and to have a meaningful life. What was interesting is that in terms of employers, work in government, social services, the police or universities were found to be the least attractive for youth in America (Bachman *et al.*, 2000). The military is even less attractive. According to Cole (1999), the main reason for this is the military lifestyle: the youth considered the military to be too authoritarian, involving too much risk, too regimental and stifling, and placing too much demand on family life. This appeared to be relatively universal, and emerged in studies of youth in Europe.

In Belgium, Manigart (2005), for example, found that the new generation was disinterested in the military. For this reason, this study considered a number of studies that have focused on the work values of different generations, and the circumstances that have contributed to changing attitudes towards work (Ralston, Egri, Stewart, Terpstra, & Kaicheng, 1999; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Parry & Urwin, 2011). The focus of this study was narrowed to the millennials (the current

generation), and their values and attitudes towards work and the armed forces. According to Wilcox (2001), Drago (2006) and Hyler (2013), the military is not attractive to millennials as they are risk-averse and individualistic, favour being close to their families, and desire achievements now associated with tertiary qualifications. More recently, Ender, Rohall and Matthews (2014) published a comprehensive assessment of the intersection between millennials and the military, and particularly how they view military culture and the purpose of the military.

One of the challenges faced by the military is that the work values of millennials are not compatible with the culture of the military. Military culture is authoritarian and rooted in the masculine ‘warrior’ image (Burk, 1999; Coker, 2007; Hall, 2011). A review of the literature indicates that the core values of military culture are obedience, discipline, subordination to authority, cohesion and teamwork and loyalty (Dyer, 1985; Osiel, 1998; Burk, 1999; Dandeker & Gow, 1999; Dorn, Graves, Ulmer, Collins, & Jacobs, 2000; Coker, 2007). This is almost in direct contrast to what millennials identify with. For example, Drago (2006) and Hyler (2013) argue that millennials are risk-averse, and are opposed to rigid, authoritative and conservative work environments, indicating that the military is not an ideal fit. Alternatively, Ender *et al.* (2014) argue that millennials may not be less receptive to all kinds of authority, but find impartial authority and the emphasis on unquestioning obedience as unattractive.

Moreover, the ‘warrior’ ethos has also been associated with men and typically hyper-masculine attributes that are a deterrent to most women and some men who do not fit the ‘Rambo’ profile. Drawing on Connell’s concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, the military has typically served as a bastion for a physically and psychologically superior form of masculinity that has served to exclude and subordinate those who are viewed as ‘unsuitable’, predominately women (Barrett, 1996; Buckingham, 1999; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Carreiras, 2006; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). Even with the shift to peacekeeping missions, the military remains hostile to women, as they are not perceived to possess the characteristics that make good soldiers. Those women who have enlisted tend to frequently face the effects of tokenism, performance pressures, boundary heightening, marginalisation, isolation and role encapsulation and tend to remain in administrative and non-combat posts (Kanter, 1977; Yoder, 1991; Carreiras, 2008).

Besides the masculine environment, there is another issue that deters young people from joining the military. Millennials are individualistic, and individuals have no place in the military. You become a number, a member of a team, and are expected to sacrifice self for the greater good. The military is also an archetypal total institution, as defined by Goffman (1961), where individuals are expected to conform to the values and expectations of the institution. Mady Segal (1986) coined the military a



‘greedy’ institution, because it requires that members sacrifice their own and family interests for the military. When joining the military, personnel must be prepared to be on call 24 hours a day, be prepared to spend prolonged periods away from family, and be willing to sacrifice one’s own life for the greater good. Millennials do not find this very alluring.

Additionally, there are various societal factors that influence the willingness of young people to choose a military career. In the post-Cold War era, few youth possess knowledge of the military. This has been termed a growing civil-military gap, and unfamiliarity among civilians of military affairs (Dandeker, 2000; Morgan, 2001; Heinecken & Gueli, 2005; Drago, 2006). This indicates that the youth know little about the military, and the opportunities and possible career options available, and this is referred to as a ‘knowledge gap’. Consequently, Cable and Turban (2001) argue that, in order for an organisation to recruit new members, individuals need to be familiar with and aware of the organisation. Therefore, the lack of knowledge of the military, combined with the growing dislike for the military job will have a negative impact on the ability of armed forces to meet recruiting targets.

Another factor that influences recruitment is how the military profession is perceived. A review of literature indicates that the military has traditionally been afforded a unique and praise-worthy status in society (Huntington, 1957; Caforio, 1991; Dandeker & Watts, 1991; Nuciari, 1994; Franke, 1997; Snider & Watkins, 2000). However, with the end of the Cold War and the shift to an all-volunteer force, the military profession has undergone a number of changes. Consequently, Nuciari (1994) argues that the military profession is experiencing a ‘role crisis’ and a process of ‘deprofessionalisation’, owing to changes in service values (Moskos, 1977; 1986) as well as the growth of private security, and this is influencing the control the military is able to exert over their profession (Heinecken, 2014). These are just some of the factors that appear to be influencing recruitment in Western nations. But what is the position in South Africa? How do the youth view military service and, for those who have enlisted, is there a correlation between the views of the civilian youth and those who have actually enlisted?

### **1.3 Research problem and question**

The key overarching research question of the study is: ‘How do young South Africans perceive the military as a possible employer of choice?’ The aim of this study is to explore the work values of South African youth to determine what motivates young people to enlist in the military, and how they experience military service once they have joined, and the implications this has for the ability of the SANDF to meet recruitment targets.

Based on this research problem, the specific research objectives are as follows:

1. To establish how high school learners perceive the military as a possible employer;
2. To establish what motivates young people to join the military, and how they experience military service once they have enlisted;
3. To establish how youth perceptions and experiences of the military affect recruitment and retention within the SANDF;
4. To make recommendations on how the SANDF can improve their recruitment strategies in order to meet targets.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

This study builds upon, and is an extension of my Honours project which aimed at investigating how high school learners from advantaged, Model C schools in the Cape Town region, perceive the military as an employer of choice. The findings from this study were published in an article co-published with my supervisor.<sup>2</sup> A limitation of this study was that it did not provide a comprehensive understanding of how youth perceive military service in South Africa, as it only addressed the views of white and coloured youngsters from economically-advantaged backgrounds (predominantly middle-class backgrounds). This study provides a more in-depth, inclusive understanding of the perceptions of South African youth towards work and military service. To allow for this, I will draw upon the findings from my Honours project in the presentation and discussion of the findings from the current study.

As virtually no research exists regarding the values of the millennial generation in South Africa and how learners view military service, the approach to this study is exploratory. A qualitative research strategy has been adopted, taking a constructionist view to establish how perceptions and experiences of the youth are formed. The advantages of this approach are that it allows for the generation of in-depth and rich data; it emphasises and prioritises the role played by the participants; and it acknowledges how context influences the way in which the participants construct their social reality. One of the shortfalls in qualitative research is that it tends to present the limited or localised understanding of a small group. To overcome this, I chose to triangulate this research by drawing on the findings from my Honours study of the learners from advantaged backgrounds, combined with the perceptions of the learners from disadvantaged backgrounds; members in the MSDS from across the country, and military officers involved in the recruitment process that recruit nationally and can

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<sup>2</sup> Smith & Heineken. 2014. Factors influencing military recruitment in South Africa: The voices of Cape Town high school learners, *African Security Review*, 23(2): 102-116.

reflect on regional differences. The findings from each of these samples will be compared to establish what job attributes South African youth classify as most important, and how this impacts on willingness to enlist. The selected methodology will be explained in detail in Chapter Four.

### **1.5 Challenges and limitations**

This study is limited to the perceptions of youth in the Western Cape, and different perceptions may arise in different parts of South Africa. Nevertheless, the samples of high school learners and MSDS members are diverse in terms of race, class and gender and should provide insight into how these factors influence youth perceptions of work. The sample of high school learners is however limited to young people in urban areas, or the outskirts of urban communities, and thus perceptions of learners in rural South Africa are omitted. Another limitation of this study is that the sample comprises only of Army and a few Navy MSDS members selected from the Infantry School in Oudtshoorn, Western Cape.

Although this sample may appear limited, Infantry is the largest division in the SANDF and the largest recruiter of new members annually. Furthermore, the MSDS participants originate from different regions in South Africa, and not just the Western Cape, thus alleviating the geographical limitation of this study somewhat. Although, it did become apparent that these members were recruited from the larger cities (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Pretoria etc.), and once again excluded young people from rural areas. By interviewing Army recruitment officers who recruit right across the country, a national perspective was obtained and this could be contrasted with the Western Cape sample. Nonetheless, this study, as the first of its kind in South Africa, is able to provide valuable insights into the attitudes of the youth to military service in South Africa, as well as a broader understanding of youth work preferences.

### **1.6 Value of the Study**

Although a literature review of military recruitment indicates that a vast number of studies have been conducted in Western militaries, particularly the United States where the issues of recruitment, the changing nature of militaries and warfare, and the youth have been well documented; this is not the case in South Africa. As the first of its kind in South Africa, this research makes a valuable contribution to new knowledge in the field. This study provides insight into the work values of the South African youth and their willingness to enlist, and explores the applicability of the ‘millennial’ concept, within a South African context. This study addresses various social implications that influence the decision of youth to join or not to join the military, namely the culture and status of the

military and the presence of a civil-military gap. In so doing, it not only makes a contribution to academic knowledge, but offers practical recommendations for the SANDF.

## 1.7 Chapter outline

In chapter two, I set out to explore the theoretical approaches that will be used to inform my discussion of the youth's career preferences, perceptions and experiences of the military. I will be drawing on a sociological approach to career choice, employing Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) *Careership* theory and Cable and Turban's (2001) *Employer Knowledge Framework*. With these theories, I acknowledge that career choice is not an individual process but rather a complex interaction of social, cultural, economic, political and historical factors. I will also explore youth work values from a generational standpoint. In most sociological research, different attitudes and perspectives are attributed to factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic status. Additionally, generational theory posits that attitudes and behaviours of individuals are determined by the era that they are born into. Each generational cohort is influenced by specific social, political and economic circumstances and events that happened whilst growing up. What makes the millennial generation so fundamentally different from those before is that they have been raised in highly global and technologically stimulated environments. The question is, are millennials in the West reflective of millennials in South Africa?

In the following chapter, I will explore the various institutional and societal factors that have influenced the ability of armed forces in the West, to attract and recruit the right quantity and quality of candidates. I will draw on the literature from the previous chapter, as well as the various studies that have been conducted on the millennial generation, their values, and attitudes towards military service, that indicate a growing disconnect or 'clash' between millennial and military cultures.

In chapter four, I present a detailed discussion on the qualitative research strategy that framed this research. I discuss the reasons for the various methodological choices and explain how I went about selecting the participants, conducting the research, obtaining ethical clearance and the data analysis process. I reflect on these methodological choices as well as the challenges that emerged during the research process. Lastly, I reflect on my position as the researcher and how this may have impacted on the research process.

In Chapter five, I present the empirical research where I examine how both school-leavers and those who have joined the military, perceive the military as an employer of choice. I also reflect on the findings from the recruitment officers who have had experience of young South Africans from across South Africa.

Lastly, in chapter six, I present a discussion of the findings in relation to the theories (Chapter 2) and the broader literature (Chapter 3). I argue that the trends in military recruitment in the West resonate with those in the SANDF, where the military is no longer perceived as an employer of choice to the ‘right’ candidates. The biggest challenge facing military recruitment is that the military job and organisational culture are viewed as unattractive. Moreover, these institutional factors are compounded by the decline in status of the military profession and the existence of a military knowledge gap in South Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO: MILLENNIALS AND THE WORLD OF WORK

### 2.1 Introduction

With globalisation and the increasing use of information technology, the world of work is changing significantly (Noon & Blyton, 2007). This has altered the context, the means, the location, and the conditions under which work is performed, as well as work preferences and work values. Martins and Martins (2012) assert that employers need to rethink how they attract, recruit and retain a new generation of workers, who are techno-savvy, more independent, want a better work/life balance and generally desire more flexible working conditions.

In this chapter, I aim to explore the literature on the millennial generation, drawing attention to their characteristics and their expectations from the workspace. An analysis of different theoretical traditions in career decision-making is presented, expanding on the concept of work values. As youth values are addressed from a generational standpoint, this theoretical stance is explained. In the last section of this chapter, I will discuss this in relation to the millennial, otherwise referred to as the ‘born-free’, generation in South Africa. This is the target group the SANDF currently hopes to attract to the military to staff its technologically-advanced defence force. Although there is little existing literature on the work values of the ‘born-frees’, I argue that these findings largely resonate with the findings from the West. However, taking cognisance of the historical legacy of the military during the apartheid and the economic, social and political context of the current South African society, it is important to reflect on how this may shape the attitudes and perceptions of young South Africans, in comparison to the ‘millennials’ of the West.

### 2.2 Theories of career decision-making and work values

To understand why youth may or may not find military service attractive, it is important to begin by looking at what influences career decisions. Based on the literature, it is clear that there are numerous theoretical propositions that have been put forward to explain career decision-making (Super, 1953; Roe, 1956; Bordin, Nachmann & Segal, 1963; Holland, 1973; Gottfredson, 1996; Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999). However, Osipow (1990) argues that there are essentially three dominant approaches, namely trait-factor theories, developmental theories, and social learning theories. Trait-factor theory, otherwise referred to as congruence theory, was originally proposed by Parson in 1909, but it is Holland’s theory of congruence (1973) that has been particularly influential (Spokane, Luchetta & Richwine, 2002). Holland’s theory proposes that an occupation represents a complete way of life for an individual: ‘the choice of an occupation is an expressive act which reflects the person’s motivation, knowledge, personality and ability’ (cited in, Spokane, Luchetta & Richwine,

2002: 375). Holland (1973) proposed six personality types that individuals can fall under: realistic, investigative, conventional, enterprising, social, and artistic. Individuals then select preferred careers on the basis of how best the environment ‘fits’ with their personality. Overall job satisfaction and stability will be achieved when the optimal ‘personality-environment fit’ is established. Thus, if an individual is creative and likes to work in an unstructured way, then a rigid, highly authoritarian work environment like the military, would not be a good personality fit. A prevailing critique of this theory is that it tends to reduce the vocational process to one decision (over-simplified) and assumes that the individual’s personality remains relatively constant over time (Spokane, Luchetta, & Richwine, 2002:379).

In contrast, developmental theorists such as Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1950) and Super (1953) have proposed that vocational choice is a life-long process. Ginzberg *et al.*’s theory is based on four elements: occupational choice is developmental and takes place over a period of time; this process is irreversible; the process ends with a compromise between interest, values and opportunities; and occupational choice occurs in three periods, the last ending in adulthood with the selection of a career (Super, 1953:186). Added to this, Super proposed that career choice is the incorporation of the self-concept into the career, and that this is a continuous process (Brown, 2002). A self-concept is the ‘image that someone has of himself or herself, of his or her own needs, interests, preferences, [and] capabilities’ (Bulmahn & Wieninger, 2010:91). However, this theory, much like the trait-factor theory, only acknowledges the role of the individual in the career decision-making process, without any real consideration for the impact of social and contextual factors (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997).

Social learning theory, proposed in the early work of Krumboltz in 1978, assumes that individuals are each born with different predispositions and characteristics, which are shaped by environmental conditions (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999; Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999). In the social learning theory, career choice is the result of both their predispositions and their specific environmental conditions (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). This theory is derived from Bandura’s learning theory, which assumes that ‘individuals are active, intelligent, problem solving agents who interact with their surroundings to pursue their own purposes and needs’ (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999:314). Osipow (1990) argues that unlike Holland’s theory, individuals in the social learning theory are subject to a number of environmental influencers (parents, biology, school, social environment) that shape their behaviours and career decisions. Thus, there is some consideration for the influence of external agents on individual career choice.



One criticism of all these theories is that they are largely psychological in their focus, with too much emphasis placed on the rational decision-making of individuals, separate from the context in which they are situated (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997; Bright, Pryor, Wilkenfeld, & Earl, 2005; Hodkinson, 2008). Although Krumboltz's developmental theory acknowledges the role of outside influencers, career decision-making is still perceived as an individual process. Consequently, a sociological approach to career decision-making will be adopted in this research. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) conceded the absence of a comprehensive sociological theory to understand career decision-making, and thus formulated the *Careership* theory that acknowledges that individuals do not make decisions independent of social and cultural factors:

‘In this theory, three artificially-separated parts are completely inter-related. They are pragmatically rational decision-making, choices as interactions within a field, and choices within a life course consisting of inter-linked routines and turning points’ (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997:32)

Based on a small longitudinal study, Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) proposed two arguments that diverged with the dominant theories discussed above: firstly, career decision-making is not as rational as they predicted and secondly, careers are strongly influenced by actions, events and circumstances that are beyond the control of the individual. Their theory of *Careership* draws largely on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and the concepts of the *field* and the *habitus*. This theory proposes that career decision-making entails ‘pragmatic rationality’. Because individuals are influenced by feelings and emotions, and decisions are made based on information provided by and the opinions of peers and family, career choices are often made by chance and only one career option is selected. Taylor (2005) argued that career decision-making is a protracted, complex process: youth have to make choices between their aspirations and the realisation of what they want to do, with often-contradictory information and perceptions from various influencers, whilst weighing up the opportunities available to them in the labour market. Bright *et al.* (2005) found that the media (television, print, and the internet) had the most influence on career decisions, followed by teachers, parents, friends and peers.

Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) also argue that decision-making is influenced (not determined) by the *field* in which individuals are situated. The *field* refers to a complex set of forces that interact with one another. For example, the *employment field* consists of a number of interacting forces, stakeholders and structures, such as labour markets, the economy, the political system, employers and employees, race, class and gender. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997; 2008) assert that career decision-making is influenced by the interactions of the forces within a field, whilst acknowledging that individuals are still active agents in this process. In support of this argument, Gottfredson (1996;



2002) argues that an individual's perception of their abilities is influenced by their perceptions of their social reality, wherein they are able to formulate a range of accessible career alternatives. Moreover, individuals select careers that they perceive as accessible, but these are not necessarily their ideal career option. Thus, career decision-making is influenced by the availability of resources within the field. For example, a school-leaver may be forced to join the military because they have no other options available to them, but because that school-leaver has an aunt who is a military officer, he or she was given a recommendation that got them the job.

Lastly, *Careership* theory proposes that people's decisions are 'bounded by *horizons for action*' (Hodkinson, 2008:4). This metaphor describes that what individuals believe is attainable is influenced by their position in society and what they can 'see' in front of them. Anything beyond the *horizon* is not considered. Factors such as social inequalities, historical context, and an education system can all influence what careers individuals perceive as obtainable. This metaphor is used in conjunction with the concepts of *habitus* and *dispositions* – 'deeply held and mainly tacit ways of viewing and understanding the world that orientate us towards all aspects of life' (Hodkinson, 2008:5). An individual's *dispositions* and their *horizons for action* thus influence the 'how' and 'why' of career-decision making. Using an example from this research, although policy may be geared towards the integration of women into the armed forces, this does not necessarily mean that women perceive this career as acceptable or accessible. Thus, *Careership* theory explains that career decision-making is a complex process that is influenced by the individual dispositions and perceptions, the individual's position within society, the various forces that interact therein and the resources available.

In order to establish a comprehensive sociological understanding of career decision-making, I will also draw on Cable and Turban's (2001) *Employer Knowledge Framework* that purports that decision-making is influenced by the knowledge and awareness of an occupation or organisation. The *Employer Knowledge Framework* (2001) proposes that job seekers' knowledge of different careers is a key determinant of whether a career is perceived as attractive, the espousal of the career choice and the decision to pursue that career choice. This concept emerged in brand knowledge and marketing. However, further studies have confirmed the relationship between employer knowledge and the attraction to certain jobs and organisations (Lievens, Van Hove, & Schreurs, 2005; Collins, 2007; Low & Woo, 2009; Ng & Gossett, 2013). Cable and Turban (2001) distinguish between three dimensions of knowledge, namely employer familiarity (awareness), employer image (culture of organisation), and employer reputation (status of organisation).

Firstly, this framework proposes that the more familiar the individual is with an employer/organisation/career, the more attractive it will appear (Cable & Turban, 2001). In other words, simply being aware of a career means that the individual has the ability to make a decision about that career. Without the knowledge of an organisation – for example, the military - individuals would not be able to formulate perceptions thereof (e.g. of the image and reputation) and are thus less likely to consider it as a career option. The second dimension asserts that individuals have a set of beliefs about the attributes of an organisation, the type of work performed and the individuals that comprise an organisation, and these perceptions (whether factual or historical) influence career decision-making (Cable & Turban, 2001). Lastly, Cable and Turban (2001) propose that the reputation of an organisation, namely other people's perceptions of the organisation, can influence the attractiveness thereof. This dimension differs from the previous, as it concerns the subjective impression of an individual on how others perceive the organisation. Lievens, Van Hove and Schreurs (2005) found that employer reputation had the most significant influence on the career choice of their participants, compared to employer awareness and image.

Thus far, it has become apparent that individual career decisions are influenced and determined by a number of interacting factors. Lastly, I will consider the concept of work values. According to Lyons, Higgins and Duxbury (2010) values, and more specifically work values, are central to understanding the meaning that people attribute to their work. The concern however, is that the conceptualisation of work values is highly fragmented and inconsistent (Pryor, 1982). Dose (1997:228) identified four themes in the literature on work values and vocational behaviour: 1) work values as preferences for work environment and types of work; 2) work values as desirable workplace behaviours; 3) work values as the significance of work for people; and 4) work values as the basis for business ethics.

A review of literature on work values reflects two dominant streams, namely the significance attached to work, and the preferences for attributes of work. In the former, work values are used interchangeably with work ethic, often guided by the Protestant Work Ethic: the belief that hard work, frugality, dedication and perseverance are divine and necessary for salvation (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Thus, work values define what is right and wrong in the work place, as posited by Dose (1997:228), who asserts that 'work values are evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is right or assess the importance of preferences'. Nonetheless, most of the literature considers work values as the latter, namely as underlying characteristics that guide individual preferences for certain types of work. This is the approach of this research.

In this line of thought, work values are the objectives that an individual hopes to obtain through working. Often used interchangeably with work preferences, this definition focuses more on the individual's perception of work, rather than the actual content of work (Littau, 2009). Work values are ordered in a hierarchy of importance and this is used to guide an individual's career decisions, attitudes and behaviours to work and job problem-solving (Lyons, *et al.*, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010).

In defining the different types of work values, the most consistent approach in the literature is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic work values. Although some argue this to be a restrictive approach, the intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy forms the basis of many vocational studies (Pryor, 1982; Elizur, Borg, Hunt, & Beck, 1991; Twenge *et al.*, 2010; Kalleberg & Marsden, 2013). Intrinsic values, also referred to as cognitive values or intangible rewards, are inherent within the activity of work; for example, the value of interesting work, work that is challenging, or that allows one to have an impact on others. Extrinsic values, on the other hand, are the outcomes of the action of work and are not directly linked to the nature of work. These are tangible or instrumental rewards such as pay and material benefits. Moreover, some researchers have identified other work values, namely social (interpersonal relationships), altruistic (social responsibility), prestige (status and recognition) and freedom work values (time for leisure and freedom from supervision) (Sagie, Elizur, & Koslowsky, 1996; Lyons *et al.*, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010). It is necessary to consider all six of these facets of work values (intrinsic, extrinsic, prestige, freedom, social and altruistic) so as to develop a comprehensive understanding of the work values of youth and how this relates to their attitudes towards military work.

Work values, like career decisions, are not merely individual preferences, but are influenced by other societal factors such as social structures, dispositions, demographics, and expectations (Elizur *et al.*, 1991; Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). Increasingly, discrimination in the labour market along the lines of gender, race and class has had a recognisable impact on work values and occupational choice (Kalleberg & Marsden, 2013). Additionally, Mortimer and Johnson (2002:43) argue that this discrimination not only occurs in the labour market, but is also prevalent in the education system. They argue that the structure of education institutions can either perpetuate or eradicate social inequalities that influence career outcomes. According to Griffith (cited in Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005), this is caused by different career opportunity structures that exist for different people. This is particularly relevant for women and other minority groups. For example, male and female learners may be encouraged to pursue certain careers because of gendered assumptions.

According to Sagie, Elizur and Koslowsky (1996), gender has consistently emerged as a determinant of work values, where women are more concerned with social approval and meaningful careers, while men are more focussed on economic rewards, competitiveness and achievement. Gender differences in career perceptions and work values have been attributed to the socialisation of women into specific gendered roles (Gati & Perez, 2014). Although differences between men and women have become less prominent, Gati and Perez (2014) assert that women still remain in traditionally gendered occupations and tend to pass up opportunities in traditionally male-dominated occupations. Therefore, career aspirations of women may not be different to those of men, but the presence of barriers in the labour market and social perceptions influence the types of careers that women pursue. This is the argument that Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) support as they contend that racial and ethnic minorities do not have significantly different career aspirations, yet they experience more barriers that determine or influence their career choices. According to Kalleberg and Marsden (2013:265), ‘those who are more vulnerable to job employability and economic security, such as blacks and the low educated, are more likely to emphasise income relative to other work values’.

Accordingly, Dick and Rallis (1991) proposed a career decision-making model which draws on all the above mentioned arguments. Firstly, career decisions are influenced by the individual’s self-concept, their beliefs about themselves, and their dispositions. Secondly, career choice is influenced by the evaluation of intrinsic (interest in the career) and extrinsic (salary and benefits, prestige, career mobility) values of different careers. These in turn, are influenced by past experiences and the expectations and attitudes of parents, teachers, and peers. Added to this is the individual’s awareness of, and the information available to them of different careers. Lastly, these career decisions are influenced by different social, economic, political and historical contexts and the individual’s position therein.

### **2.3 Generational theory**

Generational theory is a useful theory for understanding the attitudes and values of young people, and whether differences occur among young people within a generation, and with previous generations. The predominantly-cited definition of a generation is that of Kupperschmidt (1998:66), who proposed that a generation is an ‘identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location and significant life events at critical developmental stages’. The age of the individual determines how different events impact upon them. Howe and Strauss (2000) contend that children and adolescents are most influenced by events and circumstances, as older individuals have previous events to compare to.

The origin of the generational theory is attributed to Mannheim (1952) and his essay ‘The Problem of Generations’, wherein he equated a generation to a class classification. Mannheim (1952) proposed that, like a class group, people do not share proximity with those in their generation, but they have shared experiences that shape their attitudes and perspectives. Mannheim’s theory emphasises that a generation is not merely about a shared time in history, but also a ‘distinct consciousness of that historical position... shaped by the events and experiences of that time’ (cited in, Parry & Urwin, 2011:81). Thus, a generation is not simply a cohort, but is the result of shared cultural, social, economic and political incidences that shape young people’s perceptions.

Similar to Hodkinson and Sparkes, Edmunds and Turner (2002:7) draw on Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus* to explain that the identity of a generation is determined by shared social experiences: ‘members of a generation share a collective cultural field (of emotions, attitudes, preferences and dispositions) and a set of embodied practices’. David Wyatt (cited in Turner, 2002:7) stated that generations are often influenced by a ‘traumatic event, a set of political mentors, a dramatic shift in demography, a privileged interval and collective rituals’. For instance, generations of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have been significantly influenced by war and conflict.

Nevertheless, intra-generational differences can emerge, as proximity can determine the degree to which an event influences young people. For example, 9/11 in the United States had a profound impact on young American citizens during that time, but not necessarily as much on young South Africans. Ingelhart (2008) proposes that intra-generational differences can be explained by two hypotheses: the socialisation and the scarcity hypothesis. The socialisation hypothesis focuses on how socio-economic conditions can influence adolescent values. The scarcity hypothesis indicates that those socio-economic variables that are in short supply, will affect the values of individuals the most. This argument assumes that career decisions of minority groups or individuals from lower class groups are more likely to be influenced by socio-economic status, than those from the middle and upper classes.

The important contribution of the generational theory is that it shifts away from the emphasis on ‘youth’ as a transition, or the belief that childhood and adolescence are merely phases on the route towards achieving adulthood (Wyn & Woodman, 2006). Similar to the *Careership* theory, generational theory acknowledges that individuals are situated in social, economic and cultural processes that frame and influence their experiences. According to the generational theory, these experiences are therefore distinguished from those of different historical periods. Thus, generational theory provides a framework to understand the attitudes of young people and the factors that influence

this. In the case of the millennials, change in education policies, as well as social, political and economic change, have led to distinctly different values for youth today.

## **2.4 The millennial generation**

The millennials go by a number of names, the most popular being Generation Y, Me Generation, the Wired generation and the Spoilt generation, yet the term ‘Millennial’ appears to be most reflective of the historical period in which these youngsters are born – between the 1980s and 1990s. Millennials are the largest generational group since the Baby Boomers (post-World War Two), and they are said to be the most heterogeneous, global, technological, racially and ethnically diverse generation (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Goldgehn, 2004). According to Zemke, Raines and Filipczak (2000), different trends have shaped the attitudes and experiences of millennials: focus on children and family, scheduled and structured lives, multiculturalism, terrorism, heroism, patriotism, and parent advocacy. Having grown up with cellphones, instant messaging and social networking, this generation has been exposed to the different political, economic and cultural values of the world. They have also been raised in a highly ‘child-centric’ era and this has significantly impacted on their attitudes and values.

In the 1980s, social attitudes altered quite dramatically, from ‘children are meant to be seen and not heard’, to ‘Mommy and me classes’ and ‘Baby on board’ stickers (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Television, advertising, branding, restaurants and social spaces became geared towards children and families. New parents became avid readers of books on child-rearing and how to baby-proof their lifestyles. According to Lipkin and Perrymore (2009), parents have become over-protective in their attempts to protect, support and build strong relationships with their children. This has led to the emergence of ‘helicopter parents’: parents who tend to hover around their children even once they have left school; parents who still make the lunches of their working children; and parents who become involved in their children’s affairs. Not only have millennials been influenced by protective parenting styles, but also by educational reforms. With the shift to outcomes-based education, achievements and rewards are no longer determined by merit, but by participation (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). The aim was to reduce competition between students, and to create equal opportunities for achievement, by doing away with standardised grades and school hierarchies. Consequently, these factors have significantly shaped the values and traits of the millennials.

Howe and Strauss, authors of ‘Generations: The history of America’s future, 1584 to 2069’ (1991), ‘Millennials Rising: The Next Generation’ (2000) and ‘Millennials go to College’ (2003), provide a detailed analysis of the millennial generation. They attribute seven key characteristics to the millennials: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured and conventional

(Howe & Strauss, 2000). This generation believes that they are unique, and are confident in their abilities to achieve; failure is unfamiliar to them; and having grown up with overprotective parents, they are comfortable with rules and structure. Claire Raines (2003), another prominent writer of the millennial generation, characterises millennials as sociable, talented, well-educated, collaborative, open-minded, influential and achievement-oriented. Moreover, Raines (2003) argues that millennials are also optimistic and happy, and believe that life today is far better than the lives of their parents.

Nevertheless, Howe and Strauss (2000) and Raines (2003) present a positive portrayal of the millennial generation. Instead, Suleman and Nelson (2011) note that the millennials tend to have inflated self-opinions, are over-confident in their abilities, feel that they are entitled, need to be constantly stimulated and bore easily. Lipkin and Perrymore (2009) assert that millennials are the ‘want it all, and want it now’ generation, with high self-esteems. They perceive themselves as unique, to the point of being conceited and narcissistic, and this results in selfish and individualistic young people who are unable to work well with others with different opinions, and who are unable to accept constructive criticism or failure.

Moreover, millennials have been referred to as the ‘spoilt’ generation of disrespectful, unruly, untamed, lazy and selfish individuals who are used to always getting their way (Sigman, 2009; Shapira, 2010; Warner, 2010). According to Warner (2010), millennials are ‘entitled whiners who have been spoiled by parents who [have] overstoked their self-esteem, teachers who [have] granted undeserved A’s and sport coaches who bestowed trophies on any player who showed up’. Sigman (2009) argues that there is now a problem of disobedience in the household, as over-protective parents are not instilling discipline and a balance of moral values. Moreover, Sigman (2009) claims that a culture of anti-authoritarianism and the loosening of power relations and overt hierarchies, with parents trying to be friends with their children rather than being parents, has resulted in spoilt and undisciplined children and adolescents.

Distinctly different from previous generations, the millennials are introducing new work values into the workplace. A review of the literature indicates that millennials desire five dominant work values: work/life balance, good pay and benefits, opportunities for advancement, meaningful work experiences, and a nurturing environment (Hersatter & Epstein, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010; Schweitzer, Lyons, & Ng, 2012). For millennials, a balance between work and leisure is the rule, not the exception. According to Lipkin and Perrymore (2009), millennials value their free time, energy and health, and insist that work is merely one part of their lives, and should not dominate their lives. Lipkin and Perrymore (2009) also refer to millennials as ‘catapulters’, as they have no problem with



moving from one organisation to the next. Millennials lack organisational commitment and do not desire long-term career paths. As millennials have higher expectations of work and their abilities, if these needs are not met in one organisation, they will simply move on to the next available opportunity.

Millennials are also attracted to organisations that encourage flexible working conditions within the workplace, and are technology-friendly. According to Stafford and Griffis (2008), the use of technology is imperative to millennials. Google has been voted as the best company to work for, for the past five years, because they have mastered a corporate culture that is attractive to this new generation (Fortune, 2014). On-site Google perks include medical and dental facilities, valet parking, free laundry services, free meals on a daily basis, slides and game areas, areas to sleep during the day, indoor gardens, free Wi-Fi, being allowed to have Ipods while working, and much more (Fortune, 2014).

Millennials place a great degree of importance on high incomes, but equally important are developing interpersonal relations with colleagues, a comfortable working environment and doing meaningful work. According to Thomas Barlow (cited in, Twenge & Campbell, 2008:866), ‘the idea has grown up, in recent years, that work should not be just... a way to make money, support a family, or gain social prestige, but should provide a rich and fulfilling experience in and of itself’. Moreover, according to the National Research Council (2003:154), this generation displays a keen interest in being involved in community projects and issues of a global nature, like environmental degradation and animal rights. Millennials have a greater sense of social and corporate responsibility, and have a desire to work for organisations that are trying to make a difference (Ng & Gossett, 2013). In literature on how to manage millennials, analysts have recommended that employees be sent out to volunteer while working, or be given a personal experience of what the company is doing in terms of societal development (Suleman & Nelson, 2011).

Millennials are also increasingly critical of authority and leadership (Stafford & Griffis, 2008; Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Suleman & Nelson, 2011). According to Twenge and Campbell (2008), millennials believe that authority figures should be the epitome of high ethical and moral standards, and that leaders should inspire and motivate their employees, rather than control them. According to Suleman and Nelson (2011), millennials are dependent on mentors and leaders in the workplace, as they have grown up with over-protective, ‘helicopter’ parents. However, although millennials want to be encouraged, coached, and given direction, they do not want to be told how to do something.



Millennials want to feel like they themselves are making a meaningful contribution to the organisation (Suleman & Nelson, 2011).

Although this literature largely reflects trends in the United States, studies among the youth elsewhere reveal similar findings. According to Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010), Canadian millennials identify opportunities for advancement as a top priority. They are also ambitious, impatient, and have elevated expectations of rapid promotion and pay increase when entering the labour market. Millennials do not regard organisational commitment as important; however, achieving a work/life balance and other social aspects of work are essential. They also favour organisations that promote the development and growth of employees through training programs and future opportunities for studying. Furthermore, Ng *et al.* (2010) did not find significant differences in terms of gender and minority groups. Women were more likely than men to accept a less-than-ideal job with lower salary expectations, and minorities were more likely to seek a long-term employer and have higher salary expectations. Ng *et al.* (2010) attribute this to a strong motivation for upward social mobility.

In the United Kingdom, the four attractive career attributes for young workers include career development (new skills and having challenges), working environment (pay and job security), lifestyle, and the need for change (looking for new jobs, always finding better employment) (Millward, Houston, Brown, & Barrett, 2006; Macleod, 2008). According to Millward *et al.* (2006), notable gender differences emerged in their study of work values. Where males favoured a good salary, the ability to do new things, and jobs that entail organising and planning, females wanted jobs that would allow them to combine work and family, but that also offered good chances for advancement and promotion. Similar findings emerged in Australia (Taylor, 2012).

Even in societies that are traditionally collectivist and based on Confucianism, such as China, millennials tend to reflect more Western values. Chinese millennials are more self-centred, individualistic and materialistic. According to Yi, Ribbens and Morgan (2010), wealth gain and self-promotion are the dominant work values. Similarly, Roongrerngsuke and Liefoghe (2013) posit that the top organisational values of millennials include seeking a job that fits personal interest and specialisation, a well-recognised brand or company, good pay and opportunities for pay increase, and that exposes them to technology and opportunities to travel abroad. More selfish and individualistic values of Chinese millennials have been attributed to the 'one child policy' (Yi *et al.*, 2010; Porschitz, Guo, & Alves, 2012).

Before continuing, I think it is important to reflect upon the absence of consideration given to the differences of the millennials within these studies. As many of these studies are situated in developed, economically-stable countries, little consideration has been given to the presence of intra-generational differences within the millennial cohort. Howe and Strauss (2000) assert that this generation, unlike any other, is largely homogenous, with shared values, experiences and expectations. However, in a country with prevalent inequalities like South Africa, it is important to consider whether this has an impact on different work values and aspirations, within the millennial cohort. According to Diemer and Ali (2009) social class cannot be separated from occupational choice, as class is closely related to the presence of external resources that can either hinder or assist career choice. Thus, Diemer and Ali (2009) argue that adolescents from the middle to upper social classes tend to have a higher achievement motivation, emphasise educational attainment, and have higher expectations on attainment of prestigious occupations, which are the existing trends in the literature on millennials. The following section presents a discussion on the applicability of the ‘millennial’ construct to South African youth, taking cognisance of socio-economic status, race, class and the historical legacy influencing education and youth.

## **2.5 South African millennials**

In South Africa, the emergence of a new generational cohort coincided with profound political, economic and social change, when the country transitioned from the oppressive apartheid regime to a democracy in 1994. All those born into this new political dispensation have been coined the ‘born free’, or ‘Mandela’, generation. According to Mattes (2012:4), this generation is ‘not only growing, but are increasingly comprised of young people who have spent some or all of their high school years exposed to a pro-democracy curriculum’, with little memory of passes, segregated living, F.W. de Klerk, and the release of Nelson Mandela from Robben Island. The ‘born free’ generation are also fast becoming the largest generation in South Africa, as they make up approximately 40% of the population (Maswili, 2014). They are also most likely to be black, and for many, this has coincided with a rising black middle-class in South Africa. Furthermore, they are less likely to be active members of community or religious groups, or to be pro-active regarding local issues (Mattes, 2012).

Much like their Western counterparts, the ‘born-frees’ have been born into an era dominated by globalisation and technological change. Martins and Martins (2012) argue that the attitudes and values of South African millennials do not differ much from their Western counterparts. According to Martins and Martins (2012), South African millennials are very family-centric, they crave attention, and are self-confident, optimistic, hopeful, independent, determined, and lifestyle-centred. Job satisfaction is influenced by flexible working hours, financial assistance, and training and

development. Moreover, South African millennials, more than previous generations, experience more social responsibility, and are inclined to seek work or employers that endorse corporate responsibility and social upliftment (Puyabaraud & Pimm-Jones, 2010). At the same time, Martins and Martins (2012) argue that millennials are less receptive to authoritative leadership, they prefer working for flatter organisations that encourage the development of employees, and are less inclined towards teamwork and participation with others. Moreover, Puyabaraud and Pimm-Jones (2010) found that ‘born-frees’ are influenced by the culture of an organisation, and this can attract or deter them from selecting it. Born-frees want to work in an environment that feels like a ‘home away from home’, with meaningful relationships and a less corporate, and rigid atmosphere.

A tracer study by Cosser and Sehlola (2009) found that the main work attributes of young South Africans include passion for the profession, wanting to make a difference to the lives of others, the certainty of finding a job, money, flexible lifestyle, and the status of the profession. In terms of career choice, the most highly-rated professions and industries were engineering, accounting, Internet Technology (IT), travel and tourism. While these are the preferred career industries of many youth, Cosser and Sehlola (2009) claim that there is an ‘aspiration gap’ in terms of what they aspire to do and what they end up doing. The young people in their study, for example, indicated that they took a job for three main reasons: firstly, because it provided valuable experience; secondly, the necessity to support themselves; and lastly, not because it was what they studied, but because it was the only work available. The problem in South Africa is that many young people are forced to choose a career because it is the only employment available on the labour market, and not because it is what they want to do.

According to the Labour Force Study (StatsSA, 2014), a quarter of the South African working-age population is unemployed. Of those employed, almost half are employed in precarious work, namely in the informal sector and private residences. The problem is that the youth are disproportionately influenced by and experience high levels of unemployment, and this has resulted in growing uncertainties among youth regarding job stability, the value of their abilities, job offers and earnings after school (Lam, Leibbrandt, & Mltasheni, 2008). The youth in South Africa are more likely than any other cohort to be unemployed, with more than half of those between the ages of 15 and 25 unemployed (Altman, 2007; van Aardt, 2012). Furthermore, youth unemployment accounts for 30% of the total unemployed population in South Africa. van Aardt (2012) attributes youth unemployment to the problems of low skill suitability and inexperience, as well as socio-economic status and racial legacies.

Youth unemployment is unequally spread across race, gender and socio-economic status in South Africa (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; van Aardt, 2012). Youth in urban areas are more likely to find employment compared to those in rural areas, because ‘metropolitan areas are usually associated with higher economic growth and better quality of schooling than rural areas’ (van Aardt, 2012:60). Black youth also find it more difficult to gain access to the labour market compared to other population groups. This is attributed to the education policies of apartheid, where black learners were disadvantaged by lower standards of education and access to resources. The majority of the black population was also forced to live in typically low-income and low-employment areas. Mlatsheni and Rospabe (2002:17) assert that white youth typically have better job opportunities because of access to ‘higher levels of employment enhancing features such as education, their better family background, as well as their location in areas of lower unemployment’. Thus, it is important to consider if and how geographical location, race, and socio-economic status influence the career perceptions and ideal attributes of the South African youth.

A study by Jawitz and Case (1998), on students studying engineering, indicates how socio-economic status influences the youth. While white students are more influenced by parents, teachers and personal interest when making career decisions, black students were influenced by socio-economic conditions and prevailing inequalities created by apartheid education policies. The fact that Mathematics and Science teaching standards are considerably lower in previously disadvantaged schools affects their ability to enrol in Science and Engineering faculties at university. In terms of gender, women who took up engineering stated that they did so because they are now able to do so. Black women were not only oppressed in terms of apartheid racial policies, but also by traditional patriarchal limitations that prohibited them from entering certain careers. Thus the female participants in this study argued that because the opportunities are now available, they have to seize them: ‘Now as we women are given a chance it is [in] our interest to show how much we can do’ (Jawitz & Case, 1998:238).

A study conducted by Meyburgh (2005) proposes that career motivators are influenced by race. According to Meyburgh (2005) black students’ career choices were most influenced by the availability of employment and career stability, and least by career mobility and career opportunities. Whereas, white students tended to be less influenced by the availability of employment, and more so by the desire for career flexibility. In terms of academic constraints, white students were more concerned about qualifying for a position, whereas black students were more concerned about the costs of being able to qualify for a position, indicating that financial constraints and economic opportunities are more important to black students.

Other literature notes that there is a difference between the aspirations and ambitions of white and black youth in South Africa, as well as gender differences. Kotze (2001) found that females and black students were more committed to a community role compared to their counterparts. Kotze (2001) notes that women appear more strongly oriented to 'life-role priorities', which means they are inclined to place family priorities above all others, whereas this was not the case for their male counterparts. It was also found that white students tend to place more emphasis on leisure, which Kotze (2001) argues can be attributed to differences in culture between white and black students, with white students adopting more Western ideals of independence, individuality, self-actualisation and competitiveness, and black students tending to embrace the values associated with 'Ubuntu', such as conformity, compassion, respect and human dignity.

Consequently, the studies reviewed indicate that career choice in South Africa is significantly influenced by race, class, socio-economic status and gender. Unlike the West, the youth in South Africa cannot be thought of as 'homogenous' due to clear divisions along the lines of race and class, a long-standing effect of the apartheid era. It is important to acknowledge that social inequalities in South Africa are inextricably related to oppressive apartheid policies that continue to reflect and influence the present. The racial segregation of the education system was a component of maintaining white supremacy during the apartheid and the ramifications thereof are still evident with distinct disparities in the educational attainment of youth today. With the creation of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, the Apartheid government took control over black education. White schools were significantly better funded and privileged, with whites receiving a superior education to the blacks, coloureds and Indians who attended schools with very little resources. Although efforts have been made to better the state of education in South Africa, it is still apparent that previously disadvantaged schools are still predominately black.

Thus the applicability of the millennial literature of the West to South African youth is questionable. This does not mean that millennial attitudes are not evident in South Africa. However, it can be argued that the millennial values are more likely to appear among the middle-class youth in South Africa, predominantly the whites, who share similar experiences with the youngsters of the West. Moreover, one defining attribute of the millennial generation is that technology and globalisation delineates this generation from all previous generations and this too has been the experience in South Africa.

## 2.6 Conclusion

What this discussion of the occupational literature indicates is that career choice is influenced by a number of interacting factors. These theories provide different lenses through which to determine what influences the career decisions of young South Africans, and what implications these have for the ability of the SANDF, or any other organisation, to attract the youth. Firstly, the theory of *Careership* addresses the complexity of career decision-making, namely that career choice is influenced by the individual's position in society, their self-concept, and various contextual, historical and societal factors, and the availability of resources. At the same time, acknowledging that individual decisions are not entirely rational as they are influenced by the attitudes of several influences (media, teachers, parents, peers). With this lens, it is important to consider that the attitudes towards the military, and any other organisation, are deeply embedded in social expectations, as well as economic, political and demographic forces.

Secondly, the *Employer Knowledge Framework* provides a more specific orientation to understanding why individuals select certain careers and not others. This framework proposes that an individual's knowledge (familiarity, image and reputation) of an occupation or organisation determines their choice thereof. This has several implications for the military. The more familiar young people are with the military, the more likely they are to select it as a career choice. Furthermore, individuals are more likely to adopt certain beliefs about an organisation (its image and culture), that they perceive as attractive or not. Subsequently, if military culture is perceived as unfavourable to the youth, they are unlikely to join. The *Employer Knowledge Framework* also acknowledges that individuals' career choices are influenced by the perceptions of those around them and the status they attribute to different careers. This overlaps with the theory of *Careership*. Thus, for the military to be attractive to young people, it needs to be viewed as a high status or prestigious occupation in society.

Lastly, the generational theory is a useful lens in understanding the work values (ideal work attributes) of young people, and how these are determined by shared experiences. Millennials, as a result of globalisation and technological change, are more individualistic, narcissistic, ambitious, and confident, and they expect more from the work environment in terms of free time, acknowledgments, and technology. Consequently, this will have a negative effect on the ability of armed forces to recruit and retain these youngsters to an organisation that is authoritative, rigid, and conservative, and requires total commitment from its members. This much is already evident with armed forces in the West falling short on recruitment targets. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the millennial experiences of the West may not be entirely applicable to a South African context due to marked differences in the youth along the lines of race, class and socio-economic status. In the

following chapter, I will look more closely at the military job, and assess whether the military is an employer of choice for millennials.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE MILLENNIALS AND MILITARY RECRUITMENT

### 3.1 Introduction

With the shift to an all-volunteer force, militaries are faced with the challenge of recruiting candidates who must meet a wide range of criteria. Not only should they possess the necessary educational qualifications, but fit the social profile of being fit, able to operate under stress, and be willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice – their lives in the course of duties. On top of this, they must be unquestioning in their obedience to authority, and display loyalty and commitment to their peers and the military institution. Given these requirements, and considering the work values of youth – specifically those from the West - it is not surprising that armed forces across the globe are finding it increasingly difficult to meet both quantitative and qualitative recruitment targets (Tresch & Leuprecht, 2010).

One reason for this is the changing work values of civilians that are increasingly at odds with the nature of the military job (Dandeker & Strachan, 1993). Millennials in particular seem to be disinterested in the military, and when they do enlist, find serving in the military very frustrating and restrictive (Morgan, 2001; Ender *et al.*, 2014). This chapter will pay closer attention to the military institution and profession, as both an employer and a career option. The aim is to sketch why the military may or may not be an employer of choice to the current generation of youngsters. The first part of this chapter examines the nature of the military institution, and military work and the unique features of the military culture that affect recruitment. Hereafter the focus shifts to outside of the military organisation, to societal factors that influence the career choice of millennials in relation to the military, such as the status of the military profession and the much discussed civil-military gap, before the chapter ends with some concluding comments. However, before continuing it is necessary to include a brief discussion on the current recruitment challenges that the South African military faces.

### 3.2 Background to the challenges facing the SANDF

As indicated, one of the challenges with the shift to an all-volunteer force is that armed forces can no longer rely on conscription for a continuous flow of high-quality recruits. This challenge is no different for the South African military. Prior to 1994, the former SADF relied predominately on white male conscripts to fill the ranks, although blacks, coloureds, Indians and women were allowed to serve on a volunteer basis (Heineken & Van der Waag-Cowling, 2009). With broader political, social and economic restructuring, the structure of the South African military underwent a number of changes and the system of white conscription was replaced with an all-volunteer system. This, together with the integration of former homeland and revolutionary forces, changed the racial make-



up of the military significantly. This was done in accordance with the development of a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory institutional culture, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in order to rectify the racial imbalances in the SANDF, affirmative action and equal opportunity programs were implemented. It was envisaged, that in order for the military to be reflective of society, the following targets needed to be met: blacks (64 %), coloureds (10 %), Indians (1 %) and whites (25 %) (DOD, 1998). As the table indicates below, these targets were largely achieved by 2004.

**TABLE 1: RACIAL PROFILE OF THE SANDF, 1994-2013 (%)**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Blacks</b>	39.2	63.09	70	71.8
<b>Coloureds</b>	12.6	12.64	13	12.7
<b>Indians</b>	1.3	1.03	1	1.15
<b>Whites</b>	46.8	22.96	16	14.2

\*Figures obtained from the Department of Defence (2013)

In recent years, it has become evident that certain population groups, most notably whites, are no longer joining the military. The problem is that whites are now underrepresented, with more than a 10 % shortfall of whites in the ranks in 2013 (DOD, 2013). Subsequently, fewer whites are interested in joining the South African military. According to an article, published in Business Day (2012), young whites are opting for military service abroad, because of the perception that there are few opportunities for whites in the SANDF.

Besides the challenge of establishing a socially-representative defence force, it is imperative that the SANDF recruits the right quantity of high-calibre candidates to staff a flexible, disciplined, and technologically-advanced defence force, capable of executing tasks effectively and efficiently. This is in accordance with the following Constitutional imperatives:

- Chapter 14, Section 226(4), The South African National Defence Force shall be established in such a manner that it will provide a balanced, modern and technologically advanced military force, capable of executing its functions in terms of this Constitution
- (5) All members of the South African National Defence Force shall be properly trained in order to comply with international standards of competency (RSA, 1993).

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter referred to as the Constitution

Chapter 11, Section 200(1), The Defence Force must be structured and managed as a disciplined military force (RSA, 1996).

Given the high levels of youth unemployment in South Africa, the SANDF does not have a problem with attracting sufficient volunteers. The challenge lies in attracting people with acceptable academic results in Mathematics and Science to fill the technical posts. In 2013, the posts with the highest percentage of vacancies included technical (17,34 %), naval combat (18 %) and engineering posts (23,46 %) (DOD, 2013). Moreover, the Annual Performance Plan of the DOD (2013) indicated that shortages of manpower in the skilled medical posts were also experienced. However, Higgs (1998) argues that it is not sufficient to select recruits who simply meet entry requirements. It is important that new recruits also have an awareness of and interest in military life and who embody certain traditional character traits of a soldier, because of the unique institutional and professional ethos of the military.

In order to equip a defence force that is intellectually agile, able to adapt quickly, resilient and continuously evolving (DOD, 2014), the military needs to recruit people who are young (18-24), fit, healthy and medically sound, who are not area-bound, have no criminal records, are preferably unmarried and with few familial commitments, and have satisfactory academic results in Mathematics and Science. Furthermore, all recruitment needs to fulfil racial and gender quotas of the SANDF, and recruits need to come from both rural and urban areas across South Africa (DOD, 2004). All new recruits enter the military through the Military Skills and Training Development System (MSDS), where members serve for an initial two-year contract. Recruitment drives for the MSDS are initiated on the first Sunday in February every year, when advertisements for new applicants are placed in newspapers, radio stations, national television, career publications and school periodicals (DOD, 2004). Recruiters also attend school exhibitions, primarily in disadvantaged communities, although this is dependent on the availability of resources (both financial and personnel). In 2012 and 2013, the SANDF attended the RAND Easter Show, Youth Day celebrations, Women's Day parade, Ekurhuleni Job Fair, AAD exhibition and the Mitchell's Plain festival in order to promote the role of the SANDF, and its recruitment drive (DOD, 2013).

Consequently, the present recruitment strategy was heavily critiqued by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in February 2014, who argued that the current system of 'filling in a form and that's it' does not ensure that the best and brightest are selected (eNCA, 2014). Challenges surrounding recruitment were confirmed by training officers at the Oudtshoorn Infantry base, who argued that too many recruits are lost at the beginning of training due to poor health and fitness, and psychometric testing. The problem is that new intakes only happen once a year; therefore all those lost due to poor

selection processes cannot be replaced until the following year. Moreover, training officers complained about the lack of discipline among selected recruits, and their unwillingness to adapt to the military structure of command. The failure to select, recruit, and train the right candidates to fill the ranks will impact on the SANDF's ability to deliver on its mandate, as stipulated in the Constitution, 'to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people' (RSA, 1996: 200, 2).

The question then remains: are high-quality school-leavers attracted to a military career? What are their perceptions and experiences of military service, and what factors deter them from joining?

### **3.3 The military institution and military work**

Based on existing literature, it is evident that millennials favour flexibility and freedom, desire a work/life balance, and value family life. On the contrary, the military job requires young recruits to sacrifice all this for the greater part of their military careers. Right from the point of entry, new recruits are subject to a process of 'de-personalisation' and 'de-individuation' in order to mould civilian recruits into soldiers (Herbert, 1998). The military institution, especially during the first two years when the most intense period of socialisation occurs, resembles the characteristics of what Erving Goffman (1961) deemed a total institution. Goffman (1961:191) defines a total institution as a place of work where 'a great number of similarly situated people [are] cut off from society for an appreciable period of time [and] together [they] lead an enclosed and formally administered life'. Some have compared this experience to being in a fortress, especially in those early phases of basic training (Wertsch, 2006). All actions are conducted under the guidance of an authority that regulates behaviours and activities in order to fulfil the aims of the organisation (Goffman, 1961). This means that, especially during periods of basic training, military personnel are dictated when they will eat, sleep and work, and the manner in which this should be performed. This continues when under training, in attendance of military employment or when deployed on military missions. Moreover, the military requires conformity among its members who are expected to operate according to strict rules, regulations and schedules.

In this regard, the military has often been referred to as a 'greedy' institution, because of the commitment it demands from all members and their families (Coser, 1974; Segal, 1986; Vuga & Juvan, 2013). According to Segal (1986), conflict between the family and the military has traditionally been avoided, with the family submitting to the culture and values of the military. However, with societal changes such as the increase of women in military service, and strategic changes that require more frequent deployments, many are finding that family and military service

are no longer compatible. In fact, Drummet, Coleman and Cable (2003) argue that the military is increasingly met with intolerance and dissatisfaction from families and those who wish to be in proximity to their family.

The problem is that greedy institutions, like the military, expect undivided loyalty and commitment from their members, often with little recognition for individual contributions. The military job often entails long and irregular working hours, frequent periods away from home, uncomfortable working conditions, and danger. The military job entails an element of risk and sacrifice that is like no other organisation, as it cannot be separated from the task at hand (Caforio & Nuciari, 1994). Thus the military, unlike any civilian job, requires a high degree of institutional commitment, where individual needs are subservient to those of the military.

If one compares this with the literature on the millennials, there is a clear dissonance in terms of what the military as an employer wants and what the youth are looking for from their career choice. The military job emphasises conformity rather than individuality, therefore millennials are unlikely to get the recognition they feel they so duly deserve. The literature on millennials indicates that they are highly ambitious, thrive on recognition, and need to be acknowledged in the work place (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Sigman 2009; Suleman & Nelson, 2011). Millennials are also risk-averse (Hyler, 2013) and having grown up in ‘helicopter’ family environments, want to be in close proximity to their families. Thus, the demands placed on the individual by the institution in terms of self-sacrifice, versus the norm of self-interest of millennial youth, produces a clash of values and interests. Added to this is the unique culture of the military that places additional demands on service members.

### **3.4 Culture of the military**

#### ***3.4.1 Obedience and selflessness***

Based on numerous studies, the core values of military culture include the willingness of the individual to unquestioningly obey and comply with orders; discipline and subordination to authority; conforming to a unique set of rules and regulations; and valuing the common good over individual needs (Osiel, 1998; Burk, 1999; Dandeker & Gow, 1999; Dorn, Graves, Ulmer, Collins, & Jacobs, 2000; Coker, 2007). Discipline, cohesion and obedience are of utmost importance in the military, as these enable ‘military formations to operate in that most demanding environment – combat’ (Dorn *et al.*, 2000:8). Furthermore, the member has to willingly accept that he or she is no longer an individual but is part of a team, and it is imperative that cohesion and teamwork are augmented for the success of the mission (Dyer, 1985). Thus, loyalty and selfless service are deep-seated values of military culture and should be upheld by all members.

Reflecting on Cable and Turban's (2001) *Employer Knowledge Framework*, the perceptions about the image or culture of an organisation can determine the attractiveness thereof for job seekers. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, a rise in individualism is present among millennials, who tend to be more selfish and focussed on their own personal aspirations and achievements. Ender *et al.* (2014), who considered how millennials affect military recruitment, found that they are less civic-minded and less trustful of each other. This is problematic for the military in two ways: firstly, the emphasis on individuality means millennials are less likely to surrender individual needs in favour of the common good; and secondly, cohesion and teamwork may be hampered.

Millennials are also more likely to leave an organisation if they feel that opportunities for advancement are better elsewhere. Lipkin and Perrymore (2009) posit that millennials display very little organisational commitment and loyalty. For example, Ender *et al.* (2014) found that millennials are more likely to help a friend at the 'drop of the hat', but are unlikely to help out at a soup kitchen. The reason for this - they argue - is that they prefer informal and uncommitted engagements. The implication of this is that millennials are interested in military service, however they are deterred by the pressure to commit and conform. This is in line with the literature which indicates that millennials place importance on independence and flexibility in the millennial generation.

Millennials are also deterred by the emphasis on obedience in the military. The literature indicates that millennials are predominantly averse to jobs that are rigid and authoritative (Sigman, 2009). Both Suleman and Nelson (2011) and Ender *et al.* (2014) argue that millennials have a harder time respecting authority if they are unable to question it, but they are largely trustful and accepting of authority figures. This is perhaps the ultimate clash in values, as in the military one is expected to obey orders, while questioning them is not part of the culture.

### ***3.4.2 Hegemonic masculinity and male-dominance***

Another feature of the military culture is that it is embodied in the 'warrior ethos' and there is a considerable amount of literature which indicates that the 'warrior ethos' is intricately tied to masculinity (Barrett, 1996; Buckingham, 1999; Carreiras, 2006; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). According to Morgan (1994:165), the military is a bastion for masculinity, and he argues that of 'all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct'. The 'warrior' resembles a hegemonic masculine ideal that serves to subordinate other masculinities and femininities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This masculinity upholds the ideals of emotional control, overt heterosexual desire, and a capacity

for violence and aggression that strongly parallels with the image of the warrior, who is physically fit, unemotional, resolutely heterosexual, adventurous, a risk-taker, and brave (Woodward, 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hinojosa, 2010). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that few can attain these hyper-masculine, hegemonic ideals, but it represents a hierarchy of masculinities, where all men are positioned in relation to these ideals. Consequently, this dissuades all those who do not find the tough ‘macho’ culture of the military appealing, from joining the military.

Women have traditionally been excluded from combat and combat-related positions, based on biological and social arguments of what it means to be a woman (Dunivin, 1994; Herbert, 1998; Maninger, 2008; Malešević, 2010). Despite the change in legislature regarding women in service, the public perception that the military is not the place for women still prevails, based on existing stereotypes that women are physically and psychologically unsuitable for warfare (Ender *et al.*, 2014). However, this essentialist argument departs from the perspective that gender is something each individual is born with. Social constructionists, on the other hand, argue that gender is merely a taken-for-granted construct that deliberately influences society’s expectations of how ‘men’ and ‘women’ should act, and in this case, what jobs are seen as appropriate for women and for men. Social constructionists do not view gender as static and unchanging, but rather that different roles and responsibilities are prescribed to different gendered constructs in different societies, based on different social practices (Lorber, 1994:55). Gender is therefore ‘learnt’ and internalised based on the effects of socialisation, beginning first in the household, and later reinforced in school and in the work place. The prevailing social expectation that the military is a male institution will impact on the ability of the military to attract and recruit women to non-traditional positions such as combat.

Besides the prevailing belief that the military is a man’s job, a review of the literature indicates that women in male-dominated organisations tend to face challenges that prevent the proper integration and acceptance of women in the military, namely tokenism, performance pressure, social isolation, and role encapsulation (Kanter, 1977; Yoder, 1991; Boldry, Wood, & Kashy, 2001). The problem is that women in the military are evaluated according to different standards based on stereotypical assumptions, and this heightens the pressure on women to continuously perform better (Boldry *et al.*, 2001; Ender *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, Boldry *et al.* (2001) assert that women who do not act in gender-appropriate ways will be isolated further by hostile male personnel who feel the culture of the organisation is under threat. Kanter (1977) argues that the solution to this would be to establish a numerical balance between the dominant group and the token. Yoder (1991) is critical of this perspective, and argues that a greater presence of women in the military will enhance the negative reactions from men, who feel that the masculine military culture is under threat.

Women in the military also face uniquely feminine challenges, or challenges pertaining to their sexuality. The incompatibility of family and military life appears to be more of a challenge for women, where pregnancy and childcare present difficulties for deployability and women in non-administrative positions (Harrall & Miller, 1997). Moreover, women tend to find the harsh environment in deployment more difficult than men, especially in terms of ablutions, personal hygiene and menstruation (Heinecken & Van der Waag-Cowling, 2009). Women in the military also face higher incidence of sexual harassment and are at a higher risk of rape during deployment (Carreiras, 2008). These factors are likely to deter young women from enlisting in the military, or from taking up combat positions in the military.

### **3.5 Status of the profession**

Besides the military job, there are societal forces at play that influence the willingness of millennials to select a military career. According to Cable and Turban (2001), the reputation (status) of an organisation, or how an organisation is perceived by those surrounding the job seeker, influences the attractiveness of an organisation. According to Schaub (2010), the legitimacy of the military profession is derived from the state, service to society and its monopoly over security expertise. Consequently, the changing relationship between the military and each of these sources impacts on the status and prestige of the military profession. Prior to the end of the Cold War, armed forces were seen as central to the power, functioning and survival of nation states, whose primary function was to defend against invasion from other states (Moskos, 2000). However, the post-Cold War era has witnessed a loosening of the ties between nation states and their armed forces that are no longer confronted with major armed threats (Snider & Watkins, 2000). Dandeker (1998:152), argues that post-Cold War armed forces are faced with a 'perplexing scenario': although a national armed threat is no longer imminent, there are new multi-faceted security risks facing society that range from peacekeeping and terrorism to internal security threats. Moreover, these have to be performed in a context of shrinking defence budgets, as state resources are channelled to issues of welfare and social development.

Subsequently, with the growing complexity of military tasks, in an era of technological advancement and globalisation, military functions and missions have increasingly been outsourced to private military companies and civilian contractors. Even combat and combat-related positions, typically exclusive to the military, are now outsourced in certain countries. One reason for this is that private military contractors and companies tend to be more flexible, more cost effective and often have higher standards of training and equipment. Consequently, as Heinecken (2014) argues, this has led to the



erosion of the military profession as security expertise is no longer the sole responsibility of the military. This is due to the loss of control over the military profession, institutional knowledge, chain of command and discipline. Moreover, Snider and Watkins (2000) argue that the loss of autonomy of the military and the blurring of roles and missions has led to a greater competition for both financial and human resources in the military, which has meant that the military has had to emphasise economic incentives to recruit and retain skilled personnel.

For many, these societal influences have affected how people view military service. When military service was considered central to the survival of the state, service motivations were generally considered to be altruistic. Today the purpose of military service is questioned, and many military tasks are now civilianised or outsourced to the private sector, and this has marked a shift in values. Many join the military not for altruistic reasons, but because it offers opportunities of employment, education and social upliftment. For many, the military is just another job. This is not an entirely new phenomenon, as Moskos (1977; 1986) had already mentioned in the seventies that far more people were joining the military for occupational (pay, employment) rather than institutional reasons (altruism, commitment to military service). The problem is that the military is now faced with the ‘just another job’ syndrome (Dandeker, 1998), and that those joining the military are doing so for selfish reasons, rather than selfless service. Wilcox (2001) and Drago (2006) argue that those serving in the military are motivated by self-centred reasons and extrinsic gains, and do not display patriotic or altruistic values as a motivation. Similarly in South Africa, Heinecken (1997a; 1997b; Franke & Heinecken, 2001) found a decline in commitment to selfless service among junior officers. Officers were motivated by job security, benefits, discipline, interest in military weapons, and cohesiveness, but not because they perceived the military to be a calling (Heinecken, 1997a:57).

What is clear from the literature on millennials and the military is that millennials are unlikely to join the military for altruistic reasons, and they do not find the military job ‘offering’ attractive, in terms of pay, service benefits and working conditions. Ender *et al.* (2014) paint an interesting picture of the millennials and their attitudes towards the military: there is a lack of support for national service, and although millennials acknowledge the necessity of a strong, high-quality defence force, they are not interested in serving themselves. There is a ‘the military seems to be doing fine without me’ attitude present among civilian millennials in the US (Ender *et al.*, 2014:64). When considering their career choice, they do not consider the job and educational opportunities (even whilst getting a salary) to be as attractive as university enrolment. The reason is that university education is seen as a more likely path to higher salaries and attractive careers. Influencing this perception is the fact that many of the youth today have little understanding of what the military has to offer in terms of career possibilities.



### 3.6 Civil-military gap

According to Cable and Turban (2001), familiarity and knowledge of an employer or organisation is a key determinant of organisation attractiveness. Moreover, their *Employer Knowledge Framework* argues that employer awareness is fundamental for the development of ideas about the status of an organisation. One of the challenges facing the military, as pointed out by Ender *et al.* (2014), is the growing unfamiliarity and indifference of civilians towards military affairs.

The shift to an all-volunteer force and the end of the Cold War has exemplified the perception in most Western countries that an armed threat is no longer imminent. Consequently, this has led to a distancing of the militaries from their host societies, as the number of civilians with experience of the military decreases (Wood, 1988). According to Dandeker (2000), there has been a decline in the general British population's knowledge of the military and experience of military affairs. This is also true among the political elites. Morgan (2001), Drago (2006) and Hyler (2013) noted a similar pattern in the United States, with increasing apathy towards national security, less attention paid to military affairs, the belief that the military has largely become obsolete or irrelevant, and the lack of knowledge and awareness of the military among adolescents. Furthermore, Kuhlman (1994) asserts that civilian support for the primary function of the military is waning; or rather that little importance is now given to this role in society, and more is given to social development.

Similarly, a growing civil-military gap is present in South Africa, with a decreasing familiarity of the public, especially young people, with the military. The importance of the military task has become increasingly irrelevant in South African affairs, with both civilians and the government displaying high levels of apathy towards matters of defence (Kent & Malan, 2003; Heinecken & Gueli, 2005; Mandrup, 2007). A study conducted by Heinecken and Gueli (2005:130) found that civilian students demonstrated little interest in security issues, with 'a fifth of the students indicating little or no interest in military service'. A more recent study of youth in the Western Cape by Smith and Heinecken (2014) produced similar findings, where few participants possessed knowledge of the military.

The growing distance between the military and the society it serves is referred to as a civil-military gap. In 1997, Secretary of Defence William Cohen raised the possibility of 'a chasm...developing between the military and civilian worlds' (Feaver, Kohn, & Cohn, 2001:1). Thomas Ricks's *Widening Gap between the Military and Society* (1997) sparked debate regarding the presence of a growing civil-military gap in American society. In 1998, Holsti (1998) asserted that the military had grown out of step with the mainstream ideology of civilians. The presence of a civil-military gap indicates

a divergence between the mainstream attitudes and values of civilians and those of the military and the concern is that, if this gap becomes too wide, it could threaten the effectiveness of the armed forces. The debate regarding the ‘gap’ dates back to the two theoretical arguments of Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz. Huntington (1957) proposed that an ideological divide between the military and society was necessary, and that civilian elites should tolerate the conservative values of the military in order for the military to operate effectively. Janowitz (1960), on the other hand, argued that military culture must adapt to changes in civilian society, otherwise the military ‘would become unresponsive to civilian control and civilians would therefore stop providing the support needed to maintain an adequate or effective military posture’ (Feaver, Kohn, & Cohn, 2001:3).

To allow for more conceptual clarity of the ‘gap’, Rahbek-Clemmensen, Archer, Barr, Belkin, Guerrero and Hall (2012) identified four variants of the gap, namely a cultural, demographic, policy preference and institutional gap. Firstly, the cultural gap refers to whether the values and attitudes of civilians and the military differ. As already discussed in this chapter, a divergence between military and civilian values is evident. The second type of gap, demographic, refers to whether there is a difference in the socio-economic makeup of the military and broader society. According to Rahbek-Clemmensen *et al.* (2012:672), ‘the armed forces seem less able to mirror the demographic composition of civilian society than as the case in previous eras when a draft was in effect’. The third variant pertains to policy preference and the gap between military and civilian elites who tend to disagree on public policy issues (Rahbek-Clemmensen *et al.*, 2012). According to Gronke and Feaver (2001), although an ‘unbridgeable’ gap is not currently a concern, civilian and military elites tend to diverge on the importance placed on the deployment of the military. Lastly, an institutional gap ‘concerns whether the relationship between the military and civilian institutions, such as the media, the courts, and the education system, can be characterised in terms of harmony or conflict’ (Rahbek-Clemmensen *et al.*, 2012:673).

Consequently, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the military in society, and this is attributed to the lack of exposure of young people to military affairs. Hence, this lack of familiarity among youth indicates that less and less perceive the military career as attractive. Millennials, being the techno-savvy generation that they are, are exposed to the military through mass media (Hollywood movies) and social media (Twitter and Facebook). According to Wiegand and Paletz (2001), the media is an important tool for the military because it plays a critical link between public opinion, civilian elites and the military, and has the ability to shape public perceptions. However, media coverage on the military is often questionable, as it is largely uncritical and uniformed (Caforio, 2007; Thompson, 2011). Moreover, popular culture tends to only focus on one aspect of the military job, for instance

warfare, and often presents military personnel as masculine, unstable, aggressive and violent (Ender *et al.*, 2014:81). Although this may be attractive to some, Hyler (2013) argues that millennials are risk-averse and anti-war, and this deters many from perceiving the military as an employer of choice.

Another consequence of the civil-military gap is that the military is becoming a family business, because of a greater exposure to military life in these families. According to Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) and Bright *et al.* (2005), individuals often make career choices based on the perceptions and opinions of their family, friends, school teachers and the media. Ender *et al.* (2014) found that the majority of millennials in the military would be happy if their children joined the military, whereas civilian millennials clearly indicated that they would not be supportive of this, confirming the statement that the military is a family business. However, this is problematic for recruitment, as the pool of those who are aware of and interested in the military is declining.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Based on this discussion, it is evident that a number of institutional and societal factors can influence the willingness of millennials to join the military. Firstly, the nature of the military job and institution requires that members be subservient to the needs of the military, and to operate in rigid, scheduled, and formally-administered environments that afford little recognition to the role played by the individual. Moreover, the military job is often dangerous and requires frequent periods away from the family. This is a deterrent to millennials, who are highly ambitious, individualistic and confident in their abilities, and who seek flexible work environments and close proximity to the family. If these values are present among South African millennials, the SANDF is unlikely to be an employer of choice.

Secondly, the culture of the military stresses the importance of obedience, discipline, loyalty, cohesion, selflessness and masculinity. Millennials, on the other hand, display little regard for organisational commitment, the collective, and authoritative organisations. The military will continue to face difficulties with recruitment and retention if these core values are emphasised in South Africa. However, as Ender *et al.* (2014) noted, millennials are in favour of the right kind of leadership and authority and this will need to be considered to recruit and retain these youngsters.

In terms of the theories of career choice, *Careership* theory and the *Employer Knowledge Framework* in particular emphasise that career choice is not merely an individual preference, but is the result of the interaction of various social forces with the individual. It is evident that the perceptions of those around the individual have a significant influence on the careers they deem (un)attractive. For

example, the continuation of the belief that the military is only a place for those who embody hegemonic masculine qualities such as strength, bravery and aggression will continue to deter and alienate both men and women who do not meet these requirements, from military service.

The status of the military profession is also a clear deterrent to young millennials who do not recognise national service as important. However, this belief is largely informed by a lack of awareness and understanding of the military job among young people, who are very much influenced by what they see and hear in the media and at home. Thus, in order for the military to become an employer of choice, it needs to become more active in the civilian sphere and in the media. Millennials need to be made aware of the current missions that the military is engaged in, the importance of recruiting suitable young candidates, and the various opportunities that are available for them.

## CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

In the first section of this chapter, the method of data collection, sampling and analysis process are outlined. In the second section, I reflect on my methodological choices, challenges incurred whilst doing this research, as well as my own position as a researcher.

### 4.2 Research Strategy

Most of the literature on the perceptions and attitudes of youth towards work and careers has emerged in quantitative studies, where work values and perceptions have been counted and quantified to reflect the change in values over time. Although I acknowledge that there is some merit in exploring a large sample of youth in order to establish generalisable results, this is not suitable for the objectives outlined in this study. As there is almost no existing literature on the work values of the South African ‘born-free’ generation, or their attitudes towards military service, an exploratory approach was considered more appropriate. Presently, there is no single theory that explains the willingness of young people to embark on a military career. Therefore, although there is a large body of literature on the factors influencing military recruitment in the West, no such research has been conducted in South Africa. Although informed by the literature, this study adopted an exploratory, inductive approach and was not shaped by the theory, but the responses of the participants. The theory previously discussed was later used as a means to explain and conceptualise why the youth felt the way they did about the military.

Moreover, considerations have been given to the impact of the shift to an all-volunteer force in the USA since the 1970s, where youth attitudinal surveys have been conducted annually to measure this change (Bachman *et al.*, 1998; 2000; Wilcox, 2001; Warner *et al.*, 2003; Ender *et al.*, 2014). This has not been the case for South Africa, where no such quantitative or qualitative data exists. Little deliberation has been given to the impact of the shift to a voluntary force in 1994 in South Africa, as well as what impact complete social, political and economic reorganisation would have on the values of South African youth.

Furthermore, most of these youth attitudinal studies have been derived from a psychological perspective that focuses on individual perceptions and choice. This study has taken a more sociological perspective of work values in South Africa, taking cognisance of how social, cultural, political, economic and generational factors impact on the attitudes and perceptions of young South Africans. Bryman (2008) posits that a research strategy is not simply the choice between a

quantitative or qualitative research approach, or the decision to combine approaches, but is informed by the orientation one takes to research. A research strategy is thus informed by the epistemological and ontological stance that the researcher departs from.

This research is influenced by a social constructionist worldview, wherein the emphasis is placed on how individuals themselves interpret and understand the world in which they live. The constructionist paradigm ‘emphasises the importance of context, [of culture], of complexity, of examining situations in which many factors interact’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2012:19). Moreover, it acknowledges that individuals and their social reality cannot be understood as separate entities, but rather as entities that interact and influence one another (Bryman, 2008). Social constructionism, and an inductive approach to research, are aligned with a qualitative research strategy that has been the methodological approach to this research. Consequently, I argue that a more deductive, quantitative research strategy would not solicit the desired, in-depth data necessary to explore the work values of a new generation of South Africans, and their attitudes towards military service. Moreover, a questionnaire or survey-based study would require existing knowledge on work values and attitudes to military service, which does not exist at present. The findings of this study may, in fact, provide the baseline for the design of a National Youth Attitudinal survey, to assess the values and perceptions of the ‘born-free’ generation and their attitudes towards work and more specifically, military service.

One of the main criticisms of qualitative research is that the scope and generalisability of the findings is often restricted (Johnson, 1997; Flick, 2007; Bryman, 2008). This is attributed to the smaller size of the sample, and to the limited ability to generalise findings to a broader population. According to Johnson (1997), some qualitative researchers are of the belief that terms such as ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ should be abandoned in qualitative research, as they are incompatible with its ontological and epistemological considerations. However, the general belief is that ‘validity’ should be used to determine the difference between good and bad qualitative research. Good qualitative research should be ‘plausible, credible, trustworthy and, therefore, defensible’ (Johnson, 1997:282).

Although many qualitative researchers dispute the need to establish external validity and generalisability, there are existing methods to ensure this. Triangulation of methods has become a popular means in qualitative research to produce greater validity (Flick, 2007). In the case of this research, I triangulated different samples of participants in order to confirm the validity of my findings. Johnson (1997) refers to this as replication logic:

‘According to replication logic, the more times a research finding is shown to be true with different sets of people, the more confidence we can place in the findings and in the conclusion that the finding generalised beyond the people in the original research study’ (Johnson, 1997:290).

In the case of this research, three different samples were taken into consideration in determining how the youth view military service, namely the perceptions of high school learners before completing secondary school, the perceptions and experiences of MSDS members after their first year in the military, and the perceptions of recruitment officers. As the high school learners were selected from schools only in the Western Cape, it is difficult to make inferences regarding young people in other provinces of South Africa. Although this could be compared to or substantiated by the views of the MSDS members at the Infantry school who have come from all parts of South Africa, and can be classified as the same generational cohort as the high school learners. The military officers have also interviewed recruits throughout South Africa, and were asked to comment on national differences in recruitment to determine whether the views of learners in the Western Cape differ from the rest of the country.

#### ***4.2.1 Method of data collection***

To explore the different attitudes and perceptions of the youth participating in this study, focus groups were conducted with learners, as well as MSDS recruits. Although a number of definitions are available, broadly speaking, focus groups are ‘carefully designed [group discussions] to obtain perceptions on a defined environment or an informal discussion among selected individuals about specific topics’ (Smithson, 2008:358). The emphasis of the focus group lies in the distinguishing factor of group interaction. It is a tool to elicit in-depth discussions on the attitudes and perceptions of a group of participants, acknowledging the importance of how interaction influences those perceptions (Gibson, 2007).

The focus group method is increasingly regarded as a useful and preferred method to researching children and young people (Liamputtong, 2011). Although initially this was largely in the line of sex research, health and education, particularly with adult participants (Kitzinger, 1995), focus groups have become a popular method for conducting research with children and young people (Daley, 2013). One of the benefits of a focus group is that it tends to create an environment wherein young people feel comfortable to talk about their attitudes and experiences. Unlike one-on-one interviews, focus groups provide support and assurance through the presence of peers or friends. This shifts the focus from the individual participant to the group, and allows the participants the opportunity to build their ideas from talking to and listening with one another, without feeling pressured to respond in a



certain way, at a certain point in time. According to Punch (2002:48), ‘the group environment [is] seen by young people as valuable for them to generate confidence with other group members and to explore topics more broadly’. Moreover, the young people in Punch’s research indicated that they preferred talking with each other in an informal manner, compared to an interview structure with only a researcher. For these reasons, focus groups are the preferred method when compared to individual interviews.

Secondly, as the focus of this research is not on individual experiences, but rather on how young people as a group construct work and the importance they attribute to it, focus groups are more befitting to this research than individual interviews or a survey-based questionnaire. According to Bagnoli and Clark (2010), when doing focus groups, the importance is on how, through the interaction of group members, key ideas are formulated and developed. A focus group is not merely the sum of individual responses that could have been elicited in one-on-one interviews. Moreover, focus groups allow individuals to explore and clarify their own ideas and perceptions through group discussion, thus eliciting ideas that may not have emerged in a one-on-one interview. The emphasis of the focus group is on how participants negotiate their ideas, concepts and perceptions, and how this can present the reader with an insight into the context that influences their behaviours (Morgan, 1996; Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). Bagnoli and Clark (2010:104) argue that the power dynamics between the researcher and the participant is disrupted, as precedence is given to the voices and ideas of the participants, and not that of the researcher, which is often the case with more structured interviewing. In this way, the participants construct what is important, rather than the researcher.

There are a number of advantages to the focus group method. Firstly, focus groups are a useful tool when orientating oneself to a new field (Barbour, 2007; Liamputtong, 2011; Sagoe, 2012). Focus groups are usually used in exploratory research, or as a preliminary method prior to questionnaires and surveys. As there is little existing literature on the attitudes and perceptions of young South Africans, it was necessary to explore this through a more exploratory research method, such as focus groups. Focus groups also allow for a concentrated and diverse set of interactions to be collected in a relatively short space in time (Morgan, 1996; Liamputtong, 2011). Particularly in exploratory studies, focus groups prioritise the voices of the participants, and thus allow for new ideas to emerge, which the researcher may not have envisaged. The focus group discussion also highlights differences and similarities between participants that can be further explored by the researcher.

One limitation to the focus group method is that the ‘articulation of group norms may silence individual voice of dissent [or assent]’ (Kitzinger, 1995:230; Smithson, 2000). Group dynamics can



contribute to group participation. However, it can also hinder the research process, especially when individual opinions that differ from the rest of group are not observed or discussed. On the other hand, the presence of participants who dominate the discussion, or tend to talk over other participants, can also influence the willingness of participants to state their views. In this event, the researcher needs to ensure that dominant participants are mediated. Using focus groups, one also runs the risk that participants are unwilling to take part in the discussion, or rather that the group dynamic does not encourage discussion. However, according to Liamputtong (2011), it is the onus of the researcher or focus group moderator to facilitate and encourage discussion among the members. Liamputtong (2011) suggests that when doing research with young people, certain activities can be used to encourage participation, for example using videos, or playing games, or bringing along sweets and snacks. Lastly, the presence of other research participants can influence opinions and the confidentiality of the discussion (Kitzinger, 1995; Smithson, 2000). This is often an issue when discussing sensitive topics, and participants are concerned about what the other participants may say, or that the information could be disseminated to others outside of the discussion.

Although focus groups was a preferred method to elicit the views of the young people in this study – in both schools and for the MSDS recruits – this method was not suitable for the engagements with the military officers. A semi-structured interview was the chosen method to elicit the views and opinions of two military officers. The emphasis on the qualitative, or semi-structured interview is on how the ‘interviewee frames and understands issues and events - that is what the interviewee views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns and forms of behaviour’ (Bryman, 2008:438). This research required a more open, interactive interview approach, in order to explore the issues surrounding military recruitment, and to ensure that the participants had more control in determining what was important for discussion. This is particularly important considering that recruitment policies and procedures are not available for public access, and thus little is known about the acquisition of new members to the military.

#### ***4.2.2 Selecting the participants***

Firstly, I decided to select a sample of young people from different high schools in the Western Cape. Using high schools as a research site was the easiest way to get groups of young people together (at a given time and place) for a discussion. Additionally, as the school curriculum involves some form of career planning towards the end of secondary schooling, it is safe to assume that the participants attending these schools had given some consideration as to what they would like to do when they leave school.

Secondly, this research took place in two phases. The first phase focused on learners in so-called ‘advantaged’ schools, who were majority white and coloured, and research was conducted in July, 2012. These findings were reported in my Honours research project. The rationale behind selecting advantaged schools with the above-mentioned demographics is that these are the learners that the SANDF is battling to recruit, both in terms of the calibre of recruit, and in terms of demographic representation. Certain criteria were identified to select the various schools for this research: schools had to be state-owned (public high schools) with a 100% matriculate pass rate, and not in the vicinity of the military or a university in the Western Cape. The reason for this was that these two institutions could have an influence on career choice, given the pupils exposure either to military personnel or university students.

The ‘Report on the 2011 National Senior Certificate Examination’ from the Department of Education was accessed, in order to acquire the list of schools in the Western Cape with a 100% pass rate in Grade 12. All schools in the vicinity of a university and military base were eliminated, as well as schools ranging from quintile 1 to 4.<sup>4</sup> Following this, only schools within a 60km radius of Stellenbosch were selected as part of the sample, as schools located outside of this area were not logistically accessible at the time research. The schools’ contact details and locations were accessed on the Western Cape Education Department online database. From this selection process, a total of 12 schools were selected, but only eight agreed to participate. The four schools that declined to participate were either unwilling, or felt that the study did not meet the needs of the curriculum. This did not influence the profile of the sample selected. Table 2 displays the details of the selected schools, in terms of geographical location, the most recent matric pass rate, and the annual school fees per learner.

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<sup>4</sup> All public schools in South Africa are appointed a quintile rating from 1 to 5. The rating is given on the basis of the availability of school resources. I used this to distinguish whether schools were advantaged or disadvantaged.

**TABLE 2: PROFILE OF FOCUS GROUPS IN ADVANTAGED HIGH SCHOOLS (JULY-SEPTEMBER 2012)**

School	Location	Group No	Participants	Pass Rate*	School Fees
Bloubergrand Secondary	Metro North	1	26	97,6%	R 11, 000.00
		2	18		
Camps Bay High School	Metro Central	1	21	98,0%	R 26, 500.00
		2	27		
		3	21		
Durbanville Hoër Skool	Metro North	1	19	100%	R 17, 800.00
		2	33		
Milnerton High School	Metro North	1	26	100%	R 14, 202.00
		2	28		
		3	13		
Rustenburg Girls High	Metro Central	1	26	100%	R 31, 500.00
		2	29		
Stellenberg High School	Metro North	1	36	100%	R 17, 640.00
		2	28		
Tableview High School	Metro North	1	25	100%	R 13, 000.00
		2	19		
Windsor High School	Metro Central	1	36	94,8%	R 5 100, 00

\* Pass rate of 2011, as data collection was conducted in 2012

In order to select participants for the focus groups, a combination of convenience and purposive sampling was used. Teddie and Yu (2007:77) define purposive sampling as the selection of ‘units (e.g. individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research question’. For example, the selection of certain participants according to set criteria, to ensure a sample is representative of a set population. Convenience sampling is a means by which a sample is selected, that is both accessible and willing to participate in the study (Teddie & Yu, 2007:78). Thus, because of accessibility, the participating schools identified the various learners that could participate in this study according to set criteria that I provided them with. To achieve this, it was necessary to liaise first with the school principals and then with an assigned teacher from each high school who was responsible for selecting the learners, and arranging the times and facilities for the focus groups. In terms of the criteria, the learners had to be in Grade 11 or Grade 12, have Mathematics and Science as subjects, and be representative of race and gender. The school principals had the onus of informing the parents of the research and the distribution of the informed consent forms, allowing for the swift initiation of the data collection. At least two focus group discussions

were conducted in each high school, with a total of 17 focus groups between July and September 2011.

The second phase of this research focused on learners from ‘disadvantaged’ high schools so as to explore whether socio-economic status influenced work values and attitudes towards the military. Similar selection criteria was used to identify a list of disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape, however the one significant difference being the status of these schools. Instead of selecting schools rated as a Quintile 5,<sup>5</sup> only schools that were classified as a 1, 2 or 3 rating were considered. In these schools, learners do not pay school fees, and there is limited access to resources like computers, textbooks, classrooms, desks and chairs. These schools are typically ‘previously disadvantaged’ schools as well. Once again, the Western Cape Education Department online database was accessed to draw up a list of schools that meet the above criteria. Consequently, none of the schools with a quintile rating of 1, 2, or 3 had a 100% pass rate in the past three consecutive years (2010-2012) thus the schools with highest pass rates during this period were selected.<sup>6</sup>

**TABLE 3: PROFILE OF FOCUS GROUPS IN DISADVANTAGED HIGH SCHOOLS (JULY TO SEP 2013)**

School	Location	Group No.	Participants	Pass Rate*	School Fees
New Orleans	Cape Winelands	1	18	86,3%	R 0.00
		2	16		
Matthew Goniwe	Metro East	1	14	84,2%	R 0.00
		2	12		R 0.00
Sinethemba	Metro South	1	19	86,1%	R 0.00
Paulus Joubert	Cape Winelands	1	10	81,0%	R 0.00
		2	10		
Bloekombos	Metro North	1	14	83,9%	R 0.00
Noorder Paarl	Cape Winelands	1	14		R 0.00
		2	11	82,6%	

\*Pass rates of 2012, as data collection was conducted in 2013

To gain access to the disadvantaged schools presented certain difficulties that did not emerge in the previous study. Firstly, as many of these schools were located in informal settlements, it was

<sup>5</sup> A Quintile 5 rating is associated with advantaged, Model C primary and secondary state-owned schools.

<sup>6</sup> None of the schools selected had a 100% pass rate in the last three years – this could be attributed to a lack of resources, and other socio-economic and historical consequences that put a strain on the achievement levels of the learners.

necessary for me to have a colleague accompany me to these schools for safety concerns. Because of this, it was necessary to work around both my and my colleague's schedules, as well as the schools'. After many unanswered phone calls and e-mails, I decided the best way to gain access would be to go directly to the schools. After meeting with school principals, the next hurdle was the selection of the learners, and the co-ordinating of relevant times for the discussions. Often a liaison teacher was appointed, but never informed of the briefing that was had with the principals. Often the research process had to be re-explained to the teachers before being able to proceed with data collection. For this reason, only six disadvantaged high schools participated in this phase of the study. Although repeated attempts were made, it was not possible to gain access to other high schools that met the mentioned criteria. However in both phases of the research, saturation point was reached in terms of the responses of the learners, and it was felt that there was no need to obtain more schools to participate.

As with the first study, both a purposive and convenience sampling strategy was used to select the participants for the focus groups. A total of ten focus groups were conducted with a representative sample of learners, who were either in Grade 11 or 12, and had Mathematics and Science as subjects. The school principals agreed to notify the parents of the research. Although, the majority emphasised that the likelihood of consent forms being returned by parents would be slim. Waiting for the school principals to receive consent from the parents therefore slowed down the research process. Once consent was granted, the second phase of the research was conducted between July and September 2013.

In both the advantaged and disadvantaged high schools, the focus groups were conducted during school hours in an office, classroom, or library. The size of the focus groups in the advantaged school ranged between 13 and 36 learners and the difficulties surrounding such large group sizes was reflected upon in my Honours report. Nonetheless, due to restrictions imposed by the selected high schools, it was not possible to select smaller focus groups. However, in the second phase of the research, these difficulties were explained to the school principals during the briefing and the majority agreed that smaller groups would be more beneficial to the research. Hence, with the learners from the disadvantaged schools, the average size of the focus group was between 10 and 15 participants, with one focus group of 21.<sup>7</sup> Each discussion, in both samples of schools, lasted approximately an hour to an hour and a half, and all interviews were conducted in either English or Afrikaans,

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<sup>7</sup> This school was unable to provide a smaller group, as they did not have another teacher to facilitate the learners not selected for the discussion. For this reason, the focus group had to be conducted with the entire class of learners.

depending on the preference of the participants. In the disadvantaged schools, half of the participants had isiXhosa as their home-language, but could all speak English well enough to enable the researcher, myself, to establish rapport with the learners.

In terms of the profile of the focus groups, for both the advantaged and disadvantaged high schools, the focus groups were heterogeneous in terms of gender and race. As reflected in Table 4, the ratio of female to male learners was slightly higher with more females in all three of the samples, namely focus groups in the advantaged schools and disadvantaged schools. The reason for including both males and females in the focus groups with the learners was to establish whether gender emerged as an influencer on career choice, and how this was constructed among male and female participants.

Although it was originally stated that the focus groups should be representative in terms of race, but because of the category of schools selected are influenced by the education policies of the apartheid government, this was not easily achievable. For this reason, white and coloured learners were over-represented in the advantaged schools, with no white learners in the disadvantaged schools, whereas the learners in the disadvantaged schools were only black or coloured. The racial representation in the disadvantaged schools was also influenced by area and language. For example, in the Afrikaans-medium schools, the learners were predominately coloured, whereas in the English-medium schools, the learners were predominately black. Although the entire sample of learners is largely representative of the different racial categories in South Africa, this study takes cognisance of the racial profile of the Western Cape, and that this correlates with language and socio-economic status.

**TABLE 4: RACE AND GENDER PROFILE OF HIGH SCHOOL AND MSDS FOCUS GROUPS**

Site of Research	Total groups	Race				Gender	
		B	W	C	I	Male	Female
Advantaged Schools	17	10%	55%	35%	-	44%	56%
Disadvantaged schools	10	53%	47%	-	-	44%	56%
Infantry School	6	76%	21%	3%	-	45%	55%

In order to triangulate the views of the South African youth towards work and the military, focus group discussions were also conducted with youth already in the military. The participants were selected from the Military Skills Development System (MSDS), which recruits young people from across South Africa for a two-year period of military service and creates a pool of candidates from

which the military can select suitable members for permanent positions within the ranks. The Infantry School in Oudtshoorn was selected as the research site because it is the largest recruiter of young people for the military, and as the combat corps, lies at the heart of the Army. All Army and Navy MSDS members complete their Basic Military Training (or a portion of their training) at the Infantry school. The participants were selected by an officer responsible for MSDS training, with the instruction that the sample must be representative of rank, race and gender. These focus groups were conducted in October 2013, when the participants had just completed their Basic Military Training (BMT) before shortly moving on to their chosen services.

As the focus groups with high school groups are limited to the perceptions of learners in the Western Cape, the focus groups with the MSDS members ensure the sample of youth is more representative of South Africa. Members at SA Infantry School come from all parts of South Africa, and interviewing these members provided the opportunity to assess whether attitudes to military work differed by region. Furthermore, comparisons can be drawn between young people's perceptions of work in the military (from high school learners and MSDS members) and the actual experiences thereof (according to the MSDS members).

Finally, the views of the youth were triangulated with the views of two recruitment officers from the military, to establish how the military perceives the youth's perceptions of the military. One semi-structured interview was conducted with two officers from the Army: a Colonel who coordinates the recruitment process, and a Major who is responsible for the actual recruitment. The Major travels throughout the country and is responsible for the career officers who select the recruits after they have passed the initial paper selection, based on their Grade 12 results. This interview was conducted by my supervisor, Prof. Lindy Heineken, who has an established relationship with the Army and was originally commissioned by the SANDF to investigate matters regarding the military and the South African society, from which this study emerged.

#### ***4.2.3 Data Collection***

As already noted, data was collected using two methods: focus groups and a semi-structured interview. As already mentioned, this research began with the focus groups with learners from advantaged schools in 2012, followed by the focus groups with the learners in the disadvantaged schools in 2013. Prior to the data collection process, key themes for the discussions were identified based on a review of international literature. I then conducted two pilot focus groups under the guidance of my supervisor, to test whether these questions allowed for a conversation to develop. Consistent with an inductive approach, I allowed the participants to guide the conversation, while I

ensured that we did not veer too far from the topic. Based on the initial pilot, I restructured my discussion framework and probes for the rest of the focus groups. For example, factors of gender and race emerged quite predominately in the discussions with the high school learners, without me mentioning this. For this reason, I introduced this to the overarching discussion guide although most of the time the learners raised these as discussion points without my mentioning it. The main topics I sought to explore were broad in scope to allow room for discussion, but without being descriptive or shaped by the theories on career choice. These included questions such as:<sup>8</sup>

- When thinking about your future career, what work would you like to do?
- What are you looking for in your job? What are your career motivations?
- Have you ever considered serving in the military?
- What are your impressions of the South African military?
- Where do you get your information from about the military?

According to Henicker (cited in Liamputtong, 2011:3), the success of a focus group is dependent on the ability of the researcher to create a comfortable, permissive and non-threatening environment where the participants feel free to express their ideas. All of focus groups with the high school learners were conducted in a classroom-setting, on school premises, without the supervision of a teacher. This contributed to a more relaxed environment amongst the learners. According to Krueger (cited in Gibson, 2007:477) factors such as location, room size, seating arrangements and atmosphere can influence the involvement of the young participants. I also requested of each focus group to sit in a circle, either on desks or chairs, for all the members to sit around comfortably. All other desks, school bags and stationary were left to the side. I addressed the learners in an informal manner, and began all the discussions with light conversations about school and the research. As seen, the questions were very broad and simple, and most learners could comment on any one of the issues mentioned. I continuously tried to minimise the distance between them and myself by relating to the ideas they introduced and by encouraging them to talk freely in this space.

The length of the focus groups ranged from forty minutes to one and a half hours depending on the dynamics of the focus group. This permitted me enough time to cover all my topics. I think that, had the discussions been any longer, I would have lost the attention of the learners. The discussions were digitally recorded with the permission of the learners. I also remained after every discussion to answer any questions that the learners had. Seeing as most of them were considering their university

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<sup>8</sup> Please refer to addendum for the discussion guides and interview schedules used in this study.



applications, I was asked about my experiences as a student, and how I had come to my post-graduate studies. I made notes of these additional conversations, as well as the dynamics of each discussion, to be considered when analysing my findings. These focus groups were then transcribed into the language spoken in each discussion, either English or Afrikaans. In the focus groups with predominately black learners, because isiXhosa was their home language they often struggled to express themselves in English. For this reason, some of the learners resorted to saying something in isiXhosa in order to express themselves properly. I then had a colleague, who is fluent in isiXhosa, translate these extracts to English for me.

I wish to make a note regarding the number of focus groups conducted in the advantaged schools compared to the disadvantaged schools. Although seventeen focus groups were conducted in 2012 and only ten in 2013, I found that with each focus group I became more equipped at establishing depth and richness of the discussion. For this reason, once I had conducted ten focus groups in the disadvantaged schools, I felt that I had accumulated more than enough data to proceed with my study. Furthermore, the richness of the focus groups could also be attributed to smaller group sizes in the sample drawn from the disadvantaged schools. The focus groups in the advantaged schools were much larger than recommended, but this is because of restrictions imposed by the high schools. The school would not allow smaller groups to be conducted on school-time, thus discussions were conducted with entire class groups. I noted these difficulties and in this more-recent study, I explained the limitations to the school teachers who were willing to select smaller group sizes.

In the focus groups with the MSDS members, I sought to explore the perceptions and attitudes of the youth already in the military, towards work and the military job, but also how they have experienced working in the military. As already mentioned, this research was conducted by a team of researchers: myself, an honours student at Stellenbosch University and our supervisor, Prof Lindy Heineken. Prior to the focus groups, my colleagues and I discussed the objectives of the research and drew up a framework of key themes that we wished to address in these focus groups. As my research forms part of a broader study on the military and society, each member of the team had certain areas of focus that they wished to cover with the MSDS members. Within the focus group discussions, my focus centred around two broad questions:

- What motivated you to join the military?
- What is your experience of military work and life?

The decision was made that each member of the team would conduct two focus groups that were conducted over a two-day period at Oudtshoorn Infantry School. The focus groups were conducted in offices on base, but only the researchers and the members were allowed to be present for the discussions. This ensured that the participants could speak freely about their experiences. Moreover, all researchers were civilians, and this – we believe – had a positive effect on the willingness of the participants to share their experiences. Some participants even indicated how much they enjoyed sharing their stories with someone who is not in uniform, a ‘civvie’, as they referred to us. This also had a positive impact on the power relations within the focus groups; as my team and I were not military officers, we were not acknowledged as being in a position of power, and this contributed to the willingness of the participants to engage in the discussions.

Unlike the focus groups with the high school learners, the research team decided that the focus groups with the MSDS members should be homogenous in terms of gender. A total of six focus groups were conducted, with three female focus groups and three male focus groups. The decision to divide the groups according to gender was to explore whether different ideas emerged regarding women in the armed forces. There were on average five participants in each focus group, and the discussions lasted for approximately one hour. As the participants were all selected by a military officer, they were given the opportunity to decide whether they wanted to participate and were informed that if they chose not to, this would incur no consequence on their behalf. All, but one participant, were happy to take part in the discussions. All focus groups were digitally recorded, as agreed to by the participants. All focus groups were conducted in English or Afrikaans, based on the preference of the participants and were transcribed and translated in English.

Lastly, the decision to interview military officers was attributed to the fact that these officers have a good general overview of youth recruitment beyond the Western Cape, as they recruit from all over South Africa. Their experiences could thus be compared with those of the learners interviewed in the Western Cape, in order to establish whether the results could be generalised. This interview was conducted at the Army headquarters in Pretoria in August, 2014 by my supervisor, based on a set of agreed-upon questions.<sup>9</sup> These officers were asked to explain how the recruitment process works, what they think influences the youth to enlist in the military, what they thought the youth were looking for in their careers, what youth know about the military when they sit the selection process, and

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<sup>9</sup> The reason for this is due to the difficulties with a civilian gaining access to Army Headquarters, and the time it would have taken to obtain approval. However, Prof. Lindy Heineken (my supervisor) already had approval for this study from the Chief of the Army, and the decision was made for her to conduct the interviews. However, the questions were agreed upon, and I personally transcribed the interview.

finally, what they thought attracts or deters the youth from enlisting. This interview was digitally recorded and transcribed by myself.

#### **4.2.4 Data analysis**

Firstly, for the purpose of this thesis, the findings from the focus groups in both the advantaged and disadvantaged high schools are included in the discussion in order to have a sample that is broadly reflective of the demographics of South Africa in terms of race, gender and class. Thus, the main data of this study includes the transcripts from the focus groups with high school learners, the focus groups with MSDS members, and the semi-structured interview conducted with two military officers. As already noted, all of these discussions were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data in this study. Thematic analysis is ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns [themes] within data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006:81). Patterns, otherwise referred to as themes, are information pertaining to the research question and represent responses in the data set. In this research, themes were identified across the entire data set, and not merely in the single responses in each focus group. As an inductive approach was adopted in this study, the themes emerged from the data itself. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise that researchers are not free of their theoretical backgrounds. Themes ‘reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them’, and thus researchers may identify and select different themes of interest and report on them equally differently (Braun & Clarke, 2006:10). As such, the interpretation of the data was shaped by the literature and theoretical constructs pertaining to the youth, career choice, and military recruitment.

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend three phases to ensure systematic and rich analysis of research data. In the first phase, it is necessary to familiarise yourself with your data. As I collected most of my data myself, I was already aware of the patterns that began to emerge in the discussions. However, with regards to the research conducted in the Army as a part of a research team,<sup>10</sup> I took the time to familiarise myself with those recordings and transcriptions. The second phase entails the initial generation of codes. I made use of line-by-line coding, where I attached labels or initial codes to each sentence or phrase (inductive data-driven). Once all the focus group discussions and interviews were coded, I then sorted and grouped the codes into broader codes that brought led to the third phase: sorting the different codes into potential themes. The themes were selected from the patterns that emerged when the individual codes were grouped and overarching ideas emerged. From this I was

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<sup>10</sup> I transcribed half of the focus group discussions, and a member of my research team did the other half.

able to refine my themes (and rename them, if necessary) and consider the relationship between the themes, sub-themes and codes.

### **4.3 Ethical considerations**

In order to proceed with this research, institutional permission needed to be obtained from the Western Cape Education Department, Stellenbosch University Ethics Committee, and the Chief of the Army. The WCED provided permission, with the stipulation that parents and the school give consent. Meetings were arranged with the principals of each of the high schools in order to communicate the purpose of the study, the objectives thereof, and what I would require from the school and its pupils. In order to maximise the time available for data collection, parental consent forms were sent to the relevant school principals, who then made contact with the parents of the selected participants. Once all the parents granted consent, a time was allocated to conduct the focus groups. A learner assent<sup>11</sup> form was drafted, and was explained in detail to the participants at the beginning of each focus group. The participants were then given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research process, and it emphasised that the participants could choose whether they would like to participate in the research, and were welcome to leave the discussion at any point in time, without any consequence to themselves or their peers. The participants were notified of my intention to record the discussions, and permission was granted by all. Time was also allocated after every focus group discussion to answer any questions that may have emerged during the focus group, and to converse with the participants about any other comments or concerns they may have had.

Authorisation to conduct research in the Army was granted by the Chief of the Army and the General Officer Commanding of Infantry Formation. Written informed consent forms were drafted and explained to the participants at the beginning of the focus groups and the interview. This included the details of the three researchers, if any of the participants wished to follow up on any aspect of the research. The research process was explained to the participants, and they were given an opportunity to ask questions before signing the consent forms. All participants were assured that the discussions were confidential, and that only myself and the other two researchers had access to the recordings.<sup>12</sup>

### **4.4 Limitations and reflections of methodology**

Reflecting on the data collection process, it is evident that structured questionnaires or interview schedules would not have been as effective in gaining insight into how young people think about

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<sup>11</sup> Please refer to addendum for copies of the Parental Consent form and the Learner Assent form.

<sup>12</sup> Military personnel were not permitted to attend the discussions and will not have access to the recordings; however, they will be provided with feedback regarding the outcomes of the research.

work, especially seeing as this is a relatively unexplored area in South Africa. Nonetheless, it is still necessary to reflect on the difficulties experienced in conducting the focus groups. The main challenges experienced during the research process were attributed to gaining entry into the selected sites, and the scheduling of data collection. With regards to the focus groups in the high schools, although ethical clearance from the Department of Education was granted early on in the research process, setting up appointments with the relevant schools and gaining access to conduct research, was a lengthy process. This I would attribute to problems with communication, access to resources, and the fact that each school operates according to their own time-frame.

With the advantaged high schools, I would communicate directly with the liaison teacher and principal via e-mail. This saved me having to negotiate available times. However, this was not the case when dealing with the more disadvantaged schools. I had to resort to leaving messages with the school secretaries and waiting for the schools to make contact. However, once I had been granted permission to conduct research in the schools, I found that the disadvantaged schools were more lenient with time taken up for research compared to the advantaged schools. The advantaged schools were very restrictive of the times that I could conduct research, and the amount of time I was permitted for each discussion. On the other hand, the disadvantaged schools were willing to disrupt a lesson for a few learners to participate in the discussion. They assured me that the learners' school obligations will not be affected by participating in the research. As these schools were more lenient, I had more time to spend with the learners and was not forced to rush the discussions. So, even though fewer disadvantaged schools were included in this study, the data collected was rich.

With regards to conducting the focus groups, the challenge of having to mediate dominant participants emerged. These participants tried to 'hog the limelight' by always interjecting whilst the other participants were talking. In attempts to mediate the conversation, I would remind the group that it is important to listen to the ideas of the rest of the participants, to be able to engage with what is said. On the other hand, I found that there were participants who did not interact as often as others. With these participants, I would make a concerted effort to hear their thoughts on the discussion. After every focus group, I would take the time to speak to the participants about the process. For example, I would ask them to give feedback on what they liked and did not like, and what they felt I should change. This I found was particularly helpful in honing my skills in conducting focus group interviews, which definitely improved over time.

It is also important to consider the implications of recruiting participants from the same institution. In both the focus groups with high school learners and the MSDS recruits, the participants were

selected from the same institution, either the same class or the same military unit. According to Bauer, Yang and Austin (2004), conducting research in an established school community can affect the validity of the discussion, as some participants could limit their comments because of the presence of their peers. Similarly, Gibson (2007) argued that familiarity of participants could serve as a distraction from the focus group process. I found that certain friendships, or the presence of conflict among group members prevented certain participants from expressing their honest opinions. To refer to one incident in particular, tensions between two high school learners led to disagreements during the focus group. Two of the female participants kept looking to their one friend before saying something, as if she controlled what they were allowed to say. However, this annoyed the other female participants, who became irritated by the fact that they were not taking the discussion seriously enough. I attempted to redirect the conversation by including the male participants, who appeared to be out-numbered in the conflict, and encouraged the participants to speak openly about their opinions, as this space allowed for it. Fortunately, this was the only incident where negative tensions influenced group dynamics. However, it is important to reflect on how familiarity among participants influences group interaction.

On the other hand, Kitzinger (1994:105) and Bauer, Yang and Austin (2004) argue that familiarity among the group participants is an advantage to the focus group, and encourages deeper levels of discussion. The participants also have the advantage of knowing each other, which could alleviate any awkwardness at the beginning of the discussion, and they are able to refer to shared incidents and provide the researcher with insight into their social context. Additionally, the participants are forced to speak quite truthfully because they are affiliated with the other members and could thus challenge something that is out of the ordinary. With reference to the focus groups with the high school learners, I feel familiarity allowed them to be more open about perceptions, especially in terms of gender and race. As mentioned, these focus groups were not homogenous, but this did not hinder discussions on the appropriateness of women in the military or issues of race.

In terms of the MSDS focus groups, familiarity among members had a significant impact on the focus group. The MSDS members have worked together, cried together, laughed together and socialised together for an entire year, and the conversations gave me a great deal of insight into their shared experiences, as well as how each individual had experienced their military service. The conversations were enrich with different stories that had happened throughout their year together. It was as if the groups were hungry to tell their stories to an outsider. As a moderator, I merely had to keep the conversation on track, but the dynamics of the participants meant I had to do very little to stimulate the discussion. I felt that the members had no problem with discussing the good experiences as well

as the bad, and the various challenges they had faced. This could be attributed to the fact that the timing of the interviews was ideal, in the sense that they only had a few days left on the base before being transferred to the various units. As they had already completed their training, they could be more critical of their experiences, compared to if the research was conducted earlier on in the year.

#### **4.5 Reflecting on my role as a researcher**

Reflecting on my role as a researcher, the classic distinction is to acknowledge the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ dynamics, and the factors of age, race and gender. Firstly, I would argue that the focus groups were much easier to facilitate because I could be perceived as an ‘insider’ to the MSDS members and high school learners. This is particularly relevant because I am either the same age as, or not much older than the learners and the MSDS members, who are presumably between the ages of 18 and 25. According to Merriam *et al.* (cited in Walt, Shiffman, Schneider, Murray, Brugha, & Gilson, 2008:314), the benefit of being an insider means ‘easy access, the ability to ask more meaningful questions and read non-verbal cues and more importantly, to be able to project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study’. I feel that an older researcher may not have received the same type of responses, because of different experiences and interests.

With respect to the MSDS members, some of them had studied and have similar concerns to my own: to get a job, plan for the future and become more independent. In the case of the high school learners, many of them were considering what to do when they leave school and the majority of them were planning on doing some form of tertiary education. I had many conversations outside of the focus groups regarding my choice of study and whether I had any recommendations for them as school leavers. Some of the high school learners also mentioned that they enjoyed the focus group discussions, because I did not come across as a teacher. By this I think they meant that they saw me as someone involved in a discussion, rather than as someone leading the discussion.

On the contrary, I think that being a white female student from what is classified as a prestigious university in South Africa, may have influenced how the participants perceived me. Some of the high school learners asked me if I could give their Curriculum Vitae’s to the military, or if I could organise them a job after school. In one particular focus group, a black high school learner referred to me as one of the ‘white people’ who are interested in developing her area. In another focus group, another black learner pointed out that it is not common for ‘white people like me’ to come and talk to them. This shows that the learners developed certain expectations or perceptions of me based on my race and where I come from. Although I do not feel like this hampered the discussions, there were some cultural differences that emerged. For example, in the Afrikaans schools that were predominately



coloured, I did not understand many of the references that were made. To overcome this confusion, I would get the learners to explain the references and inferences that they were making.

Where a problem did emerge was with language. In the Afrikaans-speaking schools this was not a problem but in the schools where isiXhosa is the main language medium, I had to conduct the focus groups in English. Although most of the learners were conversant with English, the conversations were often slow to begin with. Although as the learners became more confident, they spoke more openly. I also encouraged these learners that if they could not articulate something in English, then it was best to speak in isiXhosa so that the group could either translate it, or I would have these comments translated for my transcriptions.

In terms of gender, I made the decision to conduct heterogeneous focus groups in the high schools, but MSDS focus groups were divided into separate male and female groups.<sup>13</sup> In terms of the MSDS female focus groups, I think they were more inclined to share their experiences of being a woman in the military (a predominately male environment) because they could relate to me as a woman. The female members spoke freely about the challenges of fitness, menstruation, contraceptives and sexuality, which may not have been possible with a male researcher present. In terms of focus groups with high school learners, I think my position as a female researcher had more of an impact on the male learners, especially as the military is perceived as a masculine institution. In one focus group, a male learner went to say something about women in the military and then suddenly paused. The group proceeded to laugh, and then he merely stated that women could do whatever they choose to do. It is possible that the male participants may have been hesitant to express their views on gender because of the fact that I am a woman, and possibly due to the presence of other female participants in the discussion. Nonetheless, this was not always the case, because there were discussions where the male and female participants spoke openly about 'appropriate' gendered careers, and the roles men and women should play in society, without being concerned about offending anyone.

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<sup>13</sup> As these focus groups were conducted with two other researchers, I conducted the focus groups with the female MSDS members, whereas the male researcher conducted the male focus groups, and our supervisor conducted one male and one female focus group.



## CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 5.1 Introduction

Based on the preceding chapters, it is apparent that there are a number of factors that influence career choice. The Careership theory and the Employer Knowledge Framework indicate that career choice is just as much influenced by individual preferences and work values, as it is by the social, political, economic and historical context the individuals find themselves in. Individuals tend to choose careers or occupations that they are familiar with and informed about, and are perceived as appealing. Career decisions are often made based on the preferences and opinions of, and the information offered by those surrounding individuals, namely family, friends, school teachers, peers, and the media. When assessing the attitudes of young people to different occupations, it is important to consider how these factors influence career choice.

In this chapter, I report on my empirical research which examined how both school-leavers and those who have just entered the military perceive the military as an employer of choice. The views of recruitment officers are also captured, as they have a sense of what influences recruits to volunteer for military service. Firstly, I will explore the dominant work values of young people according to the high school learners, the MSDS members and the recruitment officers. In the following section, I present the main factors that influence the experiences of young people in the military and their willingness to join. These factors emerged in both the focus groups and the interviews with the recruitment officers. These factors include the nature of the military job, military culture (including perceptions of race and gender), the status of the profession, and the presence of a civil-military gap.

### 5.2 Work values of youth

Before considering how young people in South Africa perceive the military, it is necessary to establish their work values, and what attributes they are looking for in their jobs. A review of the focus groups with both the advantaged and the disadvantaged learners indicate that six dominant work values are evident: income, training and development, meaningful work, flexible work, social responsibility and status. The importance attributed to these factors differed between the learners in the advantaged and the disadvantaged schools.

Firstly, money and the possibility for higher salaries was the most important attribute of work for the learners in the advantaged schools. This is reflected in the career preferences of these learners, as the dominant industries were business, health, hospitality and law. These sectors typically have well-paying jobs. Similarly, the learners from the disadvantaged schools mentioned money as the most

important factor, but this was in relation to their current socio-economic status. For example, one learner said, *‘the reason for wanting to earn a good salary in the first place is because a person wants a better living standard, compared to what we have now’*. These learners emphasised how they need to get a job that pays well so that they can help support their families, and to have the opportunity for growth and upliftment. Nonetheless, money, for both advantaged and disadvantaged learners, was a means to become independent from their parents and to be able to live their own lives.

Secondly, and equally important among all the learners, is that work needs to be meaningful and enriching. Although the learners in the advantaged schools felt that money was important, doing a job that you do not enjoy or that you are not passionate about is perceived to be pointless. The learners argued that if you are passionate about what you do, then *‘money will come from what you love doing’*. To elaborate, the learners want to do work that is fulfilling, that they enjoy, and that makes them happy. The learners, in both samples, also emphasised the importance of building relationships at work, as reflected in this comment:

‘I also want to set new standards in myself, like what I want to get from my job. I want to get more challenges, more interacting with new people, learning new things at the same time, that is what I want to get out and I also want to get like, good partnerships with my fellow colleagues.’

Building good relationships and interacting with new and different people is important to the learners. Furthermore, the learners want work that challenges them and present opportunities for learning.

The next factor, and equally important in both samples of learners, is the desire for flexibility. Learners are not in favour of ‘nine-till-five’ jobs, or jobs that are perceived to be too challenging or too demanding of personal time. Many hoped to find work that allows them to travel and have sufficient holiday-time. This is why many of the learners in the disadvantaged schools said that they would like to be teachers and sport instructors, as these jobs are seen to have more holidays and flexible hours compared to other jobs. Overall, the learners felt that work should not dominate one’s life. Many asserted that they would not like a job that you have to take home with you at night, and that encroaches upon time spent with one’s family and leisure time.

It also became evident in both the samples of learners that the status of a profession, and being recognised by those around you, is important: *‘You know what? Nothing is so sweet like feeling superior you know, feeling respected. I think that is what I want, feeling respected, superior than other people but not undermining’*. The learners wanted to be revered and respected for the work that they do.

Lastly, a dominant attribute that emerged in the disadvantaged schools was the notion of social responsibility. The learners wanted to do work that would allow them to improve and grow their communities. Comments were made about wanting to *‘help the poor people in [their] community to better themselves’*, and *‘I want to make a change in my community, because the community we live in is, you know, it is developing so you need to help it’*. It was also not only about the community, but about creating better opportunities for the youth. As one high-school learner stated, *‘lots of parents mistreat their children, they get AllPay<sup>14</sup> for their children, then they use the whole AllPay for themselves, then there is nothing for the children, a parent doesn’t do such things’*.

These learners wanted to be role models and leaders for the young people in their communities, and to show them that it is possible to achieve anything, regardless one’s background or the circumstances one comes from. This is reflective in the career choices of the female learners, where most indicated that they would like to be nurses, psychologists or social workers. The main career industries among the male learners were business, engineering, mechanics and sport. The military was also frequently mentioned as a possible career choice among the learners in the disadvantaged schools, but was rarely mentioned in the advantaged schools. Interestingly, it was a popular career choice among the female learners as well. However, the females were inclined to choose a non-combat related position in the military.

These findings were reflected in the motivations of the MSDS members who have joined the military. The MSDS members raised both extrinsic and intrinsic work values. Most of the MSDS members selected the military job for job stability and money. This was largely attributed to the lack of employment opportunities in the civilian labour market. There were some members who also wanted to study further but could not afford it, and those who simply wanted a stable, well-paying job with decent benefits. Some of the MSDS members had a job prior to the military, but acknowledged that there was little room for mobility and they were not getting paid well.

At the same time, many of the members added that they chose the military because of the intrinsic and altruistic value of the military job. This includes adventure and the physical nature of the military; familial obligations and the need to carry on a legacy of military families; and altruistic reasons, such as the duty to serve one’s country. The notion of familial legacy also emerged in the focus groups

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<sup>14</sup> AllPay is an Absa subsidiary that has a five-year tender to supply social grants, including child and old-age grants to South African citizens.

with the high-school learners. Those with an interest in joining the military were the ones who had parents or a family member in the military, although these learners were predominately from the disadvantaged schools. Only a select few learners in the advantaged schools knew someone in the military, and this could explain their lack of interest in the military. The learners in the disadvantaged schools were also more motivated by altruistic values, such as the duty to serve, compared to those from the advantaged schools.

Subsequently, the recruitment officers confirmed that career choice and willingness to join the military is influenced by socio-economic status and the rural/urban divide. They asserted that young people from economically-advantaged schools are the least interested in a military career:

‘The ones that are from Model C schools, they are really not interested and they just come and say “so you guys shoot is that all you do, so what is artillery, what is this”, but you can see them questioning, it is out of belittling, “do you need a matric to be in the Army”’

This argument could explain why the learners from the advantaged schools were not interested in a military career. Furthermore, the recruitment officers stated that, among those people who are joining the military, the *‘majority of these youngsters come from homes and families [that] don’t really have enough to fund their educational studies’*. This was prominent in the findings from both the disadvantaged schools and the MSDS members, where the participants indicated that they would either join, or have joined the military, because of financial incentives and the ability to study further. On the other hand, the advantaged learners were not in the least interested in the military and this could be due to the fact that they have more access to resources. This confirms that socio-economic status influences willingness to enlist.

The recruitment officers, based on their experiences with school leavers, argued that young people’s career choices are mainly motivated by the desire for money, as reflected in the following comment:

‘For them it is about, I finish high school and then I can pursue some tertiary studies but when I complete my tertiary studies I really want to earn or make money, there is that general or strong personal belief in that now’.

This belief has been confirmed by the data from the high school learners and the MSDS members. Moreover, the recruitment officers argued that money and high salaries are associated with a tertiary qualification, and thus young people are more inclined to study after school. This was evident among the learners in the advantaged schools, as the majority had already enrolled in a university or college at the time of the research. The black learners from the disadvantaged schools also emphasised the importance of studying further. The main reason given is that they are all part of the first generation to complete matric, and it is imperative for them to attend university so that they could ensure better

lives for their families. Also, the learners acknowledged that, without a qualification, it is not easy to find a decent job:

‘I think it is because we see that having a grade 12, we are not advanced to many opportunities in life, but when you have further studied, you are very more advanced to many kinds of work, there are many jobs offered’.

Interestingly, this was not the case for the learners in the predominantly-coloured high schools, where the majority indicated that they will not be attending university and will be looking for a job straight after school.

### 5.3 Youth perceptions of the military

#### 5.3.1 Nature of military work

It quickly became evident that a number of factors relating to the military job deterred young school leavers from joining the military. The first issue pertaining to the military is that it is perceived to be too risky. The comments that frequently emerged among the learners include: *‘I don’t want to die’*; *‘it is a very dangerous job’*; *‘you need to be strong to go there’*; *‘I don’t like to fight’*; and *‘the conditions are very bad, I won’t be able to handle it because there is a high risk’*. The learners did not like the uncertainty surrounding the military job, and said that they were unwilling to sacrifice their lives in the name of duty: *‘you put your life in jeopardy and I don’t want to put my life on the line’*. Some learners pointed out that people are confronted with different risks every day of their lives, for example, the risk of death in a car accident, therefore being in the military is no different. However, most agreed they would not willingly choose to put themselves at risk, as one learner explained: *‘eventually we are all going to die, but not that way, like in the military’*. Many of the learners also asserted that the only time they would be willing to take on this risk is if the military offered satisfactory salaries. As one learner suggested, *‘The government should maybe increase the pay so like I will consider the Army’*.

Besides the element of risk, the learners did not feel that the military job is compatible with family life. As one learner stated:

‘It does not match with family life - they spend most of their time away from their families, so do it if you don’t want to have children, or rather marry someone from within the military, otherwise you’ll never see each other’.

The fact that members are frequently away from home is seen as unattractive feature of the military for the learners in both the advantaged and disadvantaged schools. The learners were also concerned about what affect this – time spent away from home – would have on familial relationships. The learners felt that people in the military *‘are not able to bond with [their] families’* because they are

always away. This was particularly evident among the female members in the predominantly-black high schools, who argued that the dangerous lifestyle will have a negative effect on the children of military parents: *‘a child will be worried, “I wonder when mommy is going to come back” and then you will be stressing your child at the same time’*. Although this was more applicable to women, they believed that having both parents in the military would have a detrimental effect on children. The learners in the disadvantaged schools were also concerned about who would support their families if they were to get severely injured or die while on duty.

In addition, the military is regarded as too rigid and authoritative and, unlike civilian jobs, is too time-consuming and demanding and leaves little time for one’s self. One learner explained:

‘Okay let’s look at a job, a job is you work certain hours, like even in the military you are not working certain hours, I know that if I am in an office, I know that I am there for eight hours and then I will go back to my family.’

The learners felt that being in the military meant that *‘you can’t have a social life’*, and this was problematic for the learners who valued their own personal time. The learners were also dissuaded by the idea of being told what to do and when to do it. Other issues with the military that frequently emerged included, *‘waking up too early in the morning [and] the cold showers’*, and the female learners did not like the idea of not being able to shower for however long they want, or not being able to shower at all, in the case of deployment.

Conversely, many of the male learners liked the idea of learning how to fight and how to work weapons, as stated by one male learner:

‘I actually want to go to the military to learn new things, actually for the training basically, but I want to learn more about guns and techniques...I want to improve my[self] physically and emotionally so that I can deal with the fears that I have and the fears that I want to get rid of... to defend the kids and learn, and actually teach other people, and actually the reason why I want to be in the Army is because one day when I am married and have children I want to tell my children where I was and what I did.’

As this statement reflects, some learners liked the idea that being in the military would earn them respect and recognition in society. Other comments include: *‘I get the chance to stand out, be proud, say that I have helped South Africa’*, and *‘it is an honour fighting for your country’*. However, as already mentioned, although some learners acknowledged that the military service is an honour and duty, very few mentioned this as a motivation for joining.

Once again, many of these perceptions reflect the experiences of the MSDS members. Firstly, the MSDS members found it difficult to be far away from family and friends for a long time. This was especially difficult in the first year of basic training, as the members are only permitted to go home a few times during the year. The issue of being away from home was further compounded by the fact that the members were not permitted to have cellphones for a large part of their training. If they wanted to call home, this had to be done during free time, and public telephones had to be used. For some, not being allowed to have cellphones was quite a traumatic experience, as reflected in this comment of a female MSDS member:

‘When they were taking our phones that was a problem, because I had my first cell phone from Grade 6 and then when we got here, they told us that we are not going to have our phones and then I am like why? Why, this is part of me? If they take my cellphone, it is like they are removing something from my body.’

Many of the MSDS members said this led to feelings of isolation, and some wished they could have had the additional support from their families and friends. This may have fuelled a more positive experience of the military.

Additionally, some argued that being alienated from non-military life meant that they struggled to adapt to being around civilians. The members blamed this on the authoritative structure of the military that regulated all of their actions. They argued that in the military there is no freedom to choose, and this contributed to feelings of humiliation and the sense that their individuality was being taken away from them. One male participant shared how, at night, all members were locked in their dorms to prevent them from leaving. But a consequence of this is that military members lost the ability to think for themselves and to exercise control over their own actions, as reflected in this comment below:

‘What happens when three hundred people get set free, walking into towns that they don’t know. They are going to upset the balance and when people upset the balance then they are going to fight, because we are not trained to be reserved with our aggression, you are taught to be very aggressive... they don’t know how to handle themselves because they are not sociologically, or how can I say, they don’t have the social tools anymore to deal with other people.’

Additionally, this comment indicates that the military has the tendency to bring out an aggressive or violent side of people. Some members said that they had become aggressive and hard on their families because that is how they are expected to treat each other in the military. Others mentioned how merely the lack of freedom makes them so angry that they just wanted to lash out at those around them. Some also attributed this aggression to the language employed in the military. As the members described, people do not talk in the military, they shout and swear. The female members frequently mentioned



this as problematic, and repeatedly apologised for their ‘Army’ language during the focus group discussions.

Much like the learners, the MSDS members indicated that being in the military had earned them respect and recognition from their families and communities. Prior to coming to the military, they were treated like children but now their parents recognised what they were doing, and this permitted them a say in family matters. Some members acknowledged that they were proud of what they were doing, because when they wear their uniform people treat them with respect, because they are serving their country. Some of the members attributed this to the fact that they were now disciplined, which is a core value of military culture.

Although the military job clashed with the need of the MSDS members to be individuals, one aspect they all came to value was tolerance. It became apparent in the MSDS focus groups that learning to accept difference was one of the main challenges with adapting to military life, yet also regarded as one of the most enriching experiences. The members spoke of how they had to eat, sleep, shower, train and bond with people from different races, cultures, ethnicities, languages and religions for almost a year. Many pointed out that, prior to coming to the military, they had never really interacted with people of different races and cultures, and this was problematic at first. This experience is aptly reflected in the comment made by an MSDS member:

‘Another thing is how to live with other people and how to share with other people, especially when it comes to culture. Sometimes the colours doesn’t want to mix or maybe the Christians doesn’t want to mix with other Hindus, maybe other different culture, it’s always a clash. Now since we are here, and the language is difficult but now it is like we are from the same mother... we have had bad moments and good moments which have made us sisters and brothers at the end of the day, so we are family.’

What this indicates is that the military lifestyle forced them to interact with each other, and this taught them to be accepting and tolerant of difference, or rather not to see difference at all. Nevertheless, the members argued that this had to be a conscious decision, and one had to be willing to make an effort to get to know people from different race groups, and to learn new languages. Some MSDS members, particularly whites, were not willing to interact with other members and hence chose to leave the military.

### ***5.3.2 Military culture***

Besides aspects pertaining to the military job, many learners and MSDS members commented on the culture of the military. In both the advantaged and the disadvantaged schools, the learners felt that



the military is disciplined and being in a disciplined organisation is appealing to them, as reflected in this comment that, *‘Learning discipline and abiding by the rules, allows you to project [these] skills in your own life or when working in a non-military environment... you become disciplined, stronger emotionally and physically.’* Although many learners were deterred by the authoritarian nature of the military, there were a few learners who wanted the experience of being ‘bossed’ around. According to one learner, *‘I would like that feeling, that experience of getting up early every morning, standing up straight, I have never had that before, being outside in [the] field, shooting guns’*. Consequently, this indicates that there are learners who are attracted to the adventurous lifestyle of the military as well.

Interestingly, the emphasis on the importance of discipline also emerged in the focus groups with the MSDS members. Some members mentioned how the learning of discipline was necessary for them, because they were very disobedient and unruly before coming to the military. As one male member shared, *‘the military [and] the whole defence force pulled [him] right because he was really slapgat’*.<sup>15</sup> For others, being disciplined meant leading a better life, as soldiers become both emotionally and physically disciplined. Discipline also represented a sense of control for the participants, as an MSDS member indicated: *‘It’s all about discipline, it’s about control and the way you conduct yourself in front of other people, the respect you give other people and you are more respectful.’*

As with the learners, some of the MSDS members found discipline a favourable attribute where others did not, as reflected in the following comment by an MSDS member:

‘It was very difficult especially being told what to do, when to go to the toilet, when you can drink water, everything it is like being a child again, every move you make you are told what to do, you have to report to someone, “can I go and do this, can I go and do that” and we weren’t used to that. It’s like being a toddler when your mother tells you everything, even like the uniform, they tell you how to wear it, it was difficult.’

The biggest problem with the military is that it expects its members to be obedient and to accept all commands without question, but the members found this difficult to accept, as this was not how they had been raised. According to some participants, in the name of instilling discipline, the military leaders were merely abusing their power, rather than creating an environment where rank earned respect. This issue was compounded by the presence of Navy MSDS members who were completing their training at Oudtshoorn. The Navy members stated that they were taught to *‘comply, then*

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<sup>15</sup> This is a slang term originating from the Afrikaans language meaning ‘lazy’.

*question and complain*'. On the other hand, the Army members were taught to '*comply, comply; don't complain*'.

The presence of the Navy members heightened the members' dissatisfaction with the Army's restraint on their ability to question, as one Army member stated: '*I wish it could be like the Navy because you have to know why; you can't do something if you don't know why you have to do that thing.*' The problem is that the MSDS members acknowledged that the military culture goes against how they were raised, and the fact that they were taught to question, and be assertive and confident in their individuality, as reflected in the following comment:

'A lot of that kicks against the people's upbringing. Every person is brought up to think for themselves [to] eventually develop their own opinion, to work out a solution to the problem that they are facing... if you had to go day to day and do things with no explanation as to why, you would feel like a sheep, a zombie, just being hoarded and herded here, there and you don't see the end goal'.

Another aspect of military culture is that it is typically masculine, and this deters young women from joining the military, as well as some men. In both the advantaged and disadvantaged high schools, the military was perceived as a job for men. The learners argued that the military is not an ideal job for women because they lack the physical and the psychological qualities necessary, and thus they should not be allowed to serve in combat positions, as one male learner stated:

'If you are going to be in the Army and be a soldier specifically, you have to like action, you have to know how to hold a gun, they are like enthusiastic with guns and shooting...men are [for] fighting, and the physical so it's for them and not for them [the women]'.

This was the view of the majority, among both male and female learners. These comments were also used to exclude those men who did not meet these standards. Although this only emerged in a few focus groups, some learners emphasised that women and '*moffies*' should not go to the military. '*Moffies*' is a slang term for homosexual men, and was a term used in the discussions to equate certain men with the qualities of women. Nonetheless, the comments largely referred to the unsuitability of women for military service.

The comments from the female learners largely resonated with this comment: '*it is a man's job to protect, like a woman's [job] is to mother, to nurture, to love*'. The male learners mainly argued that women are not suitable for the military, and that they should rather work in traditionally female roles:

‘There are other jobs for women’, ‘okay let me say a woman decides to be on the field in the military, she can be scared to shoot someone if it is necessary, so she’d rather stay at home feed the kids, deliver babies’ and ‘maybe women can work in the office, make some tea for the Generals’.

The male learners also thought that women in the combat would ‘*weaken*’ and lower standards. However, it became evident in the discussions that it was more than just the different characteristics of men and women that made men more suitable for the military, but that ‘*there is a manly image that is perpetuated by the military [and] this is what men think so women don’t want to change it*’. Consequently, women do not even consider the military as an option because it is assumed to be a man’s job, and this is problematic. As one female learner added, ‘*[we] have that mentality that this is the kind of job that needs to be done by males*’, and this mentality holds women back from doing something they may be interested in.

The issue of gender emerged spontaneously in the focus groups with the learners and the MSDS members, and much of the discussion among the female learners was around issues of sexuality. They expressed concerns about rape, sexual harassment, menstruation, pregnancy and child-rearing. Some female learners felt that women in the military have to sacrifice their femininity. Comments were made that, ‘*if you train too hard in the military, I heard then you won’t be able to have children*’, and all women in the military are ‘*butch lesbians*’ because women are engaged in activities that are deemed as ‘*manly*’, while in the military. On the other hand, the male learners were more concerned about the impact women would have on the military and its standards. They also felt that working alongside women in deployment would be complicated, because the men would feel the need to protect the female soldiers, men would not be able to shoot other women, and a man would not be able to deal with the shame of being shot by a woman, in the event that this happened.

As a result, lively discussions emerged among the learners about whether women should be allowed to serve in the military. Many of the arguments resonated with this comment below:

‘I think that women should go there because we are living in the world of equality now, we have to do other aspects that men does because we are all equal, we can’t be like “no, women should be in the kitchen and men should be in the garden”, no that’s old stuff’.

The learners acknowledged that there are no innate differences between men and women, and that gender does not play a role if somebody really wants to do something. However, they readily pointed to the effect that socialisation poses. For example, some learners stated that if a person is raised being ‘girly’, compared to being raised in a house with only a father and brothers, then that person might struggle to adapt to the military. However, if a person were raised as a ‘tom-boy’, then they would fit

into the military better. Through these statements, they legitimise the social arguments about gender and the military as masculine, and that women are required to fit into this mould. However, a few female learners displayed some radical feminist tendencies, stating that:

‘If I can be in the military then I won’t [want] to be like a man because let’s say if I get to be like a man, in my view men are stubborn, they just think and do, so for women, we will be there to guide them, to say no we have to start in this way and then go about that way’.

Interestingly, these more radical feminist views were far more prominent among the female learners from disadvantaged schools, than those from the more privileged schools. These female learners (predominantly white and coloured) were far more inclined to support an equal rights perspective, in terms of it being a woman’s right to serve in the military, than being willing to challenge the status quo. They were also far more inclined to support a gendered division of labour in the military, stating that combat would not be for them, but were willing to consider being nurses, doctors, psychologists or working in administrative positions.

Given these attitudes, it was astounding how this resonated with the views and experiences of MSDS members. What needs to be taken into consideration is that the members interviewed were all in the infantry: a combat branch considered particularly hostile to women because of the physical and mental demands. The majority of the male members felt that the infantry was not a place for women because they were physically not strong enough; had to be helped all of the time; and contributed to a decline in standards, as reflected in the comment by a male MSDS member:

‘I don’t know if they are recruiting the wrong females or what, but [if] we have to run somewhere, we have to take their pace, and now for a short female like this to run at this pace, she can’t run at that pace... we go to the bush they carry a bag, and now they get an LMG<sup>16</sup> as well and then we have to carry the LMG for them because they can’t carry it, so basically if you are going into a war situation, you are going to have to carry all her stuff, it’s not going to work’.

As this extract indicates, the male members, like the male high school learners, do not feel that women are physically capable of serving in the military or being deployed in these roles. Others argued that it is not all about physical capabilities, but rather the mind-set of women, as one MSDS male member commented:

‘Females, I won’t say they are weak. I will say they are stubborn, they don’t want to do things, they are lazy, they will tell you I don’t want to shoot... how can you go to

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<sup>16</sup> Light machine guns.

deployment with the person that does not want to use a weapon because they are tell[ing] you I am scared’.

In essence, the male members felt that, because women were not physically and mentally capable, they could not be relied upon and would be a liability during deployment.

In the focus group discussions with only female MSDS members, the women had more freedom to discuss the barriers that prevent them from being accepted as equals. Firstly, most felt that the military had made no attempt to accommodate them as women, in terms of training and uniforms. Secondly, they felt that women were always being judged according to double standards. The female members asserted that when they did something right, or when they excelled (or beat men), they were never commended for this. Thirdly, no recognition was given to gender differences. The comment was made that, no matter how much the military proclaims that there are ‘*no ladies in the military*’, they will always be women, as one female MSDS member commented:

‘They [the military] must know that we are still women so there are things that we have; there are things that are a must... that we must do. A woman will always be a woman regardless of whether I am here and I am wearing this uniform or not’.

This was discussed in relation to menstruation and problems associated with it, and the fact that women have boobs. One female MSDS member stated that although they acknowledge that training or work in the military will not stop because they have a period, they did want the trainers to acknowledge and accept that this is something a woman has no control over.

With reference to the uniform, the female members highlighted that no attempt had been made to adapt the uniform to a woman’s body, so this is not only uncomfortable, but looks untidy. These focus groups were conducted at the end of military basic training, and it was noteworthy that virtually all the female recruits had experienced the training as very harsh, although they were extremely proud of having passed or having ‘made it’, alongside the male members. What did emerge as significant was that most of the women did not want to serve in roles that would require them to deploy, and where they openly stated that they wanted to serve in non-combat positions.

The fact that female school-leavers are not interested in joining the military has also been the experience of the recruitment officers, who stated that, ‘*You know, in most cases females are not interested, even when we are at exhibitions, others just look and say Army, [no] and then they just continue to pass, but the boys will come*’. According to one of the recruitment officers, the problem is that females still perceive the military to be a man’s job, and are deterred by the fact that it is physically demanding:

‘What they [female learners] always ask is did you also do basic training? Is it difficult? They still perceive that it is [the military] a masculine area or responsibility and it’s not for them, so it’s why I am saying, the only time we can change that perception is to show them that yes we do have something like this. You can just imagine if a tank comes out and when the drivers get out it’s ladies and what impact that would make’.

Furthermore, the recruitment officer felt that this is attributed to the fact that women are still not sufficiently visible in the military. The learners also raised this issue. In fact, the female learners mentioned that they only know of men who have served in the military, and as one female stated, *‘right now we only have grandfathers and fathers that were in the military, but we never had mothers and grandmothers in the military, so it is unfamiliar to us’*.

To recap, the attributes of discipline, obedience and masculinity, all pertaining to the culture of the military, were raised in the focus groups with the learners and the MSDS members. Additionally, teamwork and cohesion are important elements of military culture. Although the learners did not raise this, the MSDS members emphasised the importance of cohesion and the bonds they formed in the military, as seen in the comment made by an MSDS member: *‘The friends that you have in the civilian world will never compare to the friends that you have in the military, the reason why is because you suffer together, you live together, we cry together’*. As these members had very little contact with people outside of the military (their families and friends), they had to depend on each other to be able to get through the training. Many indicated that if it were not for the support of their teammates, they would never have been able to survive basic training. Furthermore, the sense of unity that was developed encouraged them to perform better. For example, if one member did something wrong, the whole group would be punished, thus they learnt that the only way to do things was as a group. Moreover, this taught them both independence and interdependence, and how not to have to rely on their parents and their families, as one member pointed out: *‘you can’t really cry and go to your parents and say this and that and that is happening to me, you just have to depend on the people around you’*.

However, one issue that emerged among both the learners and the MSDS members is the effect of race on teamwork and cohesion in the ranks. It is a Constitutional imperative that the military be broadly representative of its host society, although the findings indicate that certain population groups increasingly feel alienated from the military. While in the past the former SADF was essentially a white conscript force, the all-volunteer force of the SANDF is perceived to be largely black. This perception in society has influenced the way that high school learners perceive the military, and their willingness to enlist. Most of the learners from the predominantly white schools felt that alienated

from the military, and that they would have limited career prospects in the military due to affirmative action policies. White learners often referred to what the military was like in the past (before 1994), compared to how it is now, as reflected in this comment:

‘Before apartheid it was the other way around, it wasn’t so easy for people of colour to get in and get the same ranks and specific ranks but now the situation is inverted. Say you are the better person, the black person will get the position, that’s how it is and it’s the reality, even if the person has lower qualifications and ranks, that’s just how the country works’.

To clarify, the white learners provided two reasons for not enlisting: firstly, the military is predominantly an organisation for black people; and secondly, white people have few opportunities for advancement in the military. Both the white and coloured learners in the advantaged schools argued that affirmative action policies should not be implemented in a unique organisation like the military. Additionally, the white learners indicated that they would not feel comfortable in the military because of issues with language and culture. This is evident in the following comments: *‘it is difficult to accommodate different languages’*, *‘you can’t relate to the people you are staying with’* and *‘I had a friend in the Army and he said that the biggest problem is that the person who stands next to him either can’t speak the same language or he can’t trust that person’*. They questioned how they could depend on the person standing next to them, or serving alongside them, if they could not communicate freely with one another. Moreover, they believed that issues of trust would emerge because everyone speaks a different language, and it will be difficult to reach consensus.

The coloured learners in the advantaged and disadvantaged schools expressed similar sentiments. In the advantaged schools, the coloured learners agreed that white people had no chance in the military because the organisation, according to them, does not recruit whites. However, it is not only whites who struggle to get into the military but coloureds too because the military is predominantly black: *‘no offence but there is a man that told me if you are coloured then you aren’t going to get in easily’*. This was not received well by the black learners (a minority in these focus groups) who argued that, due to the racial policies of apartheid, blacks could not previously serve in the military, so it is only fair that this is rectified now. In response to this, the coloured learners highlighted that both systems have disadvantaged them, because coloured people were also discriminated against during apartheid, and now they are still being disadvantaged by systems of privilege in a democracy.



In the focus groups with predominantly black learners, a different perception of the military emerged entirely. The black learners argued that the military is a white institution, and for this reason they would not join. This is reflected in the comment made by one high school learner:

‘There are almost few blacks involved in the military as I am considering, this year there was a Cape Town military, a marine military, there was only one black guy there which shows us that blacks are not exposed, there are only whites there, so I’m saying that there must be exposure, expose black people to the military because we find that there are people with passion who are passionate about military’.

The black learners also believed that the military does not want black people from townships because of the levels of crime and violence in these areas. This belief was fuelled by the fact that military recruiters do not come to their schools and are not visible in their areas. However, some learners asserted that black people tend to hold onto ways of thinking that were prevalent during apartheid, for example, that blacks cannot do certain jobs because they are considered to be white-person jobs, even though these barriers do not necessarily exist anymore. One learner equated this to a choice in university. For example, if she said she would like to go to Stellenbosch University, her peers would question her choice because it is a white university, although she argues that this is not the case anymore.

The recruitment officers confirmed that whites in South Africa are no longer joining the military. According to the recruitment officers, it is imperative that the SANDF attracts and recruits young people from all the population groups in South Africa:

‘We need to make sure that the four population groups are represented in that regard so that they can see that the SA Army and the SANDF is a reflection of population demographics. That plays a critical role because we are experiencing a challenge with regards to getting potential applicants from the white community. There is a perception or a misperception in the white community that okay fine, the Army is no longer for whites you know, African and blacks have taken over for example, we don’t have a future of progressing through the ranks.’

In terms of willingness to serve in the military, the recruitment officers felt that white youth are largely influenced by their parents, who dissuade them from joining, *‘because my dad said [it] is not good to go to the military’*. This was confirmed by the white MSDS members and the white high school learners, who indicated that their parents were not supportive of them joining the military, because of perceptions that the military had changed since 1994:



‘My family, they are all military and especially old Army, and when I said I was gonna [going to] go they were like, why are you joining, you know – not being racist – they were like it is run by Africans, it is not the same Army, the standards [have] dropped’.

According to one of the recruitment officers, this also affects retention, as whites battle to adapt to this culturally diverse environment of the military because they are not used to sharing rooms, showers and living spaces with people of other races.

As already mentioned, issues of race and gender were not included in the focus group discussion guide, but kept emerging as issues in both the MSDS and the high school focus groups. This indicates how salient race and gender remain within the South African society. As with the learners, the MSDS members discussed the effect of racial and cultural alienation. What was significant is that it was not race or culture *per se* that seemed to be alienating, but the social exclusion that white members felt when troops and those in command spoke in an African language. In a focus group with two white members and one black member, these issues emerged as more significant than in all the other MSDS focus groups. In this group, the participants discussed how white members tend to take offence when the Lieutenant or officer does not speak in English. Moreover, the MSDS participants asserted that if a Lieutenant reprimands the white members, they take it as a personal attack, rather than accepting it as part of an authoritative organisation. Subsequently, some of the MSDS members asserted that whites are simply unwilling to make an effort to work with others and often choose to leave the military, as reflected in this comment:

‘When the [white] guys get here and they see, it’s just black, let us be honest now, that’s what all white guys think, and then they say this is not for me and they leave, especially the guys from white schools, that is very difficult’.

### ***5.3.3 Status of the military profession or ‘job’***

Another influencer of career choice is how a chosen occupation is judged in terms of prestige and status. As for the military, it is not an esteemed profession. This is one area that the findings differed somewhat between the learners in the advantaged and the disadvantaged high schools. The learners in the advantaged schools perceived the military as a low-status profession, because the only ‘*reason why people go into the military is because they can’t get a job or they can’t get into university*’ and because ‘*[the military] recruits people who don’t essentially have an education, so [it is] associate with a low status job like mine work*’. Consequently, this lowers the status of the profession and deters the youth from considering the military as a possible career choice. The learners also compared the military job with other civilian jobs in terms of status, as reflected in the comment of a learner:

‘Say that you are in a room and everybody is professional accountants and you say, “well I’m fighting for my money”, they will sound a lot smarter because you sound like all you are doing is training to fight. People may respect you but if all you are doing is training then it’s lower than other jobs’.

The learners asserted that they would rather be accountants or engineers, because those careers receive more recognition and one is more likely to earn better salaries. Furthermore, these learners felt that people do not join the military because they have a passion for it, but because it is just another job that pays.

Unlike those from the advantaged schools, who judged the military profession in relation to other professions, many of the learners from the disadvantaged schools perceived the military as a high-status profession. However, this judgement was made not in relation to other professions, but in terms of the social mobility that the profession can provide for their own socio-economic status. This is reflected in the comment that,

‘It’s [the military] like an organisation for people who doesn’t have money, doesn’t have anything to do, education, so once they get there, they learn things and they come back and they know what they want to do’.

It is evident that socio-economic status and class influence perceptions of the military. Although the advantaged learners regarded the image of the ‘military as last resort’ as a negative attribute, the learners from more disadvantaged backgrounds perceived the military’s contribution to social upliftment positively.

Nonetheless, the learners in both the advantaged and disadvantaged schools discussed how the standards in the military had declined – *‘it is not organised enough [and] the discipline is not what it should be’*. This is largely because the military is not currently active, and the members simply get paid to train: *‘It is good for [military personnel] because they are doing nothing but they earn the money, but for other workers in South Africa it is not good because they work hard to get their money’*. This led some of the learners in both samples to question the relevance of the military in South Africa. Besides problems with discipline, the learners felt that the state of military barracks had also declined, as one learner pointed out: *‘I went to one of the bases in town and it was horrible – well it was run down and it doesn’t look like anyone was looking after it’*. When discussing standards, the learners also drew attention to the state of technology and equipment used in the SANDF:

‘I think that the guys who pay attention to equipment, also like the well-being of the people in the Army because after now if you like go on the internet and check out the other Armies from other countries, let’s call the US [United States of America] for

example, every time or every third month, they have a new gun installed, or a new item installed to their equipment, or something new that they developed. For us we have to export [meant import] the machines to South Africa. Why don't us like also make something that is proudly South African'.

The problem is that these learners ascribed a high status to the US military based on their perceptions of their technology. However, in South Africa the equipment was perceived as '*out-dated*' and '*slow*'. These learners argued that this was problematic because the military is '*not well equipped for the environment of war [so] when danger comes they will not know [what to do]*'. For example, the learners in the disadvantaged schools mentioned how the military was not doing a good job of protecting South African borders:

'They are the ones that protect the border of South Africa, but that is why I am saying that they are weak because each and every day, everyone crosses the border of South Africa but in the States, I don't think this happens because the Army is really strong. I mean, here I can even bribe a soldier to get into the country but not in the States'.

The learners questioned the relevance of having a military if it is not able to fulfil some of the basic tasks stipulated in its mandate.

Alternatively, military discipline is one attribute that contributes to a higher status of the military. In both samples of learners, there were those who felt that the military and its members exemplify discipline, and this makes it a high-status profession:

'I think that the military is the best because everyone is disciplined, if you go to the Navy never mind where but they are all disciplined, even if they aren't in their work clothes anymore, you still see that discipline, you can't lose that, even if you are fifty or sixty'.

Not only did these learners feel that the military was disciplined, but that it also operates according to set principles and values that represent South Africa and its citizens. Some felt that the military deserves respect because people who serve in the military are willing to give their lives, to serve their country. Others recognised that, although they are unwilling to serve, being a soldier '*is a very heroic thing to do for your country*', and therefore respect those who are willing to make this sacrifice.

In both the advantaged and the disadvantaged high schools, the learners drew comparisons between the military and the police, and the military was evaluated far more positively. The learners felt that, unlike the police, the military is feared by criminals, and this is why Helen Zille should use to the military to deal with gang violence and crime in the Western Cape: '*you can see when they are here*

*in our areas like Khayelitsha, you can see that the criminals sort themselves, they don't do things because they know that the soldiers are here'.*

One indication of the decline in the status of the military profession is that service members are motivated by occupational values rather than altruistic values of service. This is reflected in the motivations of both the learners and the MSDS members. The majority of the learners who had any interest in the military said that they would join mainly because the military offers decent benefits, as these comments reflect: *'I thought about going to the military because I know people who have gone and they earned a great salary'* and *'if you go to the military then they pay for your studies, you can work and earn a salary, so for these opportunities, then I will join'*. What emerged as interesting is that the learners acknowledged the importance of people joining the military because it is a calling, and because they are patriotic; and not simply because it is a job. However, the main reasons cited for joining would firstly be for the money, and then secondly, because of institutional reasons such as adventure, and duty.

The perception of the military as a 'job' surfaced strongly in the discussions with the MSDS members. The majority stated that joining the military was not their first choice, but were left with no other option because they could not study, or find alternative employment. The MSDS members discussed how difficult it is for young South Africans to find stable employment, even with tertiary qualifications. Several of the MSDS members had studied prior to joining the military, and they all indicated that they were unable to find jobs in their field of study. Others had been employed, but joined the military because it was the only available job opportunity that could offer stability, as reflected in the following quote:

*'Ja it's pretty much to get an opportunity, I mean especially coming from all our different backgrounds, the most common thing is that when we leave matric we all know there is a possibility, well 50 per cent chance we are not actually going to get a civilian job... we haven't got that certainty leaving matric so when you get a sure thing as the Navy or the military or anything so you pretty much grab it with both hands'.*

As this extract indicates, the members joined the military not because of a desire to serve, but because they had needed a job, and they had exhausted other means to study or work in civilian society.

These findings also emerged in the interview with the recruitment officers, who stated that the youth judge the status and prestige of military by their equipment and vehicles, which appear to be poor and run-down. They also stated that, when speaking to the youngsters who had applied to join the military, the military was often not their first choice. In most cases, they applied to join the military because

they were either not accepted at a tertiary institution, or could not afford to study further, or could not find alternative employment. According to the recruiters, few youngsters actually perceived the military as a high-status profession or a calling.

#### 5.3.4 Civil-military gap

One aspect that became blatantly apparent during the focus groups with the learners and the MSDS members was their lack of knowledge of the military, and the recruitment officers - who did the selection of these youngsters when they reported at the recruitment centres - confirmed this. A knowledge gap is prevalent among the high school learners, who had very little awareness and understanding of the purpose of the SANDF. In the focus groups in the advantaged high schools, the learners believed that the main purpose of the military is to protect South Africa and its citizens, and to serve as an insurance policy, *'if there is a war and we don't have a military then we are pretty much useless'*. What was interesting is that the majority of these learners questioned the necessity for a military, as illustrated in the comment, *'if we are in a world peace time, why do we have a military?'* Most striking was that the majority were not even aware that South Africa had an active military. Some of the learners felt that the main role of the military was to serve as an institution for social upliftment, as seen by the comment that, *'The military benefits all the local people [and the] poor [as] it is very good for the development of skills and [assists with] unemployment [and] to keep people off the street'*.

Similar findings emerged in the disadvantaged schools, although there was more awareness of the military and its role in Africa among these learners, due to events in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2013.<sup>17</sup> This had a negative effect on the perceptions of the learners, who continuously referred to the fact that people die in the military. Furthermore, this reinforced the perception that all jobs in the military revolve around war and fighting, as this learner states:

*'The military fights, how can I say this, with countries, they help them out, they are fighting there somewhere at the top, what's that country in Africa, or maybe they fight against America to get solutions. But I don't know what type of work they do when they fight, or how they get solutions, just that they use the military'*.

As this comment indicates, the learners had very little knowledge of the military, the jobs available in the military, other than soldiering, and the different branches of the military, such as the Navy and the Air Force. Moreover, those who had any knowledge of the military indicated that they had a

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<sup>17</sup> In March, 2013, thirteen South African soldiers were killed during an intense crossfire with rebels in the Central African Republic (CAR) in what is now referred to as the Battle for Bangui (DOD, 2013).

family member or a neighbour who was, or had been in the military, and it was only these learners that displayed some interest in the military. Hence, it was personal contact with a serving member that evoked an interest.

The same was found when discussing this issue with the MSDS members. More than two-thirds of the MSDS members joined the military because of parents or other family members in the military. Some joined after seeing an advertisement in a newspaper, thinking they would just apply and see what happened. Only a select few of the members came into contact with military recruitment officers who had visited their school, as one male MSDS member explained:

‘So there were people who came at the school, talking about the MSDS. There is something called MSDS, we didn’t know anything [about] National Defence Force and things like that so they came, they explained everything, they were wearing Army uniform so they told us things like basic training and then you get a two year contract and then after that you get your five year contract, so that is how we joined.’

Even so, the MSDS members had little knowledge of what military service actually entailed. This was prevalent throughout the discussions, particularly with the female participants who were unaware of the hardships of the military job:

‘So my sister knew that they wanted to recruit people, so she told me that I must go there, so I just went there because it is a government thing, I wanted that status of being in the government and wearing that uniform, so I didn’t even think it was hard.’

This lack of knowledge is attributed to problems of visibility of the military within society, and overall lack of media coverage. The advantaged and disadvantaged high school learners, as well as the MSDS members, seldom heard or read about the military on television or the radio, or the Internet. As one learner rightly questions, ‘*how are we supposed to know anything if this is the first time we have heard about the military?*’ The learners indicated that the military had never visited their schools and that they are not visible in their community. Thus, how can people consider this as a career avenue if one has no knowledge of it, as a learner questions:

‘No companies are talking about the career in the military basically, so they don’t come to the schools and tell children more about it, so [the youth] just know that they carry guns and wear brown and what what...it is very scarce to see soldiers where we live’.

The quality of media coverage also influences the perceptions of young people towards the military. In all of these focus groups, the learners referred to the deployment of South African soldiers to the CAR, and the deaths of thirteen of these soldiers. These learners were also under the impression that all jobs in the military revolve around being trained to fight and shoot. Moreover, the media and the

film industry present the military job as very risky, and this deters the youth from wanting to serve in the military. This is reflected in the learner's comment below: *'When we first heard about the military I thought of soldiers, then I saw some of it in the media, then I see oh, they go to war, they die there, so I wasn't impressed'*.

Similarly, the recruitment officers commented on the perceptions created by the much-publicised deaths of the soldiers in the CAR. Consequently, the recruitment officers pointed out that one of the main challenges with attracting young South Africans to the military, is that they lack the necessary knowledge and awareness of the military as well as the jobs available. From their experience, young people do not know that there is an active military in South Africa, or the purpose of having a military. All they know is that people in the military carry weapons and they go out to battle, as reflected in the following comment:

'They only know you are soldier, but as to the details as to why you are in the Army doing what, it is something else [and all they know is] fine I want to become a soldier so that means I am going to carry a weapon or a gun and a rifle and go and fight and shoot'.

The youth do not know that there are different jobs such as administration or engineering in the military, and that there is the opportunity to study further, in a direction of choice. This is evident in the findings from the high-school learners and the MSDS members.

The recruitment officers argued that the military should be more proactive with different forms of media, in order to inform young South Africans about the military. According to them, it is not sufficient to place one advertisement on national television, one month of the year, or a few on national radio. Many of the learners noted that if the military were to come to their schools, more young people would be interested in joining, as this comment reflects:

'I think that they should try to inform, expose the military to the schools, getting young people interested in them, young people are interested in things like that, [when] people come to them...telling them there is a life, there are opportunities in the military, there are some experts in the military, just present them, just expose young people to the different types of military and the different fields in military'.

The learners also stated that their career choices are influenced by the organisations that come to advertise at their schools, yet the military had never attended a career day at any of the schools in this study. The learners also added that they had never been invited to attend an open-day at the military. They emphasised that, *'we need to get people in the military to come to the schools and show videos and maybe then people will be more interested'*. Subsequently, the lack of knowledge of the military



affects both recruitment and retention, as some of the MSDS members stated that members choose to leave because they realise the military job is not what they thought it to be.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Based on a review of the findings, it is evident that one of the greatest challenges facing military recruitment is that the military job is incompatible with the work preferences of the youth. The work values of the South African youth largely resonate with the literature of the millennials from the West, namely that youth favour flexibility in the workspace, meaningful jobs, and financial success. Moreover, South African youth favour being in close proximity to their families. Consequently, the military job was perceived as unattractive because it is too risky, rigid and authoritative, and requires frequent periods away from the family. Not only was this the perception of the learners, but had also been the experiences of the MSDS members who were in the military.

Other problematic issues raised were related to the culture of the military. As with the millennials in the West, these young people were not attracted to organisations that are authoritative and that do not encourage individual freedom and advancement. Besides this, the military is still perceived as a ‘macho’ organisation, and for this reason, many were dissuaded from joining. For the women already in the military, most have chosen to remain in more ‘gender appropriate’ positions, because of the challenges surrounding service in non-traditional positions. Race also appeared as a factor that influenced the culture of the organisation, as certain population groups (mainly whites and coloureds) raised perceptions of isolation and alienation.

Furthermore, many whites were dissuaded from joining the military because of perceptions that the status of the military had declined. However, it became evident that the poor impressions of the military were largely present among all the young participants. This is largely attributed to the presence of a knowledge gap among South Africans, who have very little awareness of the military, its purpose, its current missions and its mandate. Their perceptions of the military were also informed by the perceptions and information provided by those around them, which was not always factual or rational.



## CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

The SANDF has expressed concern that they are struggling to attract not only ‘high calibre’ recruits, in order to staff a modern and technologically-advanced defence force, but also certain population groups, in order to remain representative of society. Both are Constitutional imperatives, as they affect the legitimacy and status of the military. The SANDF defines ‘high calibre’ recruits as individuals who have completed a matric with good Mathematics and Science results, between the ages of 18 and 22, who comply with medical and physical standards and, importantly, are interested in the institutional ethos and culture of the military. However, the question I sought to answer in this study is whether these ‘high calibre’ recruits are actually interested in joining the military, and what their perceptions are of the military as an employer of choice. This chapter argues that, although there is some interest among young people in the military, this is largely motivated by the need for money and academic advancement, and not because the military job is attractive, or seen as a calling. Moreover, the application of the theory of *Careership* indicates that career choice is not merely an individual choice, but is also the result of interacting social, cultural, economic, and historical forces.

I argue that the nature of the military job and institution is one of the greatest deterrents to young school leavers, followed by the masculine ‘warrior’ culture of the military, and the perception that the military is hostile to women and whites. Besides this, there are two external forces that influence the attractiveness of a military job, namely the decline in status of the military profession, and the presence of a civil-military gap. Throughout this discussion, I will draw on the theories of career choice, namely *Careership* theory and the *Employer Knowledge Framework*, to reflect on the career preferences (work values) of young people, and the various factors that influence these decisions. I also argue that the young people in this study reflect some attributes of the millennials in general. This chapter concludes with an assessment of the SANDF as an employer of choice.

### 6.2 The military as an employer of choice?

#### 6.2.1 The military job

One theoretical approach to understanding career choice is to conceptualise it as a preference for certain attributes that careers or organisations have to offer, known as work values. Individuals are more likely to select the careers that meet most of their preferences (Littau, 2009; Lyons *et al.*, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010). Although there are different theoretical approaches to understanding the concept of work values, this research departs from the view that work values are the objectives that an individual hopes to achieve or obtain through working (Dose, 1997). Often, studies focus on the

presence of intrinsic (inherent in the work) and extrinsic work values (external, tangible rewards); however, a more in-depth analysis of work values would also include social (interpersonal relationships, comfortable working environments), altruistic (social responsibility), prestige (status and recognition) and freedom work values (leisure, flexibility in the work space) (Pryor, 1982; Sagie, Elizur, & Koslowsky, 1996; Lyons *et al.*, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010). Studies on work values have largely focused on how changes in the work preferences from one generation to the next impact on organisations, and the need to alter recruitment and retention programs in order to attract new generations of workers. This is an important approach for armed forces across the globe who are experiencing recruitment shortages, as one explanation for this shortage is the significantly different work values of the newest generation of youngsters.

This study indicates that young South Africans are more likely to be motivated by extrinsic work values, where income and job stability determine career choice rather than intrinsic work motivators. The findings also indicate that the youth's career choices are self-interested and focused on individual gains, such as freedom, prestige work values. This is indicated by the fact that the learners wanted jobs that are flexible, that will afford them a high status and social recognition, and allow for personal advancement. These work values all prioritise the need for work to be beneficial to the individual rather than an intrinsic desire of the youth to do certain kinds of work. These work preferences may be the norm in among civilian employees and organisations, however the military job is quite different. The military job requires the utmost commitment of its members towards the institutional goals. It often entails long and irregular working hours, often uncomfortable working conditions, the risk of injury, even death and frequent isolation from family and friends. Because of this, it is imperative that the needs of the organisation be prioritised over the needs of the individual. Thus the challenge facing the military is that selfless service is generally not an attribute associated with the new generation who are both individualistic and self-orientated

It is important to acknowledge the influence of class and socio-economic status on career choices of young South Africans. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) are critical of the dominant approaches to vocational choice, as these theories tend to focus only on individual choice, and do not give due consideration to the influence of social context. Their theory of *Careership* proposes that career decision-making is a complex process, influenced by the individual's position in society and various institutional, social, political and economic factors (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). Therefore, in this study it is not sufficient to simply reflect on work values of youth without due consideration for how the social and economic environment influences these.

The learners in this study come from markedly different socio-economic backgrounds. The learners in the advantaged schools come from predominately middle-class backgrounds, and attend schools in urban areas in the Western Cape. On the contrary, the learners in the disadvantaged schools come from underprivileged, lower-income backgrounds, and live and attend schools in informal settlements, located on the peripheries of urban areas in the Western Cape. Evidently, economic status also correlated with race. The learners in the advantaged schools (middle-income) were predominantly white and coloured, whereas the learners in the disadvantaged schools (low-income) were black and coloured, with no white learners in these schools. Consequently, the correlation between race and socio-economic status is attributed to the historical legacy of South Africa, where the white minority were advantaged economically, socially and politically over the black majority. The vast inequalities between the whites and blacks, coloureds and Indians are still reflective of the current situation in South Africa as was evident in this study where whites were in the majority in Model C (privileged, well resourced ) education institutions.

According to Inglehart's (2008) socialisation and scarcity hypothesis, those social factors (i.e. class, socio-economic status, economic capital, social capital) that are in short supply tend to affect the values of individuals the most. This became evident in the findings. In comparing the discussions with the learners from the advantaged and the disadvantaged schools, it became evident that the learners from the disadvantaged schools were greatly influenced by socio-economic status. When discussing career choices, these learners continuously referred to the importance of social mobility and the need to improve their social standing. They raised issues surrounding poverty, unemployment, drugs, crime, and unstable households and thus the emphasis was placed on excelling at school, so as to be able to get a job, so as to be able to improve their social conditions.

Not only did these learners feel a responsibility to themselves, but also a responsibility to their families, and those in their communities. As the majority of these learners will be the first to complete high school and to attend a tertiary institution, they themselves feel obligated to provide for their families, by obtaining well-paying employment. Many of these learners also felt obligated to be role models to their siblings and the children in the communities. This is because young people in their communities are faced with many hardships and do not have the luxury of overprotective, 'helicopter' parents as is the case of the millennials, and presumably the learners from the advantaged schools. As one disadvantaged learner from a coloured community commented, some parents use their child grants for alcohol and not to purchase food and necessary school stationary for their children. Contrariwise, findings pertaining to socio-economic status did not emerge in the focus group discussions with the learners from the advantaged schools. This could be attributed to the fact that

these learners, coming from a more middle class background living in urban areas in the Cape, are less likely to be confronted with the hardships that these learners face in the informal settlements.

Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) and Diemer and Ali (2009) argue that an individual's available resources (economic capital and social capital), or the lack thereof, influence their career choices. This is reflective of the difference in career choice of the two samples of learners. The dominant career choices among the learners in the advantaged schools include jobs in business (accounting), engineering, medicine (doctors), hospitality and law. As these learners are from middle-income backgrounds, attending an advantaged high school, their career motivations are less likely to be inhibited by socio-economic barriers. There were only a few select learners who aspired to join the military, and they were motivated by the intrinsic value of the military, and not by economic pressures.

On the other hand, the career choices of the learners in the disadvantaged schools included business, nursing and the military. The military was a popular choice with both the male and female learners in these schools. However, the main motivation for choosing the military was for the opportunity to up-skill, to study further and for the income and benefits. A greater interest in the military career is attributed to the fact that the learners in the disadvantaged schools require more financial assistance to be able to study after school, and they felt that the military could provide them with many opportunities. Concerns about not being able to study further because of financial difficulties did not emerge in the focus groups with the advantaged, middle income learners. The implication of this is that the military is likely to recruit more people who are in need of a job, rather than an interest in military service.

This was confirmed by the MSDS members who had joined the military. The main reason given by the members for joining the military was because they needed a job, or could not afford study fees, or because they were looking for job stability. Many of the MSDS members were also the sole breadwinners in their family, which placed an enormous burden on them to remain in the military, even if they hated it. This is largely attributed to the lack of employment available in the civilian labour market, as well as socio-economic status. What this indicates is that willingness to serve does appear to be correlated with socio-economic status, and those who are more willing tend to come from disadvantaged, lower-income backgrounds in South Africa. This is largely because the military is an economically beneficial choice and not because they are attracted to the nature of the military job.

Hodkinson and Sparks (1997) assert that career choice is also determined by the *field* that individual is situated in, for example, an employment field. In South Africa this is particularly important to consider due to the challenges present in the civilian labour market. Currently, a quarter of the working age population is unemployed, and this disproportionately impacts on the youth, with more than half of those between the ages of 20 and 25 unemployed (Altman, 2007; van Aardt, 2012; StatsSA, 2014). For this reason, many of the MSDS members stated that, because they could not find a job, they decided to join the military. Some of these members had even had a tertiary qualification, but could not find work in their related fields. Others, due to poorer socio-economic backgrounds, had chosen to join the military for the opportunity to be able to study, because like the learners, they could not afford the financial burden of studying. The implication of this is that the military is increasingly perceived by many as a tool for social upliftment.

This has been the experience of the recruitment officers who have had direct contact with young school-leavers from across South Africa. From their experience, willingness to join is influenced by socio-economic status. According to them, young people are only motivated by money, and those who are joining the military come from predominantly poor backgrounds. The recruitment officers added that money is typically associated with a tertiary education among young people; therefore those who can afford it tend to choose a degree over joining the military. According to Wilcox (2001) and Drago (2006), the biggest competitors of the military in the US for young school-leavers are the universities. Wilcox (2001:79) adds that university enrolment has become the acceptable norm, 'it is the thing to do, it's what everybody does'. This was evident in the focus groups with the white and coloured learners in the advantaged schools, where many had already applied for university. The majority of the black learners had plans to study further after school, but this was dependent on financial resources.

What this indicates is that education, is also disproportionately accessed in South Africa, along lines of socio-economic status and race, with whites being most likely to attend university. Low-income black and coloured learners experience more barriers to career acquisition, and this is evident in this study. Many of these learners would have to rely on bursaries and loans to be able to study, and even this is not a guarantee. This is why the military is perceived as an attractive option. What this also indicates is that those who are joining the military are more likely to be black and coloured, and not white, and are more likely to come from lower-income backgrounds. This is not unique to South Africa. Caforio and Nuciari (1994) claim that those joining the military come mostly from lower status groups, and join mainly for occupational reasons. Consequently, this will affect how the

military goes about recruiting young people who emphasise the extrinsic value of work. So to be able to attract high calibre candidates, armed forces will need to have comparable civilian salaries.

Another lens to reflect on the work values of young South Africans is to consider them as part of the millennial generation, different and separate from previous generations. Unlike previous generations, the millennials (born in the 1980s and 1990s) have grown up in an era dominated by technology. The largest generation since the post-World War two baby-boomers, the millennials are said to be the most technological and global generation yet, but also the most protected (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Goldgehn, 2004; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). With hands-on parenting, some have gone so far as to say that this generation is spoiled: they display high levels of narcissism and are used to getting what they want (Sigman, 2009; Shapira, 2010; Warner, 2010). A review of the studies from the West concur that millennials seek a work/life balance and a job that allows for flexibility; they are motivated by extrinsic benefits (economic incentives) and opportunities for advancement; they are looking for meaningful work experiences; and they desire comfortable and nurturing work environments (Hershatzer & Epstein, 2010; Twenge *et al.*, 2010; Schweitzer, Lyons & Ng, 2012). Furthermore, these millennials are focused on themselves and their ambitions, and display very little commitment to the organisations that do not meet their needs (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009).

Birnbaum, Ezring, Howell, Schulz and Sutton (2000) and Wilcox (2001) found that millennial youth regard the military job as unattractive because of the length of commitment, loss of personal control and freedom, family obligations, and the hazards associated with military service. The military resembles what Goffman (1989) called total institutions, where daily life is planned, controlled and formally administered by a bureaucracy that stipulates how a 24-hour day is to be spent. The military job is regulated and allows little freedom and flexibility. Where the South African youth displayed similarities with the millennials of the West, is that they too desire flexibility and freedom in the work place. The South African learners and MSDS members all found the lack of flexibility and the fact that the military job allows little room for individual expression and flexibility as unattractive.

Besides the fact that the military controls and regulates one's life and behaviour, it is also a 'greedy' institution, meaning that one's family and personal life must come second to the goals of the organisation (Segal, 1986). Two of the biggest factors that deter the youth from enlisting in the military are that it is perceived as too dangerous and risky, and it is not compatible with having a family. The findings of this study showed this quite pertinently. Firstly, it became evident that there is a growing aversion to risk among the youth, who were fixated on the notion that the military job is dangerous. Secondly, being in close proximity to family emerged as very important among the

learners, and many argued that being in the military would put too much strain on familial relationships. This perception was also confirmed by those who had recently joined the military. It is important to note that significant differences between the learners from different socio-economic backgrounds did not emerge on the matter pertaining to family. All the learners expressed some issue with having to be away from their families. This indicates that although parents may not necessarily resemble ‘helicopter’ parents as in the West, there is a strong desire to be close to family irrespective of socio-economic background.

Besides the issue of not being close to family, the MSDS members spoke about how being in the military led to feelings of isolation from society. The effect of this is more intense for the MSDS members, as they had just undergone a year of basic training and military socialisation, and hence were more cut-off from civilians. This was done by having their cellphones taken away, and being allowed only a few home visits for the whole year. This has negative implications for both recruitment and retention, as some of the MSDS members argued that they would not renew their contracts at the end of two years, due to the negative experience of being in the military.

### **6.2.2 Military culture**

Besides dissatisfaction with the military job, the learners and MSDS members raised a number of problematic aspects pertaining to the culture of the military. Cable and Turban’s (2001) *Employer Knowledge Framework* is a useful model to understand and evaluate the attractiveness of an organisation. This model posits that individuals have certain beliefs about an organisation’s attributes, whether factual or not, that influence the attractiveness of the job. The findings from both the learners and the MSDS members indicate that there is a growing resistance to military culture. This is attributed to a number of factors, one of which is the rise in individualism present in younger generations, and growing resistance to authority.

According to Wilcox (2001), the number one reason for why millennials do not find the military attractive is the loss of autonomy and individual identity, owing to the inability to express oneself and to question authority. Unequivocal obedience, discipline and subordination to authority are core values of the military culture that are drummed into the members from the moment they enter the organisation (Osiel, 1998; Burk, 1999). Interestingly, many of the learners favoured the emphasis on discipline in the military. However, at the same time, just as many found it displeasing being told what to do and when to do it. Similarly, the MSDS members argued that discipline is the best attribute of the military, but at the same time, most were dissatisfied with the system of ‘command and comply’. The MSDS members resented the fact that they always had to obey and comply, and could



not accept the fact that they were not permitted to question. They felt that this went against how they had been raised, as they had been taught to question, be assertive and confident in their individuality.

Once again, this shows how similar South African millennials are to those of the West, who are sometimes accused of being too individualistic, to the point of narcissism, and are over-confident in themselves and their abilities, having been raised with attentive and protective parents (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009). Because of this, Sigman (2009) argues that millennials are not receptive to authoritative and disciplined organisations. However, the findings of this study indicate that South African youth are not necessarily anti-discipline or anti-authority. Ender *et al.* (2014) argue that millennials are in fact trusting of authority, but only if they are permitted the opportunity to question, as was the case with the MSDS members. The MSDS members did not have a problem with discipline or having to follow commands; instead, they had a problem with not being able to question authority or ask for an explanation. However, this is difficult to accommodate in an organisation where compliance and respect for authority is the norm.

Another unattractive feature of military culture is that it is embodied in the warrior ethos, and this is essentially masculine. The image of the soldier is typically a ‘macho’ male, brave, strong, aggressive, with a proclivity to violence and risk-taking (Woodward, 1995). This image has served to subordinate and exclude both women and men who do not embody these ideals (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This emerged in the findings, where the learners acknowledged that the military is a place for those who like weapons and fighting. Moreover, it became evident that this liking for ‘weapons and fighting’ was assumed to refer to heterosexual men. The learners, both male and female, argued that the military job is thus not for women and homosexual men, although the latter was only referred to in a few focus group discussions. Moreover, these findings were consistent throughout the different samples of learners, thus indicating that race and socio-economic status has little significant influence on the perceptions of the military as a male-dominated institution.

These beliefs are rooted in the prevailing social and biological gendered arguments that regulate the expected behaviour of men and women (Malešević, 2010). The discussions among the learners revolved around the stereotypical assumptions that men are tough, and women are weak; that men are protectors, while women should love and nurture. These assumptions led to the belief that women cannot serve in the military because they are physically and psychologically not suitable. Those who were in support of women joining the military mostly raised the liberal-feminist (‘rights-based’) argument that, because of the changes in legislation regarding women, there are no longer separate male and female occupations, and there should therefore be a greater push for the inclusion of women



in all ranks in the armed forces (Miller, 1998). At the same, a number of issues were raised surrounding the challenges facing women in combat, such as the menstruation, pregnancy, child-care, and the perception that women in combat face a high risk of rape. Consequently, these arguments serve to reinforce and maintain gender differences, rather than break them down. Only now and again did the female learners indicate that they could bring different attributes or characteristics to the military, and thus should join the military because of difference and not ‘sameness’.

According to Ender *et al.* (2014), millennials are unlikely to be satisfied or remain in a career that offers little opportunity for advancement and achievement. This is evident in the experiences of the female MSDS members, who experienced a number of challenges that typically face ‘tokens’ in male-dominated institutions (Kanter, 1977; Yoder, 1991). Kanter (1977) argued that the solution to male-dominated institutions would be to balance the numbers of the token (women) with the dominant group (men). However, the experiences of the MSDS members indicate that the integration of more women does not necessarily eliminate gender stereotypes, as was posited by Yoder (1991).

In fact, the MSDS members – both males and females - became more aware of gendered differences during infantry training, which they found physically and emotionally taxing. For example, the men felt that women should not be in the military because they often have to assist the women to carry the heavy equipment, or slow their pace to allow female recruits to catch up. Women, in turn, experienced difficulties with training and menstruation, and the fact that the military environment remained hostile to them both physically and mentally. Many of the female members stated that they would prefer not to serve in the infantry, but that this was the only post open to them. Generally, the perception both outside and within the military is that the military institution is hostile to women. A recruitment officer agreed with this, and felt that the only way to overcome this to have more women in uniform visible to the public. Although this may encourage more women to join, I argue that this will still not alleviate the challenges faced by women within the ranks, particularly in the combat corps.

Besides gender, issues of race continue to be prevalent in the military. As already mentioned, questions surrounding race and gender were not initially included in the broad framework of questions, but emerged as salient in most of the focus group discussions, with both the learners and the MSDS members. Since the formation of the SANDF in 1994, the racial profile of the military has changed significantly. The need to correct past racial imbalances has also been associated with a radical affirmative action programme, which has tended to alienate certain population groups. According to Heineken (2013), whites feel particularly alienated from the military, and this is evident among the whites in this study, both in the high schools and in the military. The white school

learners asserted that they would not feel comfortable in the military due to perceived challenges with language, communication and trust. This resonated with the findings from the MSDS focus groups. What was remarkable is that many of the black learners still thought of the military as a white institution. This is possibly due to the historical legacy of the military in the townships (even before their birth) and the subsequent lack of visibility of the SANDF since then, within broader society. With regards to the MSDS members, on the one hand, language emerged as an isolating factor for whites, while on the other, many stated that it was really nice to work in a culturally-diverse environment.

Although there is some inconsistency in the literature regarding millennials and their willingness to work in teams (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009), the MSDS members emphasised the importance of teamwork and learning to work together with people from different cultures, religions, races and ethnic backgrounds. Dyer (1985) argues that cohesion and teamwork are key elements of military culture. Many of the members acknowledged that the support of their teammates was integral to their survival and completion of basic training at the Infantry school. This taught the members both independence and interdependence: how to rely on each other, and not on their parents, for support. This has positive implications for the military, because although it is clear that these youngsters are more individualistic and more dependent on their families, they see the value of the collective, and are willing to adapt to certain aspects of the military.

### ***6.2.3 Status of the military job***

Other than the evident dissatisfaction with factors inherent within the military, there are societal forces at play that influence the attractiveness of the military as an employer. One of the challenges facing military recruitment is that the military is no longer viewed as a unique and prestigious career choice in society. Consequently, the decline in the status and prestige of the military profession has negative implications for the ability of the military to attract 'high calibre' recruits. This links to the *Employer Knowledge Framework*, where Cable and Turban (2001) argue that an individual's beliefs of how others perceive an organisation, can influence their career decisions. Put more simply, the status of an organisation, or the privilege ascribed to an organisation in society, can influence whether individuals see it as a possible career option.

From the findings, it is evident that the military is not afforded a high status in society. This is largely attributed to the shift to an all-volunteer force, and the preference given to non-traditional missions. All the learners had the perception that the military is no longer actively engaged in armed conflict and that there is no longer an imminent threat to South Africa, therefore they question the relevance

and status of the military. The military was also judged according to its state of technology, weapon manufacturing and service values. Many of the learners compared the SANDF to the US Military and found South Africa wanting. The youth judge the South African military on the basis of what they see – the vehicles, deteriorating military bases, negative media reports. In fact, this was confirmed by the recruitment officers, who stated that when they are on their recruitment drives, the youth judge the SANDF based on the ‘run-down’ state of the technology.

One area where the learners tended to diverge on the views of the military was in relation to the opportunities provided by the military. The learners in the advantaged acknowledged that the only people who join the military are those who have no other choice, and this is because the military offers decent pay and benefits. These learners perceived this as a negative attributed and asserted that this is why the military is a low-status profession – it does not attract the best and the brightest. Where, on the other hand, the learners from the disadvantaged schools argued that the military is a high status profession because it provides opportunities for social mobility and social upliftment. For this reason, many were inclined to join. What this mean for the military is that it is less likely to attract young people from middle-income backgrounds, and more likely to recruit from low-income groups in South Africa because of the status associated with the military job.

#### ***6.2.4 Civil-military gap***

According to Cable and Turban (2001), the fundamental dimension of the *Employer Knowledge Framework* is employer familiarity, which informs both employer image and reputation. They argue that for an organisation to be attractive, new job seekers need to be familiar with and aware of the organisation. One of the greatest challenges facing armed forces in the West is the presence of a growing civil-military gap, which has led to a disconnect between armed forces, and their host societies (Dandeker, 2000; Morgan, 2001; Drago, 2006; Hyler, 2013). Wilcox (2001:99) aptly describes this disconnect in terms of the youth as the ‘Millennials are from Earth; the Military is from Mars’ paradox: young people are simply unaware of the military, and this impacts on their levels of interest in the military. Based on the findings from this study, a knowledge gap is prevalent among South African youth, especially seeing as some of the high school learners had no idea that South Africa even had an active military. This knowledge gap has led to misconceptions surrounding the military job, with the belief that it only entails fighting, shooting and going to war. This has two consequences for the military: firstly, this has led to the perception among many of the learners that the military is increasingly irrelevant because it is not currently actively engaged in any operations; and secondly, many young people chose not to join the military because they believe the only jobs available are soldiering.

A knowledge gap is not only a prevalent among the civilian youth, but also emerged among those who had chosen to join the military. Many of the MSDS members acknowledged that they had no idea what the military job entailed before joining. Most had simply joined because their parents told them to, or because they had read or seen it in the media, or at school. Hodgkinson and Sparkes (1997) posit that individuals tend to make career decisions based on the information they have received in the media or through friends and family. The only participants with an awareness of or an interest in the military are those who are familiar with someone in the military. Subsequently, Bright *et al.* (2005) argue that most information about careers emerges from the media (mass media and social media). However, as Ender *et al.* (2014) argue, this is problematic for military recruitment, as the media and popular culture only focus on the aspects of warfare. The media coverage of the death of soldiers in the CAR in 2013 had a significant impact on the young people in this study, who were now convinced that the military is about war and death, and were even more convinced that this job is not for them.

Accordingly, the biggest problem facing military recruitment is visibility in civilian society. As Cable and Turban (2001) rightly argue, job seekers need to be informed about occupations and organisations to be able to choose them. The problem is that the career opportunities in the military are not sufficiently advertised to school-leavers, unlike engineering and accountant jobs for example. The recruitment officers also raised this problem, and argued that it is not sufficient that the military advertises once a year on national television and attends a few career exhibitions. From the findings of this study, it is clear that there is some interest among young people in the military, but because of often-uninformed perceptions, most choose not to join.

### **6.3 Conclusion and recommendations**

The reality facing the South African military is that it is no longer an attractive career choice for those young South Africans who meet recruitment requirements, and this is attributed mainly to changing work values and preferences. The challenge facing armed forces across the globe, and evidently the SANDF too, is that the youth are more individualistic and motivated by self-centred work preferences. However, due to the nature of the military job, it is imperative that the military attracts members who are willing to make sacrifices to meet institutional goals. Besides the evident disinclination among the youth to sacrifice their own needs and themselves ‘in the name of duty’; the loss of autonomy and individuality; the high risk of danger; and the incompatibility with family life all present the military as an unattractive employer. Because the youth prioritise extrinsic work values, the military will be forced to offer more economic and personal incentives to meet recruitment

targets. There are, however, some features that some youth find attractive such as the adventure, training, travel opportunities – and even discipline. In order to attract these youngsters, these favourable attributes of the military should be emphasised.

Another challenge facing military recruitment is that it is subject to the civilian labour market and the current state of the economy. The civilian labour market affects the military in two ways: firstly, youth place a high level of importance on economic incentives when choosing a career, the implication of which is that the military will have to offer competitive salaries in order to attract high calibre recruits. Secondly, economic instability and high levels of unemployment present the military as a preferred career choice for those who are unable to find stable jobs. As youth unemployment is endemic in South Africa, the military does not have a problem recruiting sufficient numbers. The problem is that the military will disproportionately recruit from low-income groups who are in search of a job. The implication for military recruitment is that few are joining the SANDF because they are interested in a military job, and the military will find it increasingly difficult to recruit youth from middle-income backgrounds. Accordingly, this influences the ability of the military to be demographically representative and technologically-advanced.

The problem is that education and academic results are still disproportionately influenced by race and class in South Africa. Therefore, although there are school-leavers from underprivileged schools with satisfactory Mathematics and Science results, they are a minority. It is imperative that the military seek out these candidates from the disadvantaged schools. But at the same time, the military needs to become more attractive to school-leavers from advantaged schools, in order to staff the highly technical posts. Consequently, and this is particularly evident in the Western Cape, class and socio-economic status is reflective of race. The young middle-income school leavers are predominately white and coloured, but the low-income school leavers are fundamentally coloured and black. Hence, as the military is not attractive to middle-income school leavers, this has implications for the military's ability to recruit sufficient numbers of white school-leavers, and increasingly coloured school-leavers, as was evident in this study.

Not only does the military job appear unattractive to these learners, but issues were also raised relating to the culture of the military. One of the biggest challenges facing the military as an employer of choice is that it upholds a rigid, unwavering authoritative system of 'command and comply' in an era of rising individualism, where young people have been taught to embrace their individuality. As these youngsters are not receptive to the 'comply, no questions asked' system in the military, it is necessary for a system of authority to be developed that instils discipline and obedience, rather than enforces it.

As was reflected among both the high school learners and the MSDS members, discipline is an appealing feature of the military, and the members are willing to obey, as long as they are able to question orders. The SANDF will have to develop a new system of command that shifts away from an impartial authority to an interactive one.

Another challenge facing recruitment is the perception that the military is only for ‘macho’ men. This is perceived as a deterrent for both males and females who are not interested in the ‘guns and fighting’ side, and who do not meet the hegemonic masculine ideals ascribed to men in the military. For the military to be attractive, more awareness needs to be created on the different jobs in the military, and young people need to be informed that not all jobs ascribe to the ‘Rambo’ image that is depicted in the media. Moreover, the women in the military, and those in non-traditional occupations, need to be made more visible to the public. Although the females in the MSDS raised a number of challenges related to being in the infantry, every one of them had completed basic military training, alongside their male-counterparts. This is regarded as one of the toughest experiences in a military career. Their experiences need to be shared with school-leavers to encourage all those who have considered a military career, but have been dissuaded by prevailing social expectations of women.

As already mentioned, one of the implications of recruiting only from low-income groups is that the military is likely to fall short on recruitment targets of whites. However, another factor that influences the recruitment of whites and coloureds is the perception that the military is predominately black, and therefore whites and coloureds believe that they will have limited opportunities for advancement. This is attributed to the emphasis on affirmative action policies. White youth are also dissuaded from joining because of feelings of isolation and alienation, and the belief that they will be unable to work with others because of challenges with language and trust. Moreover, whites and coloureds from middle-income schools are dissuaded from the military because of perceptions that it is no longer a high-status profession, and are more inclined to select civilian careers that are perceived as more prestigious. However, the belief that the military is no longer a high-status job is prevalent among all the youth, because it is no longer perceived as a unique career option that can be distinguished from civilian jobs, and because of perceptions that the military is ‘run-down’.

What most of this research comes down to is that a widespread lack of awareness in the South African public hampers the ability of the military to recruit the right quantity and quality of recruits. The presence of a civil-military gap indicates that young people do not have the knowledge, or rather the ‘right’ knowledge about what the military is, what its purpose is, what jobs are available, the fact that it actively recruits school-leavers, and the importance of having a strong military. This study confirms

the Minister's claim that the recruitment strategy requires a complete overhaul, and recommends that the military needs to actively advertise and inform all South Africans about the military so as to better the chances of recruiting the right candidates (eNCA, 2014). It is not sufficient that the military recruitment drives tend to be localised around the major cities in South Africa. It is not sufficient that the military advertises on national television once a year, and attends a few major career exhibitions. The reason for this is that the school-leavers who meet the requirements of the military, like those in this study, are not informed about the military as an employer, or they are not informed about the opportunities available in a military career. As some of the learners aptly commented: just get the military to show up with guns and big trucks, do a short presentation, and they will have heaps of young and interested people looking for a different career experience.

In a nutshell, what this study demonstrates is two things. First a 'clash' between the youth and the military values, that means that the military as an institution needs to be more 'in step' with those it hopes to recruit, if it wants to be seen as an employer of choice. The second, and possibly even more important given that a change in 'military culture' is less likely in the short term, is for the military to become more visible. The SANDF needs to bridge the knowledge gap and lack of awareness of what the military does, and what it can offer in terms of careers and opportunities. A more intensive information campaign can go a long way to inform the youth of South Africa about what the military is and whether they can see themselves as part of this institution, or not.

### ***6.3.1 Recommendations for SANDF***

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the military change and adapt recruiting strategies to attract a new generation of job seekers. It is essential that the SANDF develop a comprehensive advertising program that aims to inform young school-leavers from across South Africa. This program should run throughout the year, and not just in February. The military needs to target different high schools in each province, and ensure that each school is visited at least once every three years. Importantly, according to the current recruitment strategy, the SANDF prioritises previously disadvantaged schools, however in order to recruit a 'high' calibre recruit, the SANDF needs to target advantaged schools as well. The SANDF need to target those school-leavers who are looking for an alternative to tertiary education, as not all young school leavers with satisfactory results, see the worth of going to university.

During the recruitment process, the SANDF needs to emphasise those aspects of the military job that the youth find appealing. These aspects include adventure, outdoor-based activities, physical training, weapons training, discipline, and teamwork. As many youngsters have little understanding of military



work and culture, a way to introduce this could be though Youth Military Camps be conducted on an annual basis in different areas of South Africa, where school learners can attend a weekend of military ‘training’. These camps can be classified as team-building exercises that give youth (both male and female) a taste of how it is to be in the military. Different programs can be designed for the different branches of the military.

Although the youth in this study were in favour of economic benefits, many seem to be motivated by intangible values such as personal growth, self-enrichment, interpersonal relationships, and social development. The military needs to emphasise how these values can be achieved through military service. Although the military emphasises the collective over the individual, the findings indicate that it is possible to be both individualistic and to value social upliftment and the value of working with others.

The SANDF needs to emphasise the positive factors that attract young people to the military and aim to educate the youth about those aspects that dissuade them to join. It is apparent that the ‘fear of the unknown’ deters young people from joining the military. Most know little of the career options the military has to offer and that the military does not just revolve around combat and fighting. Other negative aspects of the military job include the loss of autonomy, and the emphasis on obedience and discipline. Although this is the norm in the military and cannot simply be changed, if the military educates the young school leavers about the importance of discipline and obedience, and the necessity thereof, youngsters may be more willing to conform to such values. Additionally, the military can put a positive ‘twist’ on the negative aspects. Instead of the loss of independence and individuality, the value of team work, self-discipline, and development of self-confidence can be emphasised.

Lastly, the military needs to adopt ‘new’ and different recruiting strategies to attract young school-leavers based on what they value. For example, these millennials favour technology and are avid users and viewers of social media, like Twitter and Facebook. The military needs to actively engage with social media sites to develop a platform that it is more approachable for these school leavers.

### ***6.3.2 Recommendation for future research***

Future research is necessary to establish whether these trends are evident in other parts of South Africa, as this study only included school-leavers from the Western Cape. Furthermore, further research needs to be conducted among rural learners (these were omitted in this study) to establish whether attitudes of youth living in urban and rural settings differ. This was not considered in this study. As this study is the first of its kind in South Africa, I believe that future research, both

quantitative and qualitative, can be conducted in order to expand on these findings. It is necessary to conduct research in those high schools where the SANDF has advertised the recruitment program, to confirm whether awareness of the military does in fact influence willingness to join, as suggested.

Further research also needs to be conducted on the different branches of the military, as this study is largely reflective of the Army. It is important to establish whether young South Africans have different perceptions of the Navy, Air Force and the Medical Services, and whether the MSDS members in these branches have different experiences of their service and the military, in terms of race, gender, military culture, and status of the profession.

Future studies should also explore different generations' values about the military, and how this may impact on the youth's perceptions of military service, in the light of the finding that parents and family have a significant influence on the career decisions of individuals. For example, some of the parents of the learners in this study were conscripts in the former SADF and may have a negative perception of the SANDF. Alternatively, parents with no military experience may influence children in other ways, in terms of encouraging or discouraging their children from serving in the military which today is not used for national defence, but mostly for peace and security in the region.

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## **ADDENDUM A:**

### **Framework of Questions for Focus Group Discussions with High School Learners**

1. When thinking about your future career, where would you like to work?
2. What are you looking for in a job? What do you hope to achieve in your job?
3. What do you know about the military?
4. Have you ever considered serving in the military?
5. What is your impression of the military, what image do you see when I say the military?
6. If you were to join the military... (Why?)
7. Where do you get your information about the military?
8. What type of information would you like to have about the military

## **ADDENDUM B:**

### **Framework of Questions for Focus Group Discussions with MSDS members**

1. What motivated you to join the military?
2. How did you find it adjusting to the culture of the organisation?
3. What did you like and dislike about being in the military?
4. How did you find it going back into civilian society?
5. What skills do you think are most valued in the civilian sector?
6. Where are you going in your second year of service?

## **ADDENDUM C:**

### **Framework of Questions for Semi-structured interviews with SANDF personnel**

1. From which areas do you largely recruit? Which areas do large proportions of the recruits come from? Do you make a distinction between urban and rural recruits (do you actively try and recruit from both areas)
2. What are the general characteristics of the ideal recruits for the various sectors? Race, gender, age, qualifications, physical capabilities etc.
3. What is the recruitment pool in SA? How many optimal recruits do we have on average in SA? Is there a problem with quality manpower? Issues with demand and the supply?
4. Where recruitment shortages are arising? How are the sectors of the defence force fairing? Is this related to skills shortages? Interest? etc.?
5. What is the recruitment process? How do individuals go about getting into defence force? What mechanisms are used? Where are the recruitment offices?

6. Are you currently recruiting to all the different arms of service – has anything been placed on hold due to constraints?
7. How long does the recruitment process take in SA, a week, a month, a year? What processes do recruits have to go through? How long does it take for a new recruit to be enlisted?
8. When is recruiting done in the year? Does this occur once a year, twice a year, all year round? Is this advertised?
9. What are the main communication channels used by recruiters (methods of advertising)?
10. Do you feel that youth are actively being targeted for recruitment? What campaigns are being used to attract a mixture of urban and rural, ideal recruits? What efforts are being made to come into contact with potential youths?
11. What are the figures for meeting recruiting targets? How many candidates per position? How many candidates qualify for that position?
12. Do you make use of any forms of media to promote the SANDF and recruitment?
13. What aspects of the defence force do recruitment officers emphasise in order to attract new recruits – is it aspects of pay and benefits or is it aspects intrinsic to the SANDF and the value within the defence force?
14. What do you think youth are looking for in their careers? How has the recruitment process changed to deal with this? What type of youth do you think want to enlist in the military/have a military job? What opportunities are offered to attract high quality recruits in terms of remuneration and educational benefits, future civilian labour market opportunities?
15. What challenges do you foresee recruiters facing? Do you think we will be able to meet targets now/future? What factors do you feel would mostly contribute to these challenges?

## **ADDENDUM D:**



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### **STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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#### **To join or not: Factors Influencing Military Recruitment in South Africa Learner Assent Form**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Megan Smith, Masters in Sociology, from the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University and the results of this study will be in contribution to a research project. You were selected as a possible participant in this study in order to reveal your opinions and attitudes on the military and possible reasons as to why you may or may not, enlist for military service.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to establish the issues surrounding military recruitment and the impressions of the youth (high school learners) on military employment.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Partake in groups discussions with your fellow peers regarding the military and employment opportunities
- The focus groups will be approximately 50minutes in length and will require that you only participate in one focus group discussion.
- Focus groups will require interactive conversations with your peers regarding questions surrounding the military – all that we require is for you, as the learner, to participate and provide your opinions on the question posed to you.

#### **3. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information provided by the learners during the focus group discussions, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the learners' permission. This study aims to establish

overarching opinions and attitudes of the learners; therefore it is not necessary to record individual information of the learners that participate. All focus group discussions will be recorded, and will be saved in a locked folder on my hard drive after every focus group session.

#### **4. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF LEARNER</b>
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**I hereby consent to participate in this study which has been verbally explained to me by Megan Smith, and I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.**

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**Signature of Learner**

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**Date**

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**Signature of Researcher**

**ADDENDUM E:**

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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**  
**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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**To join or not: Factors Influencing Recruitment in South Africa**  
**Parental Consent Forms**

Your daughter/son has been requested to participate in a research study conducted by Megan Smith, Masters in Sociology, from the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University and the results of this study will be in contribution to a research project. Your daughter/son has been selected as a possible participant in this study, in order to express his/her opinions and attitudes on the military and possible reasons as to why he/she may or may not enlist for military service.

**5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to establish the issues surrounding military recruitment and the impressions of the youth (high school learners) on military employment.

**6. PROCEDURES**

If your daughter/son is to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to do the following things:

- Partake in groups discussions with his/her fellow peers regarding the military and employment opportunities
- The focus groups will be approximately 50minutes in length and will require that your daughter/son only participate in one focus group discussion.
- Focus groups will require interactive conversations with his/her peers regarding questions surrounding the military – all that we require is for your son/daughter, as the learner, to participate and provide his/her opinions on the question posed to them.

**7. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, inconveniences that may arise during this study. This study merely aims to establish what your children know about the military, whether they like or dislike the military, and whether any of them have considered a job in the military, and the reasons for this. Your children will be allowed to participate in a group discussion with their peers where I as



the researcher merely guide the discussion. If, for any reason, your child feels uncomfortable, they may choose to leave the discussion at any time without any consequences being incurred. This will be clearly explained to the children prior to the research.

## **8. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

This research has the potential to make a contribution to the military and the policies surrounding military recruitment. In the light of this research, the military will be advised on the manner in which they should approach the youth, as future recruits, and how they should use advertising and the media to gather new recruits. The opinions and suggestions provided by the learners shall be given to the military in order to make the necessary changes and adjustments.

## **9. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

**Please note that there will be no payment made for your children's participation in this study.**

## **10. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information provided by the learners during the focus group discussions, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the learners' permission. This study aims to establish overarching opinions and attitudes of the learners; therefore it is not necessary to record individual information of the learners that participate. All focus group discussions will be recorded, and will be saved in a locked folder on my hard drive after every focus group session. No school or individual names will be included in the report and no individual/participant or school will be identifiable

## **11. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

As parents/legal guardians, you are liable to decide whether your daughter/son may participate in this study, or not. If your daughter/son chooses to volunteer in this study, they may withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind. Your daughter/son may also refuse to answer any questions they do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your daughter/son from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## **12. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the principal of your daughter/son's high school; Megan Smith (the researcher) contacted via email on [15600289@sun.ac.za](mailto:15600289@sun.ac.za) and Professor L. Heineken (Research supervisor) at [Lindy@sun.ac.za](mailto:Lindy@sun.ac.za).

## **13. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your daughter/son's participation without penalty. Your daughter/son shall not be waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of his/her participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding the rights of a research

subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN</b>
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I hereby acknowledge that I have received satisfactory information regarding this study from the high school and the researcher, Megan Smith. I was given the opportunity to inquire about certain aspects and my questions have been satisfactorily answered.

I hereby consent that my child may be allowed to participate in this study, under supervision of the high school and its staff.

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**Signature of Parent/ Legal Guardian**

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**Date**

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**Signature of Researcher**