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THE EXPERIENCES OF A GROUP OF WOMEN-SOLDIERS SERVING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

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ABSTRACT

This research report examines the experiences of a group of women-soldiers serving in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in relation to two major sociological concerns. The first concern is the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF, and the second is gender issues within the military.

There is little literature concerning women-soldiers in relation to the establishment of the SANDF. In addition, the literature on women and militarism suggests that there is no consensus amongst women around key questions regarding the military. Therefore, researching the experiences of a group of women-soldiers required the use of research methods which would enable a free flow of information by the respondents. This particular group of research subjects was identified through the quota sampling technique. The group represented a large variety of social identities and backgrounds. The informants were interviewed primarily through structured in-depth interviews.

The central finding of this research is that the informants had various experiences according to different sociological characteristics, such as race, previous military service, or marital status. In relation to the transition and the establishment of the SANDF, military experience and race were found to be the most important factors in shaping the respondents' experiences. In this regard, I have argued that the SANDF reflects the former SADF. Concerning gender issues within the military, marital status appeared as the most relevant factor. Considering this, it is suggested that the social responsibilities attached to wifehood and motherhood influence women toward traditional female domains in the workplace.

In the memory of my friend Ayala Harush

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Yael Weiss

(Name of candidate)

23 day of December, 1998.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC- African National Congress

APLA- Azanian Peoples' Liberation Army (the PAC's armed wing)

DoD- Department of Defence

IDF- Israeli Defence Force

MK- Umkhonto We Sizwe (the ANC's armed wing)

NGO- Non Governmental Organisation

PAC- Pan Africanist Congress

SACP- South African Communist Party

SACTU- South African Congress of Trade Union

SADF- South African Defence Force

SAMS- South African Medical Services

SANDF- South African National Defence Force

SAP- South African Police

UK- United Kingdom

USA- United States of America

TABLE OF MILITARY OFFICERS' RANKS[1]

1. General
2. Lieutenant General
3. Major General
4. Brigadier
5. Colonel
6. Lieutenant Colonel
7. Major
8. Captain
9. Lieutenant
10. Second Lieutenant

(1) This table refers to officers' ranks as used in the Army, the Air-Force, and in the Medical Services. This research does not use the unique terminology concerning ranks in the Navy.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study explores the experiences of a group of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF in relation to two key sociological concerns. The first issue is the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF, and the second is gender and militarism.

Both militarism and gender were put on the agenda in relation to the South African transition. However, these two issues have usually been addressed separately. (Bazilli, 1991, 2; Cock, 1991b, 28, 30) The South African Constitution emphasises the subordination of the security services to national legislation (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1997, 112), in contrast to their position during the apartheid era. At the same time, the Constitution forbids any form of discrimination: "The state must not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1997, 7). The combination of the two latter clauses means that the SANDF is obliged to operate as an equal opportunity institution, as is the case with any other state institution. This research examines, although on a very limited scale, the implementation of such equal-opportunity policies as perceived by a group of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF.

One of the aims of the South African defence policy is that the SANDF should "broadly reflect" the composition of the South African society. Therefore, theoretically, women may become a majority in the military, as they comprise more than fifty percent of the South African population (*The Citizen*, November 25, 1995). However, very little has been written about the issue of women and militarism in contemporary South Africa. It seems that Cock (1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1995) is the primary academic who examines this field thoroughly. Although Nathan (1994), Williams (1994, 1997), and Seegers (1996) examine the transformation of the South African military, their work does not focus on the issue of women in particular.

As mentioned above, the issue of women in the South African military has been virtually ignored in the academic literature, excluding the works of Cock. This issue is also virtually ignored in the local popular literature. However, when an article concerning this issue is published, it often focuses on the uniqueness or the 'strangeness' of women-soldiers serving in former male-only jobs. In addition, it is also likely to be

titled in a sensationalist manner, such as "Abandon ship! Women aboard" (*SALUT*, January 1998, 50), or "The hand that rocks the cradle holds the rifle" (*Saturday Star*, September 19, 1998). Such representations of women-soldiers highlight the notion of the military as 'a man's world', a world where women do not belong.

Different aspects concerning the issue of women in the military are continuously debated in different forums around the world. As the findings of this research show, questions concerning women in combat or women as military leaders were answered in various ways by the women-soldiers interviewed. The feminist literature also varies in relation to such questions. While 'liberal' feminists advocate equal-opportunities for women serving in the military as a means for broader gender equality, 'radical' feminists argue that women must avoid military service in order to remain true to their 'natural female pacifism' (Cock, 1991a, 189-190). Different countries, such as South Africa, the USA, and Israel, have recently experienced legal changes concerning the utilisation of women in their armed forces (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1997, 7; Armor, 1996, 25; Fleesler, 1995[2]; *Ha'aretz*, 11 February 1998; *Ha'aretz*, 9 March 1998). One of the aims of this research, therefore, is to highlight the different aspects and dilemmas of the issue of women's utilisation within armed forces, such as the participation of women in combat roles.

This study draws heavily on international literature because of the scarcity of South African literature concerning women and militarism. Moreover, the new legislation which enforces equal opportunity for women in the SANDF, lacks specific complementary rules and guidelines on women's specific needs, such as pregnancy. There is no available South African literature which refers to questions of women-soldiers' physical limitations during pregnancy in cases of, for example, serving on a rattling ship or being exposed to heavy sounds. Local Commanding Officers who experience, for the first time, women in their combat units, rely on American and British publications concerning such issues (Major A I Martinez, interview, 18 August 1998). This research serves as a narrow and limited response to the need for local literature regarding the question of women in the military.

This research was conducted among a group of twenty-seven women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. Overall, twenty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted. The interviews took place in eleven military venues (eight in Gauteng, two in the Free State,

(2) The pages in this document are not numbered.

and one in the Cape) and in two civilian settings in Johannesburg. This group of women-soldiers was selected in order to obtain a variety of responses in relation to the research areas. The group was constructed according to the quota sampling technique, which aimed at producing representative samples in relation to the general numbers and characteristics of military women (Moser & Kalton, 1971, 129 cited in de Vaus, 1991, 78).

It was anticipated that different sociological characteristics, such as race or marital status, would influence the interviewees' responses. This initial assumption shaped the strategy of the research, in the sense that I aimed to obtain a large variety of social backgrounds within the group of the interviewees.

As mentioned before, two major concerns are analysed in this research. The first theme was the transition and the establishment of the SANDF. The notion of 'the South African transition' refers to the new social and legal order achieved in South Africa since the 1994 elections. Following the elections, the new (interim) Constitution was recognised and the SANDF was established. The SANDF has integrated six former statutory forces (the SADF and the armed forces of the five former homelands), and two non-statutory forces, MK (the ANC's armed wing) and APLA (the PAC's armed wing). In addition, it has recruited troops who did not have any former military experience. Furthermore, the SANDF is subordinate to civilian control and is obliged to practice equal-opportunities for all its members.

The second theme was gender issues within the military. Historically, Western societies have based the concept of militarism on a gender dichotomy, identifying men with fighting and killing, in contrast to women who need protection in order to ensure their reproductive role (Elshtain, 1987, 164; Chapkis, 1988, 108; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 89). Similarly, it has been argued that even when women are incorporated into the military, they are always assigned the inferior position of 'camp followers' (Hacker cited in Isaksson, 1988, 1; Enloe, 1983,1). This notion means that women are only allowed to *serve* the military, but are never allowed to *become* the military (Enloe, 1983, 15). The separation between 'protectors' and 'protected' is followed by the separation between 'front' and 'rear'. It seems that such definitions are also gendered, as the 'front' is continuously redefined in relation to where women are absent (Enloe, 1983, 15).

Since the Second World War, growing numbers of women have been incorporated into national armed forces. In order to obtain a comparative perspective in relation to women-soldiers serving in the SANDF, this research also explores the position of women-soldiers in the armed forces of the USA, the UK, and Israel. These military forces have been chosen because of their concern with promoting gender equality. This is evidenced by The Gulf War experience, where women-soldiers were utilised in the 'front' by these armies. This perspective was backed by the interviewees' perceptions as well. When asked which armed forces, around the world, practised gender equality, the interviewees scored the American military first, the British armed force second and, third, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). The literature points at significant progress in women's positions during the 1990s, especially with regard to the 1991 Gulf War. However, in all three armies, women are under-represented in relation to their general proportion of the population, and are excluded from different types of combat roles.

The literature emphasises the gender division of labour in society. Under capitalism a dichotomy between the masculine external-productive world, and the feminine internal-emotional one has been created (Zaretzky, 1976, 34). Furthermore, the labour force itself is also sex-segregated: Most jobs are occupied mainly by one of the sexes, and "the more women in a job category, the lower the wages associated with that type of job" (Burn, 1996, 84). Regarding women-soldiers, two initial assumptions were made in this regard. One, that the military also practised a gender division of work, meaning that women-soldiers were likely to occupy 'traditional female jobs'. The second assumption was that a role-conflict between the interviewees' domestic and labour responsibilities would occur or result (Rowbotham, 1973, xv).

Although the research deals with a particular group of women, women-soldiers serving in the SANDF, it recognises the fact that their experiences will be very similar to those of women who operate within male-dominated environments. Therefore, the responses of the research subjects can reflect issues of concern to a broader group of women who face such challenges.

The category of 'women' is not homogenous. The experiences of women are also shaped by class, race, ethnicity, and other factors (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 96-97). Therefore, it was expected that these factors would influence the interviewees' responses. Seven characteristics were examined: age, rank, race, arm of service, military experience, marital status, and job categorisation.

The research explores the variety of responses expressed by the interviewees in relation to the main two themes mentioned before. The findings suggest that this group of women-soldiers had held high expectations regarding the transition and the establishment of the SANDF. However, in practice, their experiences proved otherwise. Concerning gender issues within the military, the central finding of this study illustrates how these women-soldiers hold contradictory positions. While some of their responses and practices reinforced traditional women's roles in the army, other responses and practices challenged such positions. This discrepancy can be explained by acknowledging the coexistence of multiple roles held by the women-soldiers interviewed (Walker, 1993, 11). For example, while, as soldiers, the majority of the interviewees advocated equal-opportunities for women within the military, some of the mothers amongst them experienced a role conflict between their familial and military responsibilities.

The most significant characteristic regarding the theme of the transition and the establishment of the SANDF was the informants' previous military experience. The interviewees either joined the SANDF from civil life, or from a former armed force, namely: The SADF, MK, or APLA. The findings show that the type of military experience was the most important factor in shaping the interviewees' experiences of the transition. This finding highlights the fact that participation in any armed force in pre-transition South Africa was politically motivated or oriented.

Regarding gender issues within the military, marital status was found the most significant factor in shaping the interviewees' experiences. The findings show that those interviewees who are single with no children express the highest level of 'masculine' work-patterns. My interpretation of this is that women do not fit 'naturally' into traditional female jobs. It is rather when women get married or become mothers that they are more likely to be drawn into more 'feminine' occupations, which enable the coexistence of their conflicting roles at home and at work.

The answers to the key question of the research, the interpretation of the material collected and the explanations of the questions, are developed systematically in the following chapters:

Chapter Two documents the relevant literature in relation to four topics, namely gender; militarism; women-soldiers in the SANDF; and women-soldiers in the armed forces of the USA, the UK, and Israel. The literature on gender is examined through

three main perspectives: gender identity as a social construction; the gender division of labour and, additional social identities to gender. Following that, it is argued that militarism, as a concept, is dependent on a gender dichotomy between the male protectors and the protected females (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 89; Elshtain, 1987, 164; Chapkis, 1988, 108). Although some of the literature challenges the historical link between men and war (Isaksson, 1988, 1; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 93), much of it also illustrates how this gender dichotomy has been currently reinforced (Isaksson, 1988, 2; Enloe, 1993, 15; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 114). The section which analyses the position of women-soldiers in the SANDF begins with a historical analysis of the position of women who served in the former SADF and MK. It then explores literature which highlighted the need to include gender issues in the integration process and to ensure that the SANDF would reflect the social and political changes in South Africa (Cock, 1991b, 30; Cock, 1995, 50; Nathan, 1994, 3; Cock, 1995, 99). Lastly, this section examines the current position of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. The section which examines the position of women-soldiers in the militaries of the USA, the UK, and Israel identified the 1991 Gulf War as a turning point in relation to the position of women-soldiers in these armies.

Chapter Three details the research design, strategy, and method of this study. This chapter focuses on the methods of structured in-depth interviews and the quota sampling technique.

Chapter Four presents, explains, and interprets the major findings of this study. It is divided into two sections, according to the main two themes researched: the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF, and gender issues within the military. This chapter details the responses of the interviewees to the different questions posed during the interviews, and aims to interpret and analyse these responses in a sociological manner. The main finding of this study is that the experiences of this particular group of women-soldiers vary according to their different sociological characteristics. This finding suggests that women-soldiers within the SANDF do not consist of a homogenous category, and that their different backgrounds shape their experiences and attitudes accordingly. Regarding the transition and the establishment of the SANDF, the major finding reveals that the majority of the interviewees experienced the transition into the SANDF with mixed feelings. In connection with gender issues within the military, the major finding is that these women-soldiers express contradictory and incompatible positions and views. However, most of the responses provided by the informants challenge traditional women's roles within the military.

The concluding chapter of this research report emphasises the main findings and arguments of this study. It opens by exploring the scarcity of available material concerning women-soldiers in the SANDF, suggesting that this study can serve as a starting point for further and much more thorough analysis of the subject. Next, this chapter reports on each of the other chapters comprising this study. It then examines the significance of this research in relation to the South African agenda, and the universal debate concerning women in the military. This chapter also suggests two areas of further research concerning issues which were only hinted at: the necessity of an armed force in the new South Africa, and the nature of the military, in general, and of war, in particular. Lastly, this chapter argues that the extent of social integration within the SANDF, especially in relation to race and gender, might reflect the social integration in South African society, and visa versa. It, therefore, suggests that projects for equal-opportunity should be further encouraged both in the military and in civil society.

CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This chapter aims to present a critical review of literature relevant to the central themes, questions, and issues of this research; namely, the experiences of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF.

The literature review will explore four major areas of discussion. The first is gender. Under this topic, literature concerning gender identity and gender relations will be examined. The second topic is militarism. The literature review in this regard will focus on the relations between militarism and women. These two areas will be explored through relevant theoretical literature. The third topic analysed will be women in the SANDF. This section aims to connect the two first theoretical topics with the South African reality. It will examine the level of gender equality in the SANDF. The last topic, in this chapter, will be comparative in nature. It will explore the position of women soldiers in the armed forces of the USA, the UK, and Israel. This over-view will allow the comparison between the current positions of women-soldiers in the SANDF and their 'colleagues' in other armies which seem to be promoting gender equality.

2.1 Gender identity and gender relations

The concept of 'gender' focuses on the relations between men and women in society. The term 'gender' reflects the notion that many differences between men and women are constructed, socially and culturally, in contrast to the term 'sex', which reflects the biological differences between the sexes (Gentile, 1993; Unger & Crawford, 1993 cited in Burn, 1996, xix; Bazilli, 1991, 8). Although gender relates to the social construction, representation and organisation of sexual differences and biological reproduction, it cannot be reduced to biology only (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 112). Gender is also viewed as a form of social norm to which we conform due to various pressures (Burn, 1996, 182).

Three main issues will be explored in relation to this topic: The first issue will focus on gender identity as a social construction, in a contrast to 'biological' or 'natural' differences. The second will examine the relationships between gender categorisation and the social division of labour, while the third will analyse the combination of gender with additional social variables, such as race and class.

2.1.1 Gender identity as a social construction

This section will examine the socio-psychological process of socialising individuals into gendered identities.

Nearly half a century ago, Simone de Beauvoir took a radical view when she argued that gender identity was a social construction and not a biological given: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir, 1953, 9). She believed that all women shared a communal experience which was their socialisation as the inferior 'other' in relation to men (de Beauvoir, 1953, 3, 450). According to her, boys and girls do not perceive themselves as different until they receive different social messages. Such messages refer to the 'right' way of behaviour, which is sexually determined (de Beauvoir, 1953, 12). The only means to achieve gender equality in society, in her view, was to create an androgynous world in which females will be socialised as equal to men (de Beauvoir; 1953, 459).

Although 'classic' feminism started on the terrain of sexual antagonism between men and women (Delmar, 1986, 27-28 cited in Komter, 1991, 43), more recently, feminists tend to underline the social similarities between the sexes. Bem, a psychologist, testifies that she has long wrestled with one central question, namely: the cultural transformation of both male and female infants into masculine and feminine adults (Bem, 1987, 304). Although she focuses on the psychology of the individual, she also leaves room for the social influences concerning this process. Bem argues that the interaction between biology and culture is the factor which produces many gender differences (Bem, 1987, 305). Furthermore, she identifies environmental influences, institutional practices and normative expectations as crucial determinants of gender differences and, hence, inequality (Bem, 1987, 305). Her discussion focuses on sex typing (Bem, 1987, 306), arguing that children learn to associate characteristics with sex categories in a way in which "cultural myths become self-fulfilling prophecies..." (Bem, 1987, 308).

Burn, a social psychologist, also maintains that gender differences are mainly socially created. Furthermore, she argues that the information-processing strategies in society lead people to perceive gender differences as larger than they really are (Burn, 1996,

xix). Burn argues that, in Western culture, gender stereotypes often operate as social norms and that gender differences are treated as facts of nature. Yet, she stresses that different individuals in society exhibit different levels of conformity in relation to gender roles (Burn, 1996, 30). Her emphasis on social influences is so great that she explains gender differences in mathematical skills, emotional expression or aggressive behaviour by the different social demands made on males and females (Burn, 1996, 57).

Gender analysis is often identified with women's studies. Because feminism rose from the acknowledgement of women's inferior position in society, early feminist literature used to focus on women. However, some writers criticise the analysis of gender through women's lens only. Hoch maintains that while men cannot afford to ignore the problems raised by women, women cannot solve their problems if they are forever in opposition to men: "We must both realise, *we are in it together*" (Hoch, 1979, 6). Cohen believes that "Talking about women without talking about men, is like clapping hands with one hand only" (cited in Yuval-Davis, 1997, 1). Burn urges us to be aware of the fact that traditional gender roles are limiting to both men and women (Burn, 1996, xix). Bazilli warns against the reduction of the broad term of 'gender' to that of 'women'. She argues that such a reduction limits the gender discussion to areas traditionally regarded as female domains (Bazilli, 1991, 9). Other writers advocate men studies, as a complementary research to that provided by women (Brod(ed), 1987)[3].

One major question concerning women's subordination to men is the process which makes this subordination possible. Lindsey maintains that gender norms are followed by gender stereotyping, which results in sexism, and the belief that the female category is inferior to that of the male (Lindsey, 1990, 2). Komter underlines the fact that the relation between the sexes is fundamentally determined by power (Komter cited in Davis et al, 1991, 51). Goldberg proclaims that patriarchy is a universal phenomenon: "All societies that have ever existed have associated hierarchical dominance with males and have been ruled by hierarchies overwhelmingly controlled by males" (Goldberg, 1989, 16). Genovese argues that although a few women have headed national governments, none of them has succeeded in changing the patriarchal power structure of her society (Genovese, 1993, 217).

(3) This whole book, *The Making of Masculinities*, deals with the issue of men's studies.

The existence of power differences between the sexes raises the question of transforming this situation into one of gender equality. A few attempts have been made in history in order to challenge the former social order. One of them was the Soviet Revolution in the beginning of the twentieth century, which aimed at abolishing patriarchy as well as capitalism. Responding to that revolution, de Beauvoir doubted whether it was enough to change laws, institutions, customs, public opinion, and so on, for men and women to become truly equal (de Beauvoir, 1953, 457). Bazilli also states that legal change is not enough for transforming gender power relations and creating gender equality: "If the gender power relations remain the same, legal individual rights do not solve the problem (Bazilli, 1991, 14). Burn believes that gender equality is needed for both sexes because traditional gender roles are unjust and do not suit the individuals who live in modern society (Burn, 1996, 182). In order to achieve gender equality she recommends a multi-level programme starting with policy changes and ending in the creation of "gender-free environments" for children (Burn, 1996, 182-3).

2.1.2 The relationships between gender categorisation and the social division of labour

Rowbotham (1973), Zaretzky (1976), and Walker (1982) are three (of many other) Marxist theorists who view gender through the lens of the development of capitalism. Their works were chosen for this review as they represent three main aspects of the topic discussed in this section: feminism (Rowbotham), family analysis (Zaretzky), and a South African focus (Walker).

The main argument, concerning this issue, maintains that capitalism has created a gendered division of labour. While in pre-capitalist societies the household production was shared by both sexes, under capitalism, production was cut out of the household and transformed into wage-labour. This separation of the production from the household created a distinction between the public and the private realms: "It is only under capitalism that material production organised as wage labour and the forms of production taking place within the family, have been separated so that the 'economic' function of the family is obscured" (Zaretzky, 1976, 26-27).

Following the above separation between the public and the private spheres, men were assigned to operate within the 'external' world, in contrast to the women who were identified with the 'internal' one. According to Zaretzky, by the twentieth century both

the bourgeois and the proletariat family developed a sphere of 'personal' life, which encouraged the sense of individualism among men while assigning women the emotional spheres within the family (Zaretzky, 1976, 34). It was only in the 1960s that the New Left and the women's movement, in the USA, questioned the relationship between the personal and the political (Zaretzky, 1976, 127).

Theoreticians disagree over the role of the labour market vis-a vis women's liberation. While earlier Marxists, as the Soviet ones, believed in women's emancipation through joining the men's world at work, others refute such assumptions. Walker and Rowbotham emphasise the double role imposed on women under capitalism as both 'wives and mothers' and wage labourers. Walker argues that due to this duality women are discriminated against in the labour market. She maintains that the sex-based division of labour within capitalism has been twofold. On the one hand, women are responsible for the reproduction of the work-force in their private lives. On the other hand, the growth of the industrial economy has drawn women into the sphere of production in increasing numbers, usually as a distinct and inferior category of workers, due to their domestic obligations: "(At work) ... they have been used as a source of cheap labour ... and the view of women as still primarily home-oriented condones (this) ..." (Walker, 1982, 2). Rowbotham maintains that these two spheres in women's life coexist painfully and cause contradictions (Rowbotham, 1973, xv). Recent research shows that the labour force is sex-segregated: most jobs are occupied primarily by one sex or the other, and the more women in a job category, the lower the wages associated with that type of job (Burn, 1996, 84; Jerby, 1996, 120). Rowbotham criticises capitalism for not only exploiting the wage-earners at work, but also for taking from both men and women the capacity to develop their full personal potential, regardless of their gender (Rowbotham, 1973, xv).

2.1.3 Gender in relation to other social identities

In the first two sections of this chapter I referred to 'men' and 'women' as homogenous categories. This point of view was characteristic of earlier feminist thinking (during the 1960s and the 1970s). More recent gender theory examines differences within each of the sex categories.

Neither 'women' nor 'men' consist of a homogenous category or a universal box into which all cases fit (Delmar, 1986, 27-28 cited in Komter, 1991, 43; Brod, 1987, 3).

Anthias & Yuval-Davis reject theories which hold to the notion of 'sisterhood' of women, as expressed in much of the feminist theory, mainstream sociology and Marxist feminist work (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 96-97). According to them, a 'true' feminist theorisation should not ignore issues such as racism, socio-historical contexts and minority groups. They criticise Marxist feminism for prioritising the factor of class over others (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 105) by arguing that gender alone cannot explain the variety of positions which different women hold in the labour market (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 116). Regarding men, Franklin's and Pleck's researches examined the contradictory pressures faced by Black men as 'Blacks' on the one hand and as 'men' on the other. From a different perspective, Filene focused on class and homosexuality as influencing factors in determining men's history (Brod, 1987, 7).

In the South African context , 'race' and 'class' seem to influence the individual's position more than gender does. Walker emphasises different "colour and ethnic considerations" as relevant determinants of women's position in addition to gender (Walker, 1982, 4). She argues that within manufacturing a sexual hierarchy between men and women was maintained as was the colour hierarchy of white over black (Walker, 1982, 5) Bazilli and Cock also argue that, in South Africa, the divisions of race and class dominate those of gender (Bazilli, 1991, 6; Cock, 1991b, 31).

Concerning gender stereotypes, Connell notes that in spite of the social awareness of this phenomenon, it still persists: "Sexist stereotypes are still with us, showing impressive toughness and resilience" (Connell, 1987, x). In relation to this research, traditional gender roles will be re-examined, particularly in connection with the issue of militarism, which will be presented next.

2.2 Militarism / militarism and women

Dealing with the issue of militarism requires, first, the definition of this term. Hornby, in the Oxford dictionary, defines militarism as "(a) belief in, reliance upon, military strength and virtues" (Hornby, 1974, 544). From a sociological perspective, Cock distinguishes between three related concepts of militarism. The first concerns the military as a social institution or, in other words, the organisation of an armed force. The second concerns militarism as an ideology, i.e., the social acceptance of 'military values', such as hierarchy and discipline. Lastly, militarism can also be viewed as a

social process which involves a mobilisation of political, economic, and ideological resources for war (Cock, 1989, 2).

Concerning this research, the most relevant theme in the literature regarding 'militarism' is its construction on the basis of gender dichotomy. It means that men and women are assigned opposite roles, positions and status in society in relation to the notion of militarism. In the previous section I showed how gender divisions were constructed as social norms and expectations. In the context of militarism, it seems that these gender stereotypes are taken to extremes.

The most fundamental division concerning militarism is between war and peace. In the former section I presented the historical development of the gendered separation between the masculine 'external' world and the feminine 'internal' one. Following this view, Jones maintains that, traditionally, citizenship has been linked with the ability to take part in armed struggle for national defence and that this ability has been equated with maleness, while femaleness has been equated with weakness and the need for male protection (cited in Yuval-Davis, 1997, 89). Therefore, while men have been 'constructed' as naturally linked to warfare, women have been 'constructed' as naturally linked to peace (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 94). Similarly, Elshtain argues that war fighting and dying in the modern West have been left to the men- the 'life takers', in contrast to the 'life givers'- the women (Elshtain, 1987, 164). Chapkis perceives the militarised gender dichotomy as functional for the existence of militarism itself. In her view, aggressive masculinity and nurturing femininity are essential complementary components of militarism (Chapkis, 1988, 108). According to Stouffer et al, in contemporary society, war is the only situation for men to prove their manhood, although the test of manhood changed in content from one war to the other during the twentieth century. For example, while in World War I the test of social manhood was entering the armed forces, in the Second World War it shifted to a combat role (Stouffer et al, 1976, 179-180). Brod underlines the fact that even when, since the early days of Vietnam draft resistance, the profile of the hero changed from the soldier to the resister, women's function as men's supporters remained intact. This argument is illustrated by the popular slogan of that period: "Girls say 'yes' to guys who say 'no'" (Brod, 1987, 42). Further examples of these arguments can be found in a book entitled *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle* (1985). Neither its title nor its index refers to the existence of women in relation to the issues discussed.

More recent research refutes the myth that war and military are primarily men's issues (Isaksson, 1988, 1; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 93). Women have been incorporated by armed forces for hundreds of years, although the phenomenon of women in uniform is relatively new. The main argument, in this regard, is that women have been incorporated into the military as 'camp followers'. Enloe defines 'camp followers' as women who are kept ideologically marginal to the essential function of military which is combat (Enloe, 1983, 1). Historically, such women assisted both the soldiers and the army in a various ways, and, in spite of them not being army regulars, they were subordinated to the officers' authority (Hacker cited in Isaksson, 1988, 1; Enloe, 1983, 1). Sometimes, 'camp followers' even out-numbered the fighting men (Hacker cited in Isaksson, 1988, 1). Similarly, it is argued by Elshtain and Yuval-Davis that although Western history includes tales and images of women-warriors, it did not change the notions of femininity and masculinity with regard to war militarism (Elshtain, 1987, 8; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 94).

Current research also shows how, in spite of women's direct incorporation into the military, a great deal of effort is made to preserve this gender dichotomy. Pierson's study describes how military needs forced society to find ways to accept women in uniform by ensuring that they did not challenge the approved gender roles in any way (Isaksson, 1988, 2). Enloe emphasises the gendered guidelines which determine the definitions of military terms. The best illustration of this is the way in which 'combat' and 'front' are continuously re-defined, in relation to where women are not (Enloe, 1983, 15). For example, even when women were present on the 'front' (in World War II, or in The Falklands War), they were still defined as a 'supportive' force, operating in the 'rear' (Enloe, 1983, 123, 154). According to Yuval-Davis, the contemporary experience of the 1990s shows that these divisions still exist. She notes that technical innovations did not blur the sexual divisions of labour and that even in 'post-modern' wars men fight while the women become helpless and vulnerable refugees (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 114). Isaksson argues that women play a subordinate role in the military, as well as in society, because the terms of their military participation have been determined by men (Isaksson, 1988, 5).

The issue of women and militarism is not agreed upon even within the feminist circles. According to Cock, current feminist theory contains two contradictory attitudes in this regard, namely: liberal and radical. Liberal feminism denies any linkage of women with peace and demands full equal opportunities for women to serve in the military. In

contrast, radical feminism emphasises feminine uniqueness as expressed through women's reproductive capacity and their 'natural female pacifism'. Radical feminists view militarism as the root cause of women's oppression and, therefore, ask how the connection between militarism and masculinity can be broken (Cock, 1991a, 189-193). There seem to be a controversy around these issues even amongst the anti-militarist feminists. Some of them, such as Ruddick, believe that women's conscription would alter the nature of armies and wars, in the sense that feminist notions of defence and national security would dominant the existing ones (Cock, 1991a, 193). Others, as Elshtain and Enloe, reject such assumptions. Elshtain claims to *know* that instead of the women changing the military, it will happen the other way around: "... women will be drawn into soldiering through conviction or circumstance" (Elshtain, 1987, 244). Enloe's solution lies in social change which will terminate the repetitive patterns reproducing the gendered structure of militarism (Enloe, 1983, 210).

It seems that women's participation in armed forces tends to rely on broader social circumstances, such as times of national emergency, peacetime military manpower shortages, and/or when social values tend to become more egalitarian with regard to gender (Enloe, 1983, 2, 127; Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1995, 30). Concerning this research, it is crucial to examine the construction of the notion of 'militarism' in South Africa in relation to gender definitions, and to examine the social context which determines the recruitment and the utilisation of women-soldiers in the SANDF.

2.3 Women in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF)

2.3.1 Introduction

A negotiated settlement in South Africa paved the way for non-racial multiparty elections in April 1994. The elections were won by the African National Congress (ANC), and in the same month the process of integration of the SANDF began (Cock, 1995, 98). It was also agreed in advance that from midnight of April 26 1994, soldiers would be legally mandated to disobey orders if they violated the (interim) Constitution or relevant international laws (Seegers, 1996, 279).

The SANDF has integrated soldiers from the following forces:
* The former South African Defence Force (SADF).
* Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the Congress Alliance: ANC, SACP,

and SACTU.

* The armed forces of the former homelands of Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Kwazulu, Transkei and Venda.
* The Azanian Peoples' Liberation Army (APLA).

This section covers three areas. The first explores the main armed forces which comprised the SANDF, namely the SADF and MK, with a focus on women. The second reviews the main issues concerning the transition and the establishment of the SANDF. The third and last examines the current position of women soldiers serving in the SANDF.

2.3.2 Women-soldiers in former SADF and MK

Cock maintains that women participated in all the armed forces which comprise the SANDF. She argues that in spite of the basic difference between the SADF (as a conventional army) and the MK (as a guerrilla army), women who served in either of them shared similar experiences. Both armies increased women's conscription between the years 1976 and 1989; in both, women were excluded from combat roles and were concentrated in the lower ranks (Cock, 1991a, 162; Cock, 1995, 99).

2.3.2.1 *The SADF*

The historical roots of the former SADF are found in the establishment of the United Defence Force (UDF) in 1912. The UDF had integrated English and Boer armed forces, who had fought each other before the foundation of the South African Union in 1910. (Seegers, 1996, 1, 22) On January 1 1958 the UDF was re-named as the SADF. (Parliamentary Act no. 44, 1957)

In 1967 conscription into the SADF became compulsory for young White men (Nathan, 1994, 132). Seegers maintains that the majority of manpower in the security agencies in the 1970s was Afrikaans-speaking (Seegers, 1996, 92). She further argues that the management style was influenced by the Afrikaner culture, in particular, a patriarchal family dynamics (Seegers, 1996, 170-171).

According to Cock, the 1980s introduced a high level of militarisation into South African society. This process had many expressions. One of them was the level of the

military budget. It was estimated that since the beginning of that decade the Defence Force received roughly twenty percent of the total government expenditure (Frankel, 1984, 73 cited in Cock, 1989, 5). Another expression was the increasing internal use of the SADF in order to maintain minority rule and the Apartheid system (Cock, 1989, 7). It seemed, also, that the military was positioned at the centre of state decision-making (Cock, 1989, 8). Although White women were not liable for compulsory military service, they were utilised for the 'military effort' both directly and indirectly (Cock, 1989, 51). Cock maintains that at that time the SADF was the most powerful force in Africa. It had the ability to mobilise an experienced force of nearly half a million soldiers, and it obtained technically advanced weaponry and equipment (Cock, 1995, 88).

The 1986 White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply (p.17) stated that "... the SADF is mainly dependent on the white male as a source of manpower" (Cock, 1989, 51). According to Seegers, the racial composition of the SADF changed significally after 1986, as recruitment among men classified as Coloured increased (Seegers, 1996, 269). Concerning women, Cock's informant, Colonel 'Kotze', proclaimed that in January 1989 women comprised nearly fourteen percent of the SADF permanent force. At that time, the highest rank amongst women-officers was Brigadier and there was one woman holding that rank. In addition, there were ten women Colonels (Cock, 1991a, 97). Colonel 'Kotze' reported on feelings of gender discrimination, arguing that "it's a man's world- men make ninety-nine percent of the decisions" (Cock, 1991a, 100). During that period all non-combat posts were open to women in headquarters and units where there would be no deliberate contact with the 'enemy' (SADF archive: women in the SADF. Box 163 File 101/7/1).

Negotiations between the National Party and the ANC for a peace agreement began in March 1986 in Paris (Seegers, 1996, 245). The 'security forces' (SADF and SAP) participated in the process until September 1992, when the date for elections was determined (Seegers, 1996, 285). De Klerk's policies during the early years of the 1990s changed South Africa in an irreversible way. In February 1990 he announced the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC. In addition, he aimed at decreasing the influence of the military on the state. Between 1990 and 1991 the length of conscription was halved, and during the following year the defence budget was cut by sixteen percent (Seegers, 1996, 267).

By 1993, the all-White system of National Service was abolished (Nathan, 1994,140). In that year, the SADF had thirty-five thousand soldiers serving full-time. Less than half of them were White (Seegers, 1996, 268-269). The rest was made up of the other three racial groups: African, Coloured, and Indian. It was argued by Nathan that the SADF's promotion system was highly discriminatory and created a leadership which was overwhelmingly White (Nathan, 1994, 140). By 1994, the percentage of women-soldiers rose to thirty-eight percent of the permanent force. Moreover, the number of high-ranking women-officers also doubled from 1989: two Brigadiers (from one), and twenty Colonels (from twenty) (Cock, 1995, 99).

2.3.2.2 *MK*

Umkhonto we Sizwe, 'The Spear of the Nation', or MK, as it was popularly called, came into existence on 16 December 1961, following the Sharpville Massacre. Its aim was "the overthrow of the National government, the abolition of white supremacy and the winning of liberty, democracy and full national rights and equality for all the people of the country" (Barrell, 1990, 3). According to Cock, the armed struggle became a fourth central pillar of resistance of the ANC. The other three were: mass organisation and mobilisation, the building of underground structures, and the international struggle to isolate the South African government (Cock, 1991a, 156; Liebenberg, 1997, 115). Mtintso states that some of MK's key principals were democracy, non-racism, and non-sexism (IDAF, 1986 cited in Mtintso, 1993, 2).

The 1976 Soweto uprising strengthened MK, and its most active years were between that year and 1987, when negotiation began. During those years it trained more than twelve-thousand guerrillas (Barrel cited in Cock, 1991a, 159). Adam maintains that through the 1980s the number of both White South Africans and foreigners who joined MK increased (Adam cited in Cock, 1991, 159). Most MK combatants who were charged and convicted in South African courts were men (Cock, 1991, 161). However, women formed a significant proportion of the small number of Whites convicted in this regard (Cock, 1989, 63).

Overall, the treatment of women and awareness of gender issues within MK was disappointing in relation to their aim regarding this matter. According to one interviewee, the number of women in MK during the 1970s was very small (Cock, 1991a, 162). According to another, the total number of women in the MK over all the

years was disappointing (Mtintso, 1993, 18). She (the informant) said: "We totally failed in the early years to pay specific attention to women and the gender struggle ... As a result today (1993) ... our consciousness is still very low when it comes to that (gender issues)" (Mtintso, 1993, 18). A third interviewee describes how, at first, there were no special conditions or facilities for women: "... There was nothing like the male or female areas that you now have in the camps ...We were not self conscious as women but we had problems of pads, toilets and so on" (Mtintso, 1993, 19). Cock estimated that by the end of the 1980s women comprised approximately twenty percent of all MK cadres (Cock, 1991a, 162). Although men and women had been trained together, in contrast to the SADF (Cock, 1991a, 163), there was only one woman in a leadership position- the head of communication (Cock, 1991a, 162). Mtintso argued that while MK was perceived as a liberation army that aimed, also, at liberating women through participation in a traditional male domain, i.e., army and war, at the same time, it perpetuated consciously or unconsciously gender oppression. She concluded by maintaining that: "practice, the study shows, tended to lag behind policy and theory..." (Mtintso, 1993, 1).

2.3.3 The transition: gender issues and the establishment of the SANDF

Seegers defines the period of the 'transitional state' as between 1986 and 1994 (Seegers, 1996, 245), from the beginning of the negotiation until the elections. In 1988, the ANC released the first draft of its constitutional guidelines (Bazilli, 1991, 2). These guidelines specifically required affirmative action to eliminate discrimination between the sexes (Cock, 1991b, 28). In May 1990 its executive committee released a statement which recognised the issue of women's liberation as an autonomous one (Bazilli, 1991, 3; Cock, 1991b, 28). This was in order to ensure 'putting women on the agenda'. Both Cock and Bazilli emphasised the importance of addressing gender equality on its own. As Bazilli put it: "Unless women's rights are taken seriously during a society's transition, they will not miraculously appear afterwards" (Bazilli, 1991, 15).

Another major issue during negotiations was the integration of the various armed forces into the SANDF. Cock was the main academic who expressed concern at the absence of women (as participants and as an issue) from these debates (Cock, 1991b, 30; Cock, 1993, 50). Cock also advocated a wider perspective, arguing that the ultimate goal was not only the broadening of opportunities for women within the military but, rather, ensuring their participation in the shaping of the general defence

policy (Cock, 1995, 97). Both Cock and Nathan feared the consequences of absorbing the small armed forces into the former SADF, instead of creating a new military, which would reflect the South African transition (Cock, 1995, 99; Nathan, 1994, 3). Both of them underlined the crucial goal of representativity (Baynham cited in Nathan, 1994, 139; Cock, 1995, 99), pointing at the American model which has implemented equal opportunity and affirmative action programmes (Cock, 1995, 8; Nathan, 1994, 143).

The intensive public discussions concerning the military introduced a new perspective called 'the new security definition'. While the former security definition viewed military and political factors as national threats, the new security definition views internal social problems, such as poverty, unemployment, and illness, as destabilising the social order (Cock, 1993, 50; Nathan, 1994, 4). Therefore, processes which involved decreasing the level of militarism in South African society (demilitarisation, demobilisation and disarmament) were conceived as inevitable steps which had to be taken in order to ensure national and regional security. Furthermore, Cock maintains that the notion of militarism in South Africa is backed by re-emphasising the gender dichotomy (Cock, 1993, 53). Therefore, she argues that only through demilitarisation it would be possible to break the connection between militarism and masculinity, and to include women in the public debate concerning security issues (Cock, 1993, 54).

2.3.4 The current position of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF

The establishment of the SANDF introduced some new features to the former SADF. Firstly, military subordination to a democratically elected government, the Constitution, and to national and international laws, was introduced. Secondly, conscription was abolished and replaced by a voluntary service for both men and women of all racial groups who choose the military route as a career.

At the time of the integration (April 1994) the highest legal document governing the nation was the Interim Constitution. According to Molekane, a Lieutenant Colonel in the SANDF, women in the SANDF welcomed the Equality Clause in the Interim Constitution because it helped to create an enabling environment for the pursuit of gender objectives and equal opportunities. These development were perceived as tools to be used in order to further the representation of women in the defence force,

particularly in decision-making bodies (Molekane, 1996, 23). Following the spirit of the Constitution, which forbids any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, all military posts had to be opened to both men and women. Entry had to be determined according to merit only. As a result of this new policy, women-soldiers in the SANDF are posted, for the first time, as pilots, Naval officers, and as tank crew members.

The SANDF's leadership has taken some active steps in order to promote equal opportunities. For example, between January 1995 and October 1998, twenty-seven SANDF members have been trained in the International Military Education Training (IMET) programme in the USA. The course, held over a fourteen-week period, qualifies graduates as Equal Opportunity Advisors for their units. They then serve as advisors on gender and race issues both for their troops and their commanders.

In spite of the significant progress in women-soldiers' positions in some areas, contemporary statistics indicate that the connection between militarism and masculinity has still not been eliminated.

Women-soldiers made up 9.4 percent of all full-time soldiers during the first period after integration (*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 16). Their percentage rose to 10.1 percent by 1995/6 (*Annual Report*, 1995/6, 30), to 11.4 percent by 1997 (*Annual Report*, 1997, 33), and to 13.0 percent by 1998. (*DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998) However, there are also many women employed by the SANDF as civilians. This raises the percentage of women in the SANDF to 19.3 percent. (*DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998) The meaning of this statistic is that the SANDF authorities assign more than a third of all women working for the military to the position of 'camp followers'. This trend highlights Enloe's claim that even when women are allowed to serve the military, they are not permitted to *be* the military (Enloe, 1983, 15).

From 1994 to the present, women-soldiers in the SANDF have been over-represented in the Medical Services (SAMS), in comparison to the general gender ratio in the military. The last three DoD *Annual Reports* show that women comprise over forty-five percent of all full-time soldiers serving in the SAMS. This fact backs those arguments maintaining that even in uniform, women are likely to be concentrated in 'traditional' female jobs (Chapkis, 1988, 111; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 93). In comparison, women-soldiers are still under-represented in the Army and in the Navy, in comparison to the general ratio. Their percentage in the Army rose from 5.79 percent in 1994

(*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 68) to 7.42 percent in 1997 (*Annual Report*, 1997, 36). During this period, their percentage in the Navy rose from 6.57 percent (*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 97) to 8.45 percent (*Annual Report*, 1997, 35). Only in the Air-Force are women-soldiers currently represented according to the general ratio in the SANDF. Their percentage in the Air-Force rose from 9.54 percent in 1994 (*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 82) to 12.78 percent in 1997. (*Annual Report*, 1997, 35)

As argued earlier, gender equality cannot be achieved without including women in decision-making bodies. In the military, authority over decision-making is determined by rank. Statistics show that there has been a significant progress in the numbers of high-ranking women-officers in recent years. In the period following integration, the highest rank among women was Brigadier. At that time, there were four women Brigadiers, and eighteen women Colonels. By June 1998, the highest rank among women rose to Major General. At that time, two women served as Major Generals, three as Brigadiers, and thirty-four as Colonels (*DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998). In other words, while in 1994/5 there were twenty-two women as Colonels or higher, their numbers nearly doubled by 1998. With this increase of high-ranking women-officers, it is likely that they will have increased input vis-a-vis decision-making processes.

Statistics also show significant changes concerning race. In 1994/5, White women-soldiers comprised more than seventy-five percent of all women-soldiers. Simultaneously, African women-soldiers comprised eighteen percent of all women-soldiers (*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 16). Currently, the percentage of White women has dropped to less than fifty-four percent, while that of African women has risen to more than forty percent (*DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998). This distribution, although closer to that of the national population statistics, is still inadequate[4]. According to general population statistics, African women comprise nearly seventy-seven percent of all women in South Africa, while White women comprise a little more than ten percent (*Statistics South Africa*, 2.21)[5]. There have been no significant changes in the numbers of Coloured and Asian women-soldiers in the SANDF. The percentage of Coloured women-soldiers rose from 5.35 percent in 1994 (*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 16) to 6.46

(4) The South African defence policy stated that the armed forces should "broadly reflect the composition of South Africa" (*The Citizen*, 29 November 1995)

(5) This document was faxed to me on 22 October 1998.

percent in 1998 (*DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998). This is close to their percentage of the total female population: 8.8 percent (*Statistics South Africa*, 2.21) Asian women-soldiers comprise around one percent of all women-soldiers (*Annual Reports*; 1994/5, 16; 1995/6, 30; 1997, 33; *DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998). In comparison, their percentage in the total female population is 2.53 percent (*Statistics South Africa*, 2.21).

2.4 Women-soldiers in the USA, the UK, and Israel

The armed forces of the USA, the UK, and Israel can serve as examples to other militaries which have shown an interest in promoting gender equality among their soldiers. This research aims to analyse the meaning and the detail of the policies employed in these armies, in relation to gender equality.

2.4.1 Women in the USA military

2.4.1.1 Background

American women have been active participants in national defence since the American Revolution of the 1770s. However, they first gained official status as members of the American armed forces much later, in 1901, when the Army Nurse Corps was established (Manning & Griffith, 1998, 1). During World War II, four hundred and thirty-two American military women were killed, and eighty-eight were prisoners of war (all the latter were nurses-officers). During the Vietnam War, seven women-soldiers were killed (Manning & Griffith, 1998, 2; Hasenauer, 1988, 40).

American male conscription ended in 1973 and was followed by the massive enlistment of women after the end of the Vietnam War. Since then, the percentage of active women duty personnel has increased dramatically from 1.6 percent in 1973 to 8.4 percent in 1980 (Manning & Griffith, 1998,7; Isaksson, 1988, 3). According to Elshtain, by 1987 the USA had the highest percentage of women-soldiers amongst industrial nations: ten percent of its overall forces (Elshtain, 1987, 241).

Enloe identifies sexual preference and sexual harassment as two significant factors which have affected women's military service. She maintains that in 1979 women-

soldiers were discharged from service "for reasons of homosexuality" six times more often than men (Enloe, 1983, 143). Enloe also argued that the higher attrition rates among women were caused by their experiences of sexual harassment (Enloe, 1983, 146). She noted that in it was not until March 1980 that the USA army court handed down its first conviction for sexual harassment (Enloe, 1983, 148).

According to Enloe, in 1980 women were integrated into each service while simultaneously facing the closure of specific jobs and exclusion from combat (Enloe, 1983, 130). While at that time only 30 out of 230 jobs were closed to women (Enloe, 1983, 156), in August 1982 the USA Department of Defence announced that the military would be closing another twenty-three occupational skill categories that formerly had been open to women, in addition to the termination of combined basic training (Enloe. 1983, 157).

An interesting characteristic of women's employment in the American defence force was the over-representation of African-American women. While in 1982 African-American women comprised about eleven percent of all American women, their percentage among women-soldiers was 25.7 percent (Enloe, 1983, 135). Enloe explained this phenomenon by arguing that young African-American women suffered some of the highest unemployment and underemployment rates in the American labour force (Enloe, 1983, 136).

2.4.1.2 Recent developments

Both Nathan and Cock note that American policies concerning gender equality in the military should serve as a model for the SANDF (Nathan, 1994, 143; Cock, 1995, 97). Nathan emphasises the programme of equal opportunity, which combines training with affirmative action for minorities and for women, while Cock adds the issue of subordination to civilian control.

Armor identifies three major developments as the most significant factors influencing the current position of American women-soldiers: the end of the Cold War, the experience of the Gulf War, and legal changes concerning this issue (Armor, 1996, 8). The Gulf War was the first American war where instead of the men fighting for the sake of "womenandchildren" (Enloe, 1990 cited in Yuval-Davis, 1997, 108), it was carried out by both "our boys and girls" on the front (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 105, 108).

Armor maintains that the public debate concerning women's military service is over the equity of opportunity (Armor, 1996, 7). According to him, the percentage of women in the USA armed force has increased from fourteen percent in 1989 to eighteen percent in 1995 (Armor, 1996, 12). In relation to the portfolio of the applicants, a significant proportion of all USA military women are African-American (Manning & Griffith, 1998, 8).

In spite of significant legal changes which allowed women into combat ships and aircraft and in ground support positions during the early 1990s (Manning & Griffith, 1998, 8), the Secretary of Defence allowed closure of women's units whose primary mission was "direct combat on ground" in 1994 (Armor, 1996, 23). This change ignored the experience of the Gulf War where most of the American casualties resulted from a single hit by an Iraqi missile in Saudi Arabia (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 102; Armor, 1996, 8). In other words, in the Gulf War the distinction between 'front' and 'rear' got blurred and proved irrelevant (Major A I Martinez, interview, 18 August 1998). Therefore, the exclusion of women from 'combat' seems irrational. Yuval-Davis reports that recently, in the USA, a legal battle has been taking place regarding the right of women to participate in combat roles (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 103). Armor doubts the necessity for the legal exclusion of women from combat roles, as he assumes that most women are not interested in such military jobs in the first place (Armor, 1996, 25).

In spite of the above progress, the American military is also reported to have high rates of rape and sexual harassment. Recent reports in the press put the incidence of rape as high as one third of women soldiers. Yuval-Davis maintains that this phenomenon is explained by male soldiers' attempt to distance themselves from the women, in order to secure their own position as 'soldiers' (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 101). It is not surprising, then, that one of the unresolved debates about women's participation in the military concerns the question of mixed units. On the one hand, mixed units seem to promote equal opportunities for women to achieve their full potential. On the other hand, in such units the fear of sexual harassment increases. It is also argued that separate women's corps encourage a lesbian sub-culture (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 104).

This section raises a number of crucial points of comparison between the American army and that of South Africa. Firstly, while in the SANDF all posts are open for both men and women, depending on their merits, American law still forbids the participation

of women-soldiers in direct ground-combat units. Secondly, in the American armed force, as in the SANDF, women, in general, are under-represented in comparison to their size in the broader population. Thirdly, while in the defence force of the USA African-American women-soldiers are over-represented in relation to their general ratio in broader society, in the SANDF, African women are under-represented. Fourth and lastly, the American case-study raises crucial issues concerning the military service of women, such as sexual harassment and rape. It is most important that such issues be examined in relation to the SANDF as well.

All these themes were referred to during the interviews conducted, and will be presented in chapter four of this research report.

2.4.2 Women in the UK military

2.4.2.1 Background

Throughout much of the history of the UK, women serving in its armed forces were employed through women's corps, namely: Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC), Women's Royal Air-Force (WRAF), and Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). They were deployed mainly in administrative positions (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 31; Brigadier M L Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998). Enloe maintains that in 1981 women comprised approximately 4.8 percent of the total British armed forces, and that most of them were members of distinct women's units. They served on a volunteer bases and were excluded from combat. She noted that Queen Alexandra's Royal Nursing Service (Navy), as well as Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (Army), consisted of women only. At the same time, Queen Alexandra's Royal Air Force Nursing Service (AF) also included men. All nursing corps were defined as 'non-combatant' (Enloe, 1983, 129-130).

Until 1979 women comprised 2.5 percent of Army soldiers and less than six percent of Air-Force military personnel (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 31,34). WRAF ceased to exist as a separate organisation in 1949 (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 34), while by 1980 WRAC became an integral part of the armed services (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 31). Enloe points out that when WRAC started integrating women into mostly male units, the 'hunt' of lesbian women-soldiers increased. In 1981,

although only five percent of British soldiers were women, women comprised over one-third of all soldiers dismissed from service for homosexuality (Enloe, 1983, 141-2).

During the early 1980s, gender served as a significant factor concerning a soldier's job. While many vacancies in the British military were officially closed to women, such as postings on a ship at sea, some postings were also closed to men, such as telephonist or welfare assistant. At the beginning of the 1980s, the air force opened the jobs of non-combat helicopters pilot and air traffic controllers to women. Enloe explains that it was possible because women were still defined as 'non-combatants' serving in the 'rear' (Enloe, 1983, 152-3). During The Falklands War, women nurses were sent to the South Atlantic as part of the Falklands task force. Their hospital ships were defined as 'rear', in spite of the risk of them being attacked by Argentinean jets (Enloe, 1983, 154).

2.4.2.2 Recent developments

As mentioned before, separate women's corps existed after 1992 (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 34; Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998). The UK had joined other countries that allowed women to participate in all, or almost all, military positions, including those with direct, offensive combat functions (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 29). At present, women are not permitted to engage and kill the enemy in an offensive role (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 33). They are not deployed in 'front line combat units' (Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998) By 1991, women could serve in 100 out of 123 military jobs (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 32). According to Brigadier Wildman, since 1993 new opportunities were opened to women. Woman-soldiers have been trained to serve as transport, combat and helicopter pilots. However, no woman combat-pilot has been engaged in direct combat yet. They are also allowed to serve on ships, but not in submarines (as is the case in the USA and in South Africa) (Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998). Recently, the British military has introduced a 'gender free assessment', in order to match the individual soldier's physical ability with the job he/she is interested in (Dandeker & Wechsler Segal, 1996, 32; Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998).

Dandeker & Wechsler Segal identify four main factors which have led to policy changes concerning women's military roles in the British armed forces. The first factor influencing women's positions within the British military is pressure from wider society: demographic changes, which resulted in male recruitment shortages, as well as

normative and legal changes. The second factor has been pressure from women in uniform for better career opportunities within the military. Thirdly, technological progress has questioned the need for physical strength and aggressiveness, and, fourthly, policy-makers' attitudes have changed (Dandeker & Wechsler-Segal, 1996, 37-38). Brigadier Wildman emphasises the Gulf War experience as crucial in relation to these changes. According to him, during that war women in logistics and transportation jobs 'somehow' arrived in the 'front'. "They used to say 'no women in the forward of the divisional rear boundary'. This is in a conventional battle field, but that's confused now; the modern warfare is much more fluid. There is no clear line between the front line and the rear troops ...This is how an American woman-soldier was taken prisoner (Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998).

Women comprise 6.76 percent of all active armed forces in the UK (*The Military Balance*, 1996/7, 72). In relation to this, they are slightly under-represented in the Army, 5.75 percent (*The Military Balance*, 1996/7, 73), and slightly over-represented in the Air-Force, 8.76 percent (*The Military Balance*, 1996/7, 74). Their percentage in the Navy is similar to that in the defence force, 6.45 percent (*The Military Balance*, 1996/7, 73). Currently, the highest ranking women-officers are Colonels. Two of the former heads of the women's corps were Brigadiers, and there was a third woman-Brigadier "who got the job on merit" (Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998). A formal document of the British military maintains that with the full integration of women into employing Arms of service, they have obtained equal opportunity for promotion to senior rank (*Army Briefing Notes*, 1996/97, D3).

Concerning the racial distribution of the British armed forces, Brigadier Wildman maintains that it has not been 'an issue' until recently. He claims that 'now', since Tony Blair was elected Prime Minister, there has been more pressure from the government to achieve a representative racial distribution in the military. (Brigadier Wildman, interview, 30 July 1998)

This overview reveals similar patterns to those identified in relation to American women-soldiers. British women-soldiers are over-whelmingly under-represented in the military in relation to the general gender ratio in society, and they are excluded from direct combat roles.

2.4.3 Women in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF)

2.4.3.1 Background

Many believe that the IDF practices, or at least aims at, a gender-free division of labour. According to Enloe, the Israeli army is commonly perceived as an army which has broken down the classic combat/non-combat sexual division of labour: "The khaki-clad, rugged Israeli woman confidently wielding her Uzzi machine-gun - it is an image familiar to many to us" (Enloe, 1983, 155). Similarly, Lindsey maintains that in Israel, including the IDF, impressive experiments have been carried out, designed to minimise traditional forms of gender stratification" (Lindsey, 1990, 98).

The legacy of military service of Jewish women in Israel began in 1907 (forty-one years before the foundation of the state of Israel), when two women were included in a defence organisation called 'Bar-Giora'. In 1909, this organisation became 'Hashomer' ('the guard') and included a number of women as equal members. One of the founders of this organisation was a woman, named Mania Shochat. By 1921, a new defence organisation was established, called 'The Hagana' ('The Defence'). Mania Shochat was also an important figure in the establishment of this new organisation. Following 'The 1936 Events', a special offensive unit, which included only one woman, was established within 'The Hagana' (Jerby, 1996, 66; Savo, 1998[6]). A former member of 'The Hagana', Sara Cohen, maintains that the shift from a defensive strategy to an offensive one created a new situation wherein the men left for their offensive missions while the women stayed at home as guards (Bloom, 1982, 144 cited in Jerby, 1966, 66). During the 1930s, many female youth joined the 'Hagana', and, after an intensive struggle, they were allowed to participate in guarding duties (Savo, 1998).

The year 1940 introduced the first woman-pilot in the sky (Savo, 1998). Bloom argues that women's activity within the military reached its peak between 1941 and 1951, but that even then they were never equal to men, neither in actual numbers nor in proportionate representation (Bloom, 1982, 144 cited in Jerby, 1996, 69). In 1942, a women's section was established within the 'Hagana'. [illegible]ters. Between 1942 and 1945 women comprised about a quarter of all 'Hagana' members. During that period,

(6) The pages in this document are not numbered.

many young women joined other Jewish military organisations, as well as the British army. By the end of 1942, Jewish women comprised more than thirteen percent of all Jewish volunteers to the British armed forces from Palestine. In 1944, two of these women were captured and killed by the Nazis in Europe (Savo, 1998). One of them, Chana Senesh, has become an archetype of Jewish heroism in the struggle for national independence.

When the 'Independence War' broke on 30 November 1947, all women who were members of the military underground organisations were recruited (Savo, 1998). At that time, a women's corps was established within 'The Hagana'. During the fighting, women comprised 2.8 percent of all recruits (Paeel, 1979, 284 cited in Jerby, 1996, 69), while five women commanded combat units (Bloom, 1982, 149-150 cited in Jerby, 1996, 69). Of the 4,000 soldiers who were killed, 114 were women (2.85 percent). The dramatic shift in the women's position occurred after a woman-soldier was captured during the fighting in East Jerusalem. Following this incident, Ben-Gurion ordered the evacuation of all women-soldiers from the 'conflict line'. He justified this with the explanation that many soldiers were needed in rear units, and because men made better warriors they had to stay and fight (Bloom, 1982, 151 cited in Jerby, 1996, 70).

With the establishment of the State of Israel in May 15 1948, the IDF was established as well. In the same month, a women's corps, called 'khen', was established within the IDF. Technically, 'khen' is the abbreviation of 'Women's Corps' in Hebrew, but it also means 'charm': "Indeed, CHEN (sic) adds to the Israeli Defence Force the grace and charm which make it also a medium for humanisation and social activities" (*Spokesman*, 1980, 91 cited in Cock, 1989, 60). One of the formal duties of 'khen' members has been "in the areas of crystallising the morale of the units and taking care of the soldiers of the units" (Yuval-Davis, 1985, 661 cited in Yuval-Davis, 1997, 101).

According to the 1949 Security Service Act, both men and women were conscripted at the age of 18, but in different gender paths. Men were conscripted until the age of fifty-four, while women only up to age of thirty-eight. Men had to serve for three years, but women were released after two. Reserve duties also differ according to gender (Fleesler, 1995[7]) While men continue to be called for reserve service one or two months a year until the age of fifty, women's reserve service is usually minimal and

(7) The pages in this document are not numbered.

stops altogether once they get married or become pregnant (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 99-100). The 1952 Security Service Act stated three categories of military occupations closed to women: combat roles, jobs in environmental conditions which are not suitable for women soldiers, and jobs which require physical fitness (Jerby, 1996, 72).

2.4.3.2 Recent Developments

The Security Service Act mentioned above excludes Arab and Druse women from military service, as well as Jewish girls who are religious, ultra-orthodox, married, pregnant, pacifist or new immigrants above the age of regular service. The data shows that since the 1970s a smaller proportion of women are released from service. While in 1976, 51.5 percent of the Jewish girls in the recruit age-group were released from service (Isaksson, 1988, 4; Fleesler, 1955), in 1994, 31 percent of the Jewish girls had been released (Fleesler, 1995). Yuval-Davis estimates that only sixty percent of the Jewish women of recruitment age are enlisted. She adds that women are required to obtain higher educational levels than men in order to be called for military service, as the IDF is unwilling to invest in women's education in the same way as it does with men (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 100).

The above characteristics and limitations concerning the utilisation of women within the IDF re-emphasise gender dichotomy. The division of labour and, hence, of status, has re-confirmed traditional attitudes maintaining that "Men are the military, (while) women (only) serve in the military" (*Saturday Star*, 1 November 1997).

Yet, the IDF and the Israeli society have experienced significant developments in connection with the issue of women-soldiers. Two major turning-points are worth mentioning: The 'Yom-Kipur' war in 1973, and the Gulf-War in 1991.

During the 'Yom-Kipur' war in October 1973, nearly three-thousand soldiers were killed and over seven-thousand were injured. Nearly all of them were men. It has been argued that the shortage created in 'qualitative manpower' persuaded decision-makers to start deploying women in former 'male-only' jobs which did not involve combat. Since the 1980s, women-soldiers have been deployed as instructors and have been utilised in jobs which demanded technological professionalism. Between 1983 and 1993, the number of women serving as combat-instructors increased by five-hundred percent (Fleesler, 1995). Yet, as Izraeli underlines, women are only assigned

secondary roles. Although they train men for combat, they are limited to the class-room. This limitation damages both their military professionalism and their chances for promotion (*Saturday Star*, 1 November 1997).

In practice, most women-soldiers serving in the IDF serve in traditional female-jobs. According to Enloe, in the first years of the 1980s, more than two-thirds of the women were deployed in clerical jobs (Enloe, 1983, 155). By 1995, a third of the women were utilised as secretaries, while less than ten percent of them have been deployed as either teachers or instructors (Fleesler, 1995). A worrying sign in this regard is the consistent reduction of the length of women's compulsory service. Since 1986 the compulsory service of women has been gradually reduced from 24 months to 20 months. This policy deepens the gender gap as it ignores the qualities of the individual soldier, whether a man or a woman. Jerby explains that as women serve for less than two years and are released from the reserve duty at age 24, it is not economical for the military to invest much in their training (Jerby, 1996, 74). This trend, combined with the growth in the number of women-soldiers recruited, has influenced politicians to suggest the abolition of the general draft for (Jewish) women. However, while some politicians maintain that women's recruitment is nothing but a burden on the military, others suggest that women should be allowed to serve in any military job, and that military service should be open for women on a volunteer basis, as a chosen career route (Fleesler, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 100).

The 1991 Gulf War introduced a new situation in Israeli society. It was the first war in which there was no differentiation between 'front' and 'rear'. During the several weeks of fighting in the Gulf area, Israeli citizens were subjected to missiles attacks by Iraq. For the first time, in a war situation, 'the boys' were not able to fight, but were locked, instead, in sealed rooms together with the women and children. At the same time, as mentioned before, women-soldiers from other Western armies were operating on the 'front' (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 108). As already described, the confusion between 'rear' and 'front', on the one hand, and the technological innovations (which detached the attacker from the attacked), on the other, brought into question the traditional exclusion of women from 'combat'. I have already discussed the new opportunities opened to women in the armed forces of South Africa, the USA, and the UK during the years following that war. It seems that in spite of Israel's political situation, which defines its borders as 'front lines', Israeli society has not been isolated from such developments.

The remaining portion of this section will examine the new opportunities opened for IDF women-soldiers in the past five years.

Israeli pilots enjoy an exceptionally high social status. During the 1970s, one of the popular stickers read as follows (translated from Hebrew): "Good men become pilots; good women become pilots' partners". The meaning of this slogan was that while the highest position aspired to by men was a combat pilot, that of women was pilots' girlfriend or wife. Therefore, a revolutionary event occurred when, in 1993, a woman-student (a Jewish immigrant from South Africa) appealed to be accepted to the combat pilot course. After being rejected on the basis of her gender (Fleesler, 1995) she appealed to the High Court and won (Jerby, 1996, 77). Since then, women, like men, are eligible for pilot course tests according to their personal data. In July 1996 seven women entered the combat pilot course, but they all failed (*Ma'ariv*; *Sofshavua*, 3July 1998). At the graduation ceremony of that course, two years later, the former Chief of Staff, Shachak, said: "Soon we will have a first woman in the Air-Crew." It is hoped that at least one of the current women-students in the pilot course will qualify as a combat-pilot (*Ma'ariv*, 3 July 1998).

Similar developments have been occurring in other military areas as well. In February 1998, for the first time in history, the IDF permitted women to cross into enemy territory on military missions. The decision pertained specifically to airborne female physicians (*Ha'aretz*, 11 February 1998). On 9 March 1998, two members of Parliament appealed to the High Court to allow women to volunteer for the Naval Officer's Course (*Ha'aretz*, 9 March 1998). Two months later, the Navy announced that in the future it would include women in that course (*Ma'ariv*, 15 May 1998). Another Naval course, which serves as a preparatory course for high-school students, will be opened to female teenagers in 1999 (*Ha'aretz*, 1 June 1998).

The question of utilising women as combatants within the IDF is, ultimately, for society to decide. The various developments explored above have helped in fighting stereotypes concerning women's ability within the military. Yet, even if few women achieve prestigious military positions, such as combat-pilots or Naval-Officers, the basic dilemma still exits: will women be allowed to take part on the protectors' side, which means blurring the gender dichotomy concerning militarism? Two high-ranking officers in the IDF, Major General Tal (Navy) and Brigadier Chalutz (Air-Force) have stated that they will follow society's instructions regarding the participation of women

in combat roles (*Ma'ariv*; *Sofshavua*, 24 October 1997; *Ha'aretz*, 1 April 1998). Jerby maintains that while the Israeli civilian system is marked by inequality, one should not expect the IDF to be different (Jerby, 1996, 121). She further argues that the unequal military service of men and women reflects back on society (Jerby, 1996, 122). The IDF cannot be expected to practice gender equality while it does not exist in the wider society. Therefore, such changes must be made simultaneously by both sides.

2.5 Conclusion

The three last sections examined women-soldiers' positions within the armed forces of the USA, the UK, and Israel. This overview points to two contradictory phenomena. On the one hand, women-soldiers in these three armies are under-represented in relation to their general percentage in the wider population, and tend to concentrate in traditional female domains On the other hand, as has been explained, legal and normative changes have introduced significant progress in this regard during the 1990s. However, these achievements seem to refer to a minority amongst the women-soldiers concerned, and fail to challenge the general position of women in society. National militaries are social institutions, which means that they are an integral part of society. As illustrated earlier, women's positions within the military are 'negotiated' with the wider society, through its various agencies. Therefore, in order to break the connection between militarism and masculinity, gender equality must be achieved in the wider society as well.

This research examines the experiences of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF in relation to the themes and issues which have been discussed in this chapter. The next chapter will explore the research techniques which were used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Structured and semi-structured in-depth interviews constituted the basis of this research which explores the experiences of a group of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. This chapter aims to explain and justify the research strategy chosen.

Neuman maintains that research methodology is what makes social science scientific and that social researchers choose from alternative approaches to science (Neuman, 1997, 60). All research is based on collecting data. There are many data-gathering techniques which are usually grouped into two main categories: quantitative, where data is collected in the form of numbers and, qualitative, where the data collected is in the form of words or pictures (Neuman, 1997, 30). Neuman further identifies three dimensions of research: exploration, description, and explanation. The first term refers to pioneering research, which studies and analyses new topics and issues. The second type is a detailed description of a social phenomenon, which focuses on the 'how' and 'who'. The third dimension is built on the two former types and "goes on to identify the reason something occurs" (Neuman, 1997, 18-21).

This research was based on in-depth interviews, which is one of the qualitative research techniques used for data-collecting. In-depth interviews were utilised in order to reveal the experiences of twenty-five women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. The research is interpretative and descriptive in nature. Interpretative because it aimed at revealing and understanding how this particular group of women soldiers conceived of themselves in relation to the main themes of this research (Neuman, 1997, 73), and descriptive because it aimed at describing the social characteristics of this social group (Neuman, 1997, 19-20). This chapter will explore and examine the research strategy chosen.

Harvey & MacDonald identify in-depth interviews as one of the components of *ethnographic interviews* (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 199). Within this category they differentiate between three approaches, namely: traditional, phenomenological, and critical. According to their definitions, this research uses the critical approach, as it examines a broader socio-historical and theoretical framework in relation to the research question (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 214).

The experiences of a group of women-soldiers in times of social and political transition is not something which can be readily observed. Rather, such experiences are mostly hidden within the individual's consciousness. A qualitative research strategy was, therefore, chosen in view of its sensitivity to the issues of "the accessibility of other (sub) cultures, the relativity of actors' accounts of their social worlds, and the relation between sociological descriptions and actors' conceptions of their actions" (Halfpenny, 1979, 803, cited in Neuman, 1997, 329).

In-depth interviews are a form of sociological interview which was developed out of a criticism of structured interviews in the context of survey research (Burgess, 1984, 101-102). Critics of the survey-structured interview maintain that it limits the scope of qualitative data collected, that it rejects the 'personal', and that it creates unnatural and detached relationships between the researcher and the researched subjects (Bozzoli, 1991, 10; Harvey & MacDonald, 1993; Edwards, 1990, 479). Therefore, field researchers tend to use unstructured approaches which are based on developing conversations with informants (Burgess, 1984, 121). Neuman maintains that field interviews are the joint production of a researcher and a member. Members are active participants whose insights, feelings, and co-operation are essential parts of a discussion process that reveals subjective meanings (Neuman, 1997, 371). Burgess highlights the importance of the unstructured interview, which is often perceived as a 'conversation with a purpose', as a means to collect personal and hidden data (Burgess, 1984, 102). Zweig explains that the co-operation of informants during unstructured interviews stems from their perception of the researcher as "a friend and a confidant who shows interest, understanding and sympathy in the life of the person with whom a conversation occurs" (Burgess, 1984, 103).

Harvey & MacDonald identify three types of in-depth interviews: unstructured, semi-structured and structured. In conducting unstructured interviews, the interviewer has no predetermined set of questions, and the respondent is encouraged to talk about particular areas that are of interest to the researcher. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer usually has a checklist of topic areas or questions, which are designed to encourage the respondent to talk about specific areas. Structured interviews are scheduled interviews, in which the interviewer has a list of specific questions (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 199-200).

3.1 Structured in-depth interviews

This research was based on structured in-depth interviews. Twenty-five out of twenty-seven women who participated in this research project were interviewed in this manner. These interviewees were asked a fixed set of questions, usually in the same order (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 200). It is important at this juncture to explain how structured in-depth interviews are different from survey structured interviews. Harvey & MacDonald identify three major differences between the two. One, structured in-depth interviews do not have pre-coded answers, i.e., all the questions asked are 'open' (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 200). This technique enables the interviewees to answer in their own words, to reveal their own perspectives and consciousness (Bozzoli 1991, 7). Secondly, such interviews are often customised for each respondent, in the sense that the interview is not used to collect responses to specific questions that can be compared across the whole sample (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 200). Thirdly, there is no requirement on the interviewer to use the exact wording of the question or the exact sequence of questions (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 200-201). As the interviewees differed from each other in social characteristics such as their rank, their level of English language skills, or their openness, an effort was made to adjust the flow as the interview as the spirit of the conversation developed.

Structured in-depth interviews (and semi-structured ones) are characterised also by the way in which they probe for information. Harvey & MacDonald highlight the contribution of flexible and responsive probing, which allows the researcher to draw out the informants' meanings in their own terms (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 201). In my interviews I often probed for information, according to the specific responses of the person interviewed. Such probing allowed me, first, to clarify the meaning of the answer and, second, to get both a broader and a deeper picture. Harvey & MacDonald maintain that during in-depth interviews the researcher's contribution should be kept to a minimum (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 206). Although I probed for information, as argued above, I kept to my side, as an interviewer, and did not change the interaction between the researched subjects and myself (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 206).

Concerning in-depth interviews, the relationships between the interviewer and the interviewees is a crucial condition for the success of the research (Burgess, 1984, 107). Firstly, it is most important that all interviews are conducted by the researcher

him/herself (Roth, 1966 cited in Burgess, 1984, 107). Secondly, it is recommended that at the beginning of the interview the interviewer explains why s/he wants to conduct interviews with the researched subjects and what will happen to the interview material (Burgess, 1984, 107). All interviews conducted for this research were carried out by me. In addition, I started the interviews by introducing myself and the research in broad terms. As all the respondents were soldiers, I underlined the fact that we were dealing with a personal academic project, and that their anonymity would be ensured. In order to ensure a proper documentation of the interviews, I asked my interviewees for a permission to tape-record the interview (Burgess, 1984, 107). Knowing that the conversation has been tape-recorded allowed me to pay full attention to the informants, including eye-contact. Two of twenty-five interviewees refused my request to tape-record the interview with them, and their refusal was honoured. In those interviews I had to rely much more on notes taken during the interview.

Over all, twenty-six in-depth interviews were conducted for this research. Twenty-five interviewees were interviewed in the first round, and one of them was re-interviewed. The reason for this re-interview was that one major question was not properly presented so the response did not address the topic under research. The purpose of the second interview was, hence, to ensure that all topics were covered by that particular interviewee. In addition, two semi-structured interviews were held when it was not possible to conduct a full interview.

The interviews took place in thirteen different places; eleven military venues and two civilian settings. Ten of the thirteen venues are located in Gauteng, two of them are in the Orange Free State, and one is in the Cape. The interviews were conducted over a five month period, between 16 March and 9 August 1998. The military locations were chosen by the military co-ordinators who facilitated the interviews. All the military venues were the work-places of the interviewees. As for the civilian settings, they were chosen by both the interviewee and myself after getting permission from their commanders, when meeting at their work-place was not possible.

3.1.1 Sampling

Social research acknowledges two main types of samples: probability and non-probability. A probability sample is one in which each person in the population researched has an equal, or at least a known, probability of being selected in the

sample. In contrast, in a non-probability sample some people have a greater, but unknown, chance than others to be selected (de Vaus, 1991, 60). The major advantage of probability sampling is its representativity in relation to the general population researched; this means that the results of the research can be generalised (de Vaus, 1991, 107). However, when research is not aiming at such generalisation but, rather, at obtaining an idea of the range of responses that people have, non-probability sampling should be used (de Vaus, 1991, 77).

Non-probability sampling was chosen as the sampling technique of this research, as it aimed at revealing the variety of experiences of a group of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. The interviewees were chosen according to the quota sampling technique, which aims at producing representative samples without random selection of cases. "Interviewers are required to find cases with particular characteristics: they are given quotas of particular types of people to fill. The quotas are organised so that in terms of the quota characteristics the final sample will be representative. To develop quotas we decide on which characteristic we want to ensure that the final sample is representative of, find out the distribution of this variable in the population and set quotas accordingly" (Moser & Kalton, 1971, 129 cited in de Vaus, 1991, 78).

Regarding the whole population of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF, formal statistics indicates the characteristics of race, rank, and arm of service. I used the quota sampling technique in relation to the characteristics of 'race' and 'arm of service', as will be detailed in the next paragraph. Regarding the other sociological characteristics (rank, age, marital status, job categorisation, and marital status), I made sure that the interviewees reflected a variety of these. I chose the sampling size as twenty-five, according to the time limits and the scope of this research. It is important to mention, though, that due to the small sampling size an accurate representativity could not be achieved, as I aimed at interviewing at least two persons of each characterised group. In other words, the goal of obtaining a large variety of experiences was prioritised over the accuracy of the sample, as it was not intended to generalise the findings in any case. The quota of the required twenty-five interviewees was filled according to the following statistical data taken from the DoD 1995/1996 *Annual Report*:

The quota sampling technique was carried out according to the DoD statistics in its 1997 *Annual Report*, p. 33, as follows:

Seventy percent of all full-time women in uniform were White, twenty-three percent were African, six percent were Coloured and about one percent were Asian. In an attempt to match those proportions, I interviewed a total of twelve White women-soldiers, eight African women-soldiers, three Coloured women-soldiers, and two Asian women-soldiers.

Of all women-soldiers in the SANDF, forty-three percent were employed in the Army, thirty-five percent in the Medical Services, sixteen percent in the Air-Force, and five percent in the Navy. Consequently, I interviewed nine women-soldiers from the Army, six from the Medical Services, five from the Air-Force and five from the Navy.

Of all women-soldiers who were serving in the Army, 63.5 percent were White, thirty-two percent were African, 3.6 percent were Asian and less than one percent were Coloured. Therefore, from the Army I interviewed five White women-soldiers, three African women-soldiers, and one Coloured woman-soldier.

In the Air-Force, nearly ninety percent of the women-soldiers were White, 4.3 percent were African, 5 2 percent were Coloured and less than one percent were Asian. From the Air-Force I interviewed three White women-soldiers, one Black woman-soldier, and one Asian woman-soldier.

In the Navy, White women-soldiers comprised 61.6 percent of all women in uniform, Coloured women comprised 22.6 percent, African women comprised 9.4 percent, , and Asian women comprised 6.4 percent. Therefore, from the Navy I interviewed two White women-soldiers, two Coloured women-soldiers, and one African woman-soldier.

In the Medical Services, White women comprised 70.5 percent of all women-soldiers, African women comprised twenty-two percent, Coloure women comprised 6.9 percent, and Asian women comprised 0.6 percent. From the Medical Services I interviewed two White women-soldiers, three African women-soldiers, and one Asian woman-soldier.

Concerning military experience, I wanted to interview women-soldiers with different experiences in this regard. Therefore, I asked to interview, over-all, nine former SADF

members, four former MK members, three former APLA members, and nine women-soldiers who joined the SANDF directly.

Regarding rank, I wished to interview women-soldiers from all ranks. Therefore, my application for interviewing specified this requirement.

Concerning job categorisation, I aimed at interviewing women-soldiers who were doing either a 'male' job or a 'female' one. Therefore, I requested that the interviewees perform a variety of job types.

In connection with the other sociological characteristics, age and marital status, I did not mention them in the requested profiles for interviewing. Rather, I assumed that they would vary automatically within the group of women-soldiers chosen to be interviewed by me.

The profile of the required interviewees was given to the different military co-ordinators who chose the persons to be interviewed and also arranged the interviews.

3.2 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews are usually those in which the interviewer has a checklist of topic areas or questions. As already explained, the questions are designed to get the respondent to talk about specific areas that the interviewer is interested in, and the interviewer has to ensure that the topic list is covered (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 199-200).

This technique was used twice, when time limitations did not permit a full-scale structured interview. However, in these two cases the topic list was not covered, and, again, time limitations did not allow a second round of complementary interviews. Therefore, these two interviews, although mentioned in the findings, are not included in the twenty-five women sample.

3.3 Access

The permission to conduct these interviews was obtained from the SANDF authorities. The interviews were co-ordinated by a range of SANDF personnel, who filled the requested quotas and arranged the time and place of the interviews.

3.4 Problems and limitations

Burgess maintains that researchers who conduct interviews in field research should be aware of the extent to which their personal characteristics influence the practice of interviewing (Burgess, 1984, 106). Such characteristics include language, race, gender, locality (Bozzoli, 1991, 9-10), personal experience, age, social status, ethnicity (Burgess, 1984, 105), class, and initial assumptions (Edwards, 1990, 478-480). Some of these characteristics were relevant to this research. The following paragraphs will illustrate how such characteristics might have influenced the interviews conducted.

Technically, language was not a problem, as all the interviewees could speak English. However, English is a second language for both me, the interviewer, and for most of the researched subjects. Excluding any other consideration, it can be assumed that interviewing the same interviewees in their own home-language would produce a more fluent conversation. It is also worth mentioning that a few of the informants had difficulties using English, a fact which affected those interviews to some extent. These interviewees were either Afrikaans or African first language speakers.

Concerning race, the literature identifies some major considerations. Bozzoli illustrates how African interviewees expressed a racial solidarity with an African interviewer by revealing hostility towards 'Whites' (Bozzoli, 1991, 9). Schuman & Converse maintain that the effect of the interviewer's race depends on the kinds of questions posed (Schuman & Converse, 1971 cited in Burgess, 1984, 105). In this research, some of the questions posed during the interviews referred to racial issues, whether directly or indirectly. Therefore, it must be assumed that being 'White' had some effect, in that White interviewees might have felt comfortable to share their thoughts with me, while the others might have withheld some information or opinions.

Gender is another crucial characteristic concerning the positionality of the researcher. Bozzoli's experience reveals how African female interviewees refused to collaborate

when interviewed by an African male interviewer (Bozzoli, 1991, 10). Oakley and Finch argue that it is preferable for women to interview women (Oakley, 1984; Finch, 1984 cited in Burgess, 1984, 103-104). According to Finch, "Women are almost always enthusiastic about talking to a woman researcher" (Finch, 1984, 74 cited in Edwards, 1990, 480). I can assume, then, that being a woman helped in interviewing other women, although the interviews were not conducted according to a the feminist methodology which consciously uses techniques such as self-disclosure and involvement in the interviewees' personal life (Edwards, 1990, 480; Oakley, 1979b, cited in Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 215).

In her book *Women of Phokeng*, Bozzoli emphasises the relevance of the locality of the interviewer on the interviews. She shows how an interviewer who grew up in the same region gained more trust and collaboration from the interviewees than an interviewer who came from a different area (Bozzoli, 1991, 10). My personal experience during this research revealed the contrary. At the beginning of each interview I mentioned the fact that I was staying temporarily in South Africa and that I was planning to return to my country soon after the research was completed. As some of the questions posed referred to the transition, which is loaded with political sensitivities, it seemed to me that my 'foreigner' status allowed the interviewees to be more open with me, particularly about those issues. In other words, the interviewees could not identify me with any specific group in South Africa, which turned out to be an advantage.

Burgess highlights the importance of common life experience between the interviewer and the interviewees (Burgess, 1984, 105). Although I did not declare it during the interviews conducted, I have also served in the military (in Israel). Obviously, some of the interviewees might have guessed that, as it is quite well-known that Israeli women are conscripted. However, I did not make any such assumptions (Bozzoli, 1991, 8). Regardless of their awareness or lack of awareness about my previous experience as a woman-soldier, I feel fairly certain that this experience helped me in communicating with the interviewees.

Ethical considerations also influenced the flow of the interviews. As already stated, at the beginning of each interview anonymity was guaranteed, and permission to tape-record the conversation was requested. It was also promised to the interviewees that their sociological characteristics would not be listed. In addition, when the questions were more personal and the respondent was not keen to elaborate, I tried not to probe,

in order to avoid intrusiveness. However, because the interviewees were chosen by military co-ordinators, it was obvious that they could be traced. I suppose such knowledge has affected the openness of the respondents to some extent.

As already explained, the findings of this research are limited to the particular group of women-soldiers researched and cannot be generalised to all women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. However, the validity and reliability of this research has been facilitated by the use of the above research methods and techniques.

This chapter dealt with the particular methods of research used for the collection of data. The next chapter will describe, analyse and interpret the findings which were collected.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This research has focused around one main question, namely: What are the experiences of women soldiers who are serving in the South African National Defence force? The findings were collected from the responses of women soldiers to questions posed during twenty-eight in-depth interviews. This chapter reports on this set of findings.

The findings are grouped according to two main themes. First, the transition and the establishment of the SANDF, and second, gender issues.

4.1 The transition and the establishment of the SANDF

In April 1994 the first democratic elections were held in South Africa, following a process of negotiation between the Apartheid government and the ANC leadership. All South Africans were acknowledged as citizens, regardless of their race. In the same month, the SANDF was established, integrating the SADF, MK, APLA and the five armed forces of the former homelands. As already stated, nine of the interviewees have joined the SANDF directly, nine have joined it from the SADF, and seven have been integrated into it from either MK (four) or APLA (three). The notion of 'statutory forces', which will be used later, refers to both the SADF and the SANDF as conventional national armies. In contrast, the term 'non-statutory forces' applies to both MK and APLA which were guerrilla armed forces which fought against Apartheid South Africa. This section analyses the experiences of this particular group of women-soldiers in relation to the transition and to the establishment of the SANDF.

4.1.1 The experiences of the transition into the SANDF

The main finding concerning the above is that only a small minority of the interviewees (two of twenty-five) experienced the transition into the SANDF positively. The majority of the interviewees (sixteen of twenty-five) experienced the transition with mixed feelings while about a quarter of them (seven of twenty-five) experienced it completely negatively.

Each of the two interviewees who experienced the transition positively qualified her answers with respect to different factors:

(I experienced the transition into the SANDF) in a positive manner: (Due to the) acknowledgement of women and their potential, (there are) many more equal opportunities in relation to the past (in the SADF). I see it every day ...For the first time women have been recognised (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
(Because of the military experience of my parents) ... I knew what to expect ... I enjoyed every minute ... I didn't feel any difference of attitude (as a woman) (interviewee 25, 9 July 1998).

About two thirds of the interviewees (sixteen of twenty-five) experienced the transition into the SANDF with mixed feelings. Some of them emphasised the gap between their initial expectations and reality:

(I experienced the transition into the SANDF with) mixed feelings. After thirty years in MK, including a period of exile ... we were not sure of what we started ... (but) we realised we were also making history ...We were actually participating ...discussing integration itself and how should it happen ... (it gave us) more commitment to the whole process ... (however), I don't think (that an) integration can be smooth (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).
(The transition into the SANDF) was different from what I expected. I thought we would deal with shooting and fighting all the time but we also learnt different things such as manners and time-tables. It was interesting; I saw many places (interviewee 16, 18 June 1998).
It (the transition into the SANDF) was a good experience (although it was) very different from what I expected. Shouting, orders, no possibility to choose ... I didn't feel 'a woman' but (rather) 'a soldier' ... I accepted the new situation with understanding (interviewee 20, 24 June 1998).

While, for some of the interviewees their gender experience regarding the transition was positive, others felt differently :

... I believe (that) the strong position that women took in the whole negotiating area made it possible for me to become a General (interviewee 2, 16 March 1998).
Personally (regarding the transition into the SANDF), I appreciate the idea that women are more accepted where prior to that (in the SADF) one felt that ... well, if we've got to have you then we'll have you ... (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998).
It (the transition into the SANDF) wasn't easy. I had to adjust to many things, but at the bottom line a soldier is a soldier. In MK the gender difference was conceived more as a biological difference (while) in the SANDF the perception is different; women are assigned to 'soft roles', to traditional women roles ... (Although) it has changed since 1994 it is still in struggle ... This is typically a man's world (interviewee 4, 16 March 1998).

It (the transition into the SANDF) really wasn't that hard, it was (rather) a bit strange. At first they (the men in the School of Armour) didn't want us here (at the School of Armour), they didn't think we could do it (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).
When we arrived in the School of Armour it was very different (from the George College for Army women-soldiers) ... We came in touch with reality. It was much more difficult, physically ... (Concerning the social aspect) it was O.K. in both places. The men (at the School of Armour) accepted us. It was the first time (that) women entered the School of Armour and it was...difficult for the men to know how to instruct us but it was nice. Only a few (men) didn't response positively (to the women) (interviewee 15, 18 June 1998).
... concerning the sexist ways of thought and expression, I don't feel a difference (interviewee 5, 17 March 1998).
... (In the context of being a woman) I don't feel a difference and that's one good thing about it (the transition) (interviewee 9, 25 March 1998).

Opposite views were also expresses in connection with the integration:

... integrating troops who lack conventional military experience and education (is a) challenge ... (interviewee 2, 16 March 1998).
(Since the integration) there are positive changes: moving towards racial and gender pluralism; more Blacks (Africans, Coloureds, and Asians) are recruited. (interviewee 5)
(I experienced the transition into the SANDF) a little bit hard; it seems to me that they are just putting persons into the SANDF. It doesn't matter to them if they are doing the job or not. Now what's happening is that the old members, SADF members, they are left behind (interviewee 9, 25 March 1998).
... the integration of races and that, that's something you've got to come to terms with. If you don't come to terms with it you're going to suffer ... it makes you re-think your own values...one has not much experience with educated Blacks or well trained Blacks in large numbers ... but I think we must go for it ... (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998)

As already mentioned, approximately a quarter of the interviewees (seven of twenty-five) experienced the transition into the SANDF completely negatively. Some of them felt that political, racial, and gender stereotypes over-shadowed their professionalism and personalities:

It was (the transition into the SANDF) traumatic, it was terrible, because the Apartheid values were still entrenched in them and is still happening ... Things are racially motivated: At the daily level I'm being ignored with no regard to my rank and my professional level. (I also have a) language problem (because) I can't speak Afrikaans ... They don't recognise the years of my military service in APLA so it hurts my benefits (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
(Concerning the transition into the SANDF) I felt rejection ... Political gaps between the SADF and the SANDF...I didn't feel accepted in any respect; professionally, personally and socially ... (and as a woman) it was worse (interviewee 12, 2 June 1998).

(The transition into the SANDF was) difficult, very difficult ... hostility between the different forces ... inequality of power ... it's a man's society (so) you have to work double hard (interviewee 22, 3 July 98).

One interviewee found the military service very difficult, especially because she chose a traditionally 'male' occupation:

(The beginning (at the George College for Army women-soldiers) was tough ... We (the women) were all friends but it was bad. At the School of Armour it is also tough; I have to prove myself even more than the men. A lot of remarks (towards the women); they (the men) think that physically we don't fit (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).

Another interviewee expressed a deep distrust towards the new equal opportunities policies concerning race and gender:

(My experience of the transition into the SANDF was) not so positive. Black men arrived and we were not used to it...we feared that it will lower the standard ... Since last year there is a Black man in my team and I have complaints ... We are still not one group; At 'tea time' we sit separately ... (There is) a new policy called 'gender equality': women are also compelled to do the duty of locking all the buildings in the base by the end of the day. It used to be only men's duty (in the SADF) ... The problem (about this duty) is that my kids are at school only until 17:00 and it (this duty) takes time. It is also dangerous. I don't trust the security guards at the base, I'm afraid that they will attack me. I think they steal ... There are more thefts at the base now (since the integration) (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).

According to the next interviewee, language difficulties marked her transition into the SANDF:

(Concerning the transition into the SANDF) I had a language problem. Everybody spoke Afrikaans and I felt isolated. Now I feel better (because) I study Afrikaans (interviewee 7, 25 March 1998).

4.1.2 Responses to and understandings of relevant statistical data

The next set of findings concerns the interviewees' responses to statistical data concerning racial distribution of women in the SANDF. According to the DoD 1995/96 *Annual Report*, White women comprised seventy percent of all full-time women-soldiers in the SANDF. African women comprised twenty-three percent, Coloured women comprised six percent and Asian women comprised less than one percent. This racial distribution is not representative of that in the wider South African society, where Africans comprise the majority (around eighty percent) and Whites are a minority (approximately fifteen percent).

Responding to this ratio, two- thirds of the interviewees (sixteen of twenty-four) thought that these proportions reflected the legacy of the past (namely: Apartheid) and that it was being changed into a more representative ratio of all races. Two of twenty-four interviewees thought that racial balance had already been achieved within the SANDF. In other words, three-quarters of the interviewees (eighteen of twenty-four) expressed content with the current racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF.

According to the above report, White women were over-represented in the Air-Force. While they comprised seventy percent of all full-time women-soldiers in the SANDF, they comprised nearly ninety percent of all women-soldiers serving in the Air-Force. Nearly half of the interviewees (eleven of twenty-four) explained this in terms of the high standards of the Air-Force, which at that time only the White women met. A sixth of the interviewees (four of twenty-four) didn't have any explanation, while an eighth of the interviewees (three of twenty-four) maintained that it reflected a discriminatory policy. In short, more than half of the interviewees (fourteen of twenty-four) thought that the entry regulations for women-soldiers in the Air-Force discriminated against women who were not White.

Additional data from that Report showed that African women were most highly represented in the Army. While their percentage in the SANDF was less than a quarter (twenty-three percent), in the Army it was almost a third (thirty-two percent). Responding to that, nearly a quarter of the interviewees (six of twenty-five) explained the phenomenon in connection with the infantry experience of the non-statutory forces. Another quarter (six of twenty-five) argued that it reflected personal choice, and around a sixth of the interviewees (four of twenty-five) said that it reflected the low requirements of the Army.

According to the same Report, Coloured women were over-represented in the Navy. While they comprised six percent of all full-time women-soldiers in the SANDF, they comprised almost a quarter (twenty-two and a half percent) of all women-soldiers in the Navy. More than half of the interviewees (twelve of twenty-one) explained this in geographical terms, arguing that as most Coloured people lived in the Cape it was obvious that Coloured women joined the Navy. A seventh of them (three of twenty-one) did not have any explanation while a minority group (two of twenty one) maintained that these findings did not match their own personal experiences.

4.1.3 Experiences of the process of rationalisation

One of the main features of the transition and the establishment of the SANDF has been the process of rationalisation; the reduction of the military budget, downsizing military activity and, hence, personnel. It originates from both the non-militarist strategy of the new government and the aim of diverting resources to meet urgent social needs. According to interviewee 1, retrenchment will be carried out in four steps: One, those who plan to leave the service during the coming year of their own initiative. Two, enabling those who want to leave the service to do so. Three, not renewing civil contracts, and, four, as a last resort, firing, according to individual criteria only (interviewee 1, 16 March 1998).

Responding to the issue of rationalisation, nearly a quarter of the interviewees (five of twenty-two) said that although it wasn't a pleasant experience, it needed to be carried out:

It's a complicated situation (the experience of the rationalisation), not pleasant, but the reductions must be done due to the budget limitations ... Retrenchment (of personnel will be taken) only as a last resort, in relation to individual criteria ... It's very, very challenging and interesting this whole transformation and rationalisation and it's hard work (interviewee 1, 16 March 1998).
I'm a part of the senior planning group (of the rationalisation). It's (the rationalisation) inevitable (due to) budget limitations. At the moment personnel expenses comprise fifty eight percent of the budget while it should be forty percent only. It's a very unpopular job ... We try not to retrench a couple (both husband and wife) and to leave the more useful member in service (interviewee 2, 16 March 1998).
It's not a nice thing to do (rationalising) but the Government is right when concentrating in other sectors (of society) . . Retrenchment considerations (will be) individual (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).

Another quarter of the interviewees (five of twenty two) expressed feelings of insecurity about their futures:

(I experience the process of rationalisation with) a lot of insecurity about the future... Men are the majority that's really scared about the future ... because they have families where a woman if she loses her job it won't be so difficult (for her) to get another one (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
I don't know what will happen (due to rationalisation) ... I feel insecure about the future. I hear all kinds of rumours ... I think they will retrench (personnel) especially from the Army because of its large numbers (interviewee 7, 25 March 1998).

(I experience the rationalisation with) insecurity about the future ... (Although) my contract is until January 2,004 ... I can be retrenched at any time from now (interviewee 18, 23 June 1998).
(It is) stressful; (I feel) insecure about the future ... At the bottom line I think that the considerations (of retrenchment) will be individual (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998).
At the moment I think that it's a bit demoralising ... Insecurity; I don't know what will be with me until the end of the year. I can't plan my future (interviewee 21, 24 June 1998).

A minority group of the interviewees (two of twenty-two) expressed fear about the process:

It's (the process of rationalisation) pathetic, it's disastrous. I think it will have very negative results. People who've been integrated learnt the (military) system and if they will be retrenched (then) crime will get worse ... I think (retrenchment) is about (Black) colour (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
I don't think (that) basically it's (rationalisation) a good idea because...they must prepare for war (interviewee 20, 24 June 1998).

4.2 Sociolcgical characteristics relevant to understanding the different responses to the integration process and the establishment of the SANDF

Three sociological characteristics, 'first military service', 'race' and 'arm of service', were found significant in relation to the interviewees' responses concerning the following issues: The experiences of the transition into the SANDF, the responses to and the understandings of relevant statistical data, and the experiences of the process of rationalisation.

4.2.1 Experience of military service

The factor 'first military service' was found to be significant in relation to all the latter six subjects analysed in the above context.

The interviewees who served in the non-statutory forces were more likely to experience the transition into the SANDF negatively. Such an experience was shared by all three interviewees who are former APLA members and two of the four interviewees who are former MK members. In contrast, only a small minority of the interviewees who were either former SADF members (one of nine) or who joined the SANDF directly (one of nine) have experienced it in a similar way.

Those interviewees who joined the SANDF from the non-statutory forces were more likely to explain the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF in terms of the legacy of the past. While almost all the interviewees who are former members of either MK or APLA (six of seven) explained the racial distribution of the women-soldiers in the SANDF in such terms, only half of the interviewees who joined the SANDF directly (four of eight), and less than two-thirds of the interviewees who are former SADF members (five of eight), explained it in this way.

The interviewees who joined the SANDF directly tended to think that the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force was due to merit considerations. Two-thirds of the interviewees who joined the SANDF directly (six of nine) explained the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force in these terms. In contrast, neither of the two interviewees who are former members of APLA, a third of the interviewees who are former SADF members (three of nine), and half of the interviewees who are former MK members (two of four), understood the situation in this manner.

Former MK and SADF members among the interviewees tended to explain the high representation of African women in the Army as a result of their membership in the non-statutory forces. Half of the interviewees who are former MK members (two of four) and almost half of the interviewees who are former SADF members (four of nine) offered this explanation regarding the high representation of African women in the Army. At the same time, neither the interviewees who are former APLA members nor the interviewees who joined the SANDF directly explained it in a similar way.

Interviewees who are former members of both MK and SADF tend to explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms, as opposed to the interviewees who joined the SANDF directly. All three interviewees who are former MK members and almost all interviewees who are former SADF members (seven of eight) explained this phenomenon in geographical terms. But, less than half of the interviewees who joined the SANDF directly explained it in such a manner.

Those interviewees who are former members of both MK and SADF tended to:
1. Explain the high representation of African women in the Army as a result of previous service in the non-statutory forces,

2. Explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms, and
3. Experience rationalisation as an unpleasant yet a necessary process.

Obviously, the members of these two organisations share a military experience of the pre-transition years. This can explain their explanation regarding the first two findings. It seems that their thinking is still influenced by the racial perspective, meaning that they hold racial stereotypes concerning their women-colleagues. Concerning the third finding, this explanation shows a high degree of commitment to the New South Africa.

The former members of the non-statutory forces (both MK and APLA) tended to experience the transition into the SANDF negatively and to explain the racial distribution of the women-soldiers in the SANDF in terms of the legacy of the past. These findings have to be explained in a political manner. They reinforce some of the interviewees' complaints about the 'new' SANDF being, in practice, a continuation of the former SADF. These findings suggest that those interviewees who were integrated into the SANDF from the non-statutory forces felt that they were actually absorbed into the same system against which they were fighting in the past.

The interviewees who joined the SANDF directly were more likely to explain the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force as due to merit considerations. The explanation of this finding suggests that these interviewees are only familiar with a military system which is, formally, based on equal-opportunities policies.

4.2.2 The influence of 'race'

Although 'race' is often conceived as a biological given, it a social construction in the same way that gender is (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 112). Sociological research shows that racial definitions change over time and space. According to Walker, due to the specific social-history of South Africa, all social research must include the 'race' factor as well (Walker, 1982, 4).

The issue of 'race' was found to be significant in relation to the following four areas: the experience of the transition into the SANDF, the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force, the high representation of African women in the Army, and the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy.

The African interviewees tended to experience the transition into the SANDF more negatively. While half of the African interviewees (four of eight) experienced the transition into the SANDF in a negative way, only a quarter of the White interviewees (three of twelve), and none of the Coloured or Asian interviewees, reported such negative experiences.

Both White and African interviewees tended to explain the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF in terms of the legacy of the past. Almost all African interviewees (seven of eight) and a majority of the White interviewees (eight of eleven) explained the racial distribution of women in the SANDF in terms of the past. In comparison, a third of the Coloured interviewees (one of three), and neither of the two Asian interviewees, felt this way.

The White interviewees tended to explain the high representation of African women in the Army as a result of their infantry experience in the non-statutory forces. Nearly half of the White interviewees (five of twelve) explained the high representation of African women in the Army in these terms, while only one African interviewee, and none of the Coloured or Asian interviewees, explained it in a similar way.

The Coloured interviewees were less likely to explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms. While about two-thirds of the White interviewees (seven of eleven) and the African interviewees (three of five) explained the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in such terms, only a third of the Coloured interviewees (one of three) explained it in these terms.

The African interviewees tended to experience the transition into the SANDF more negatively than the other interviewees. According to the SANDF statistics, from 1994 to 1997 White soldiers comprised a third of all soldiers, while African soldiers comprised more than half. Therefor ', the explanation for this finding cannot be in racial terms only. Rather, it must involve gender and political factors as well. By 1995, the percentage of African women-soldiers amongst all full-time soldiers in the SANDF was less than two percent (*DoD Annual Report*, 1994/95, 16). This increased to more than two percent by 1996 (*DoD Annual Report*, 1995/96, 30), and rose to almost six percent by February 1997 (*DoD statistics*, February 15 1997). This suggests that their negative experience of the transition into the SANDF originated from the fact that, as African women-soldiers, they consisted of a small minority group. The other

explanation goes back to the political dimension. It can be argued that in spite of the transition and the fact that African soldiers comprised the majority racial group in the SANDF, African women-soldiers still felt they were being absorbed into the former SADF.

Both White and African interviewees tended to explain the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF in terms of the legacy of the past. As argued above, the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF was not representative of the whole South African population. In order to make it representative, the position of the White and the African women groups will have to be reversed. Therefore, the members of these particular racial groups are obviously the most aware of current political policy in this regard.

The White interviewees were more likely to explain the high representation of African women in the Army in connection with their experience in the non-statutory forces. This finding reflects the racial-political stereotypes held by the White interviewees concerning their African women-colleagues.

The Coloured interviewees were less likely to explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms. This finding reinforces the argument that the interviewees tended to hold racial stereotypes concerning their colleagues. While more than half of the interviewees (twelve of twenty-one) explained this over-representation in geographical terms, different explanations were offered by the Coloured interviewees themselves. This finding emphasises the danger of taking racial stereotypes for granted as true.

4.2.3 'Arm of service'

The SANDF comprises four arms of service, namely: the Army, the Medical Services, the Air-Force, and the Navy. This section examines the impact of 'arm of service' in relation to the interviewees' responses.

The impact of the 'arm of service' was found to be significant in relation to the following three areas of discussion: the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force, the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy, and the experience of the process of rationalisation.

The interviewees who served in the Army tended to explain the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force in terms of merit requirements. While two-thirds of the interviewees who served in the Army (six of nine) explained this phenomenon in merit terms, only half of the interviewees who served in the SAMS (three of six), a quarter of the interviewees who served in the Air-Force (one of four), and a fifth of the interviewees who served in the Navy (one of five), felt the same way about it.

Those interviewees who served in the Air-Force were the most likely to explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms. All four interviewees who served in the Air-Force explained the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in terms of geography, while nearly two-thirds of the interviewees who served in the Navy (three of five), almost half of the interviewees who served in the Army (four of nine), and a third of the interviewees who served in the SAMS (one of three), explained this over-representation differently.

The interviewees who serve in the Army tended to experience the process of rationalisation as something unpleasant, yet necessary. While almost half of the interviewees who serve in the Army (four of nine) felt this way, only one of the five interviewees who serve in the SAMS, and none of the interviewees who serve in the Navy (five) or in the Air-Force (three), felt the same way about this process.

Those interviewees who served in the Army were more likely to explain the over-representation of White women in the Air-Force in merit terms and tended to experience the process of rationalisation as unpleasant but necessary.
There does not seem to be any explanation of this finding, except for the argument that it reflects individuals' perspectives. Not only is the case that the factor 'arm of service' cannot itself make sense of this, in addition, these interviewees do not share any other sociological characteristic.

The interviewees who served in the Air-Force were more likely to explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms.
These interviewees consisted of three racial groups, excluding the Coloured one. Therefore, this finding suggests that these interviewees held racial stereotypes concerning Coloured women-soldiers.

4.3 Gender issues within the military

The findings of this research show that this particular group of women-soldiers hold contradictory positions regarding the way in which they perceive and act upon gender issues within the SANDF. Some of their positions and practices reinforce traditional women's roles, while other challenge. The findings also show a discrepancy between the theoretical and the practical level. While at a superficial level these interviewees tended to present progressive attitudes regarding gender, deeper probing revealed a withdrawal into more traditional positions and beliefs. Such a discrepancy has been evident in other research which examining gender. For example, in her book *Women of Phokeng* Bozzoli maintains that: "What the study attempts to reveal are the patterns of interplay between the inconsistent and fragmented aspects of identity, the myriad building blocks out of which a particular individual is constructed, and the larger patterns she might try to present" (Bozzoli, 1991, 12).

The notion of 'traditional' women's roles within the military refers to the dichotomy, or at least the incompatibility, between womanhood and militarism. According to this view, women should obey their biological nature by staying home, having babies, and keeping "the home fires burning for the boys on the border" (Cock, 1991a, 191). In contrast to the above position is the equal rights feminist view. It maintains that the exclusion of women from war is linked to their exclusion from economic and political affairs. This position denies any linkage of women with 'peace' and perceives their access to combat roles as a demonstration of women's wish for independence (Cock, 1991a, 189).

These findings concur with my initial assumption that the positions and views regarding gender issues within the military cannot be isolated from those of the wider society. As will be illustrated in this chapter, the women-soldiers interviewed were not consistent in their attitudes towards the different gender issues examined.

4.3.1 Reinforcing traditional women's positions and roles in the military

4.3.1.1 *Responses and understandings of women's over-representation in the SAMS*

Traditional attitudes are illustrated by the informants' acceptance of women's concentration in the SANDF Medical Services. According to the 1995/96 DoD *Annual Report*, the general percentage of full-time women soldiers in the SANDF was

approximately ten percent. However, they comprised forty-five percent of the military's Medical Services. This statistics illustrates the traditional women's role as nurses in Western armed forces (Chapkis, 1988, 107-108; Elshtain, 1987, 145; Enloe, 1983, 213).

A small minority of the interviewees (two of twenty-five) disapproved of this gender division of labour and suggested that women should be absorbed in the other arms of service as well. However, most of the interviewees (twenty of twenty-five) thought that it was either natural, normal, or obvious for women soldiers to serve in the Medical Services:

It is likely to assume that women will always tend to concentrate in the Medical Services (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).
SAMS is full of nurses. It's a traditional job (for women) (interviewee 4, 16 March 1998).
It is sensible (the over-representation of women in SAMS) because of the nurses and the social workers (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
To be a nurse - it suits women (interviewee 7, 25 March 1998).
The medical used to be a lady's job (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).
You don't see guys that are working in the hospital that much (interviewee 9, 25 March 1998)
The nature of the work (in the Medical Services) is the one that is encouraging most women to come to SAMS (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).
It's normal (the over-representation of women-soldiers in the Medical Services) (interviewee 12, 2 June 1998).
It's a traditional job for the women in the army to be nurses, sisters (interviewee 15, 18 June 1998)
The job of nursing always seemed as 'for women only' (interviewee 17, 23 June 1998).
In the Medical Services it's all naturally a domain of women's work (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998)
Medical is basically female, nurses (interviewee 21, 24 June 1998)
It's obvious (the over-representation of women-soldiers in SAMS); (because of) all the nurses and so on (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998).
It's more suitable for women to support (interviewee 24, 9 July 1998).

4.3.1.2 *Visions of adulthood*

This finding is not surprising given that the majority of the interviewees had had a vision of becoming either a teacher or a part of the medical profession when they were teenagers. Burn maintains that sex-based divisions of labour are common to all cultures

and begin in childhood (Burn, 1996, 155). These fields of occupations are considered as traditional careers for women, who are stereotypically perceived as moral and nurturing creatures (Elshtain, 1987, 4).

Nineteen of twenty- five interviewees thought about their profession as adults within the parameters of a traditional 'female' job:

In my time there were only three 'careers' open for women: teaching, welfare, and nursing (interviewee 1, 16 March 1998).\
(my vision was to become) A nurse (or) a doctor (in order) to help people (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).
(my vision was to become) A teacher (interviewee 8; interviewee 9, 25 March 1998).
My mother was a provincial nurse and already as a child I was 'interviewing' mothers who brought their kids to the clinic (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).
(my vision was to become) A physiotherapist (interviewee 17, 23 June 1998).
(my vision was to become) A teacher, a nurse, or a librarian (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998).
(my vision was to become) A psychologist (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998).

4.3.1.3 *The impact of gender on woman-soldiers*

Despite this, the members of this particular group of women joined the military and became soldiers. One important question which arises in this connection is whether the gender of these women has had an effect on their military service?

The findings show that more than half of the interviewees (fourteen of twenty-four) admitted that they have been treated differently from their male colleagues during their military service. While some of them experienced it positively, others experienced it as gender discrimination and expressed resentment:

My previous commander: he treated you as a lady (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).
Male chauvinism has been there all the time (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
If I was a man everything would have looked different (interviewee 12, 2 June 1998).
Men don't want us here (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).

While less than half of the interviewees (ten of twenty-four) said that their gender had not had any effect on their military service, two of them feared this might occur in the future. They were concerned that in the event of either marriage or pregnancy their gender would make a difference. One of them is a tank instructor and the other is a combat officer on the Drakensberg ship. The tank instructor thought that it could be

problematic for her to get married as sometimes she had to stay in the bush for three months. The latter indicated the health risks for a pregnant woman on a ship, because of the persistent rattling. A similar fear was expressed by a woman-pilot. According to her, pilots serving in the SANDF have to shift between the different Air-Force bases, which are located far away from each other. In her view it is easier for a man-pilot to be married than for a woman-pilot because "their wives follow them around", while it's not so common the other way around (interviewee 27, 18 June 1998). Referring to the USA, Rodriguez argued that with the increase in dual-career families there was an upsurge in family conflicts related to the demands of military life clashing with those of the spouse's career (Rodriguez, 1984, 55).

4.3.1.4 *Sexual harassment*

One of the most extreme expressions of the traditional positions and roles of women is the phenomenon of sexual harassment. According to Reddi, sexual harassment refers to unwanted and repeated sexual conduct in the work environment. The distinguishing feature of sexual harassment is that it occurs in the context of unequal power. It is also not limited to physical acts but, rather, may manifest itself in different forms (Reddi, 1994, 109). Enloe's research, concerning the American army, revealed that sexual harassment was the most significant factor in explaining women's attrition. Under the title of 'sexual harassment' Enloe included different kinds and levels of harassment, such as sexist jokes. According to her, the increase of the phenomenon is related to three factors: One, the incorporation of more women into the military service. Second, the integration of women-soldiers into former all-men units, and three, allowing women to do once securely 'masculine' jobs (Enloe, 1983, 146-147).

Half of the interviewees (twelve of twenty-four) have experienced some kind of sexual harassment during their military service (either in the SANDF or before). Three of them experienced it only in the past while nine of them experience it during their current military service. Interviewee 3, who does not experience sexual harassment any longer, maintained that "it (sexual harassment) has to do with power and with the Constitution" (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998). By saying that she meant that she was sexually harassed when she was lower in rank (and, hence, in power) and before the era of the new South African Constitution.

More than a third of the interviewees (nine of twenty-four) identified sexual harassment as an ongoing phenomenon. Three of them experienced it individually. Another three either witnessed sexual harassment or heard about it, and the remaining three experienced it as a part of the women-soldiers group:

Yes, (I have experienced sexual harassment) in both armies (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
Yes, (I have been sexually harassed) a lot: in my job I have to be friendly and cheerful and men tend to interpret it in the wrong way... I had an incident when a ranking officer tried to get involved with me and I said 'no' ... It was in 1990 ... Eventually he was transferred to another base (interviewee 21, 24 June 1998).
Yes, (I have been harassed) a lot. I get many offers (for sexual intercourse) from both troops and officers but I tell them to forget it. I control it, I am not scared (interviewee 16, 18 June 1998).
No (I haven't been sexually harassed), but I see the phenomenon in relation to others ... Simple things: both verbal and non-verbal communication (interviewee 5, 17 March 1998).
No (I haven't been sexually harassed), but I saw a number of cases which happened in the base... We have a social worker to deal with these cases. We take it seriously ... It happened either between troops with similar ranks or among Civilians (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
No (I haven't been sexually harassed), but I heard that it happened to someone (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).
No (I haven't been harassed), but when the women soldiers are on parade the male soldiers laugh or say all kinds of remarks (interviewee 13, 18 June 1998).
No (I haven't been harassed), but many men here have a 'dirty mouth', especially when they don't notice that there are women around (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).

Two of the twelve interviewees who reported to have never been sexually harassed explained why, in their opinions, it never happened to them. One of them thought it depended on the woman:

No (I haven't been sexually harassed). I don't allow it: I'm not the type (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).

The other perceived sexual harassment as an outcome of three factors:

No (I haven't been sexually harassed). It depends on your rank, your age and your personality (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998).

4.3.2 Challenging traditional women's positions and roles in the military

4.3.2.1 *Attitudes towards combat roles*

Although the universal sight of women wearing military uniform has become quite common, most armies still exclude women from combat roles. It seems that the notion of 'combat' is one of the last vestiges of 'manhood' in (Western) society. Stouffer et al maintain that while in World War I the test of social manhood was joining the armed forces, during the Second World War this test shifted to combat roles (Stouffer et al, 1976, 179-180). According to Enloe, combat is the key dimension in the development of the masculinity-militarism nexus (Enloe, 1983 cited in Cock, 1991a, 192). She argues that the notion of 'combat' plays a central role in the construction of social concepts such as 'manhood', in the sense that "only in combat lies the ultimate test of a man's masculinity" (Enloe, 1983, 12-13). Therefore, some feminist organisations have fought for the inclusion of women on a footing equal to that of men in the military (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 89).

A central finding of this research is that **all** twenty-five interviewees thought that women should be allowed to serve in combat roles and sixteen approved of this idea without reservation:

To prevent women from combat roles: I don't see a reason for it and it also contradicts the Constitution ... If the State is in war there is no question of whether the woman is allowed. It's a question of defending one's country...(and) at (time of) peace; they (the women) should continue (to serve in combat roles (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).
Definitely; if she is interested (to serve in a combat role) that means she will do her best in order to succeed (interview 5, 17 March 1998).
Why should they be denied the opportunity (to serve in a combat role)? (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
It's a free choice; why not (to allow a woman to serve in a combat role)? (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).
Women should be given a fair opportunity (to serve in combat roles) (interviewee 18, 23 June 1998).

About a third of the interviewees (nine of twenty-five) expressed concern about women serving in combat roles, although they did not object this idea:

It must be her choice (to serve in a combat role); it must fit her physically and emotionally (interviewee 1, 16 March 1998).
It has to be the woman's choice (to serve in a combat role); if she accepts the risks upon herself (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).

I personally think that it's not a lady's job (to serve in a combat role), but if they want to- I can't stop them (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).
If they are capable (to serve in combat roles) and if there are accommodation and facilities, otherwise it is not practical (interviewee 17, 23 June 1998).

Interviewee twenty-six, who was not fully interviewed, very strongly opposed the idea of allowing women into combat roles. In her view, the role of women in society is to enlarge the population and, hence, "if you kill the mothers you kill the nation." She also thought that if men and women fought together in combat, the men would be busy protecting their female-colleagues. In principal, she was against gender equality in the military, arguing that "why must I compare with men and lose my femininity?" (interviewee 26, 1 July 1998).

4.3.2.2 *Attitudes towards fighting and killing in combat*

The issue of including women in combat roles involves the need to fight and to kill during combat. This brings us back to the previous debate about whether women are, basically, the same as men or different from them. Although women's identity has been constructed as the collective 'other' to the male warrior, it can be argued that fighting, shooting and killing have to do with the individual's personality rather than with his/her gender (Elshtain, 1987, 3-4).

The findings show that almost all interviewees (twenty-two of twenty- four) thought that women could fight and kill just as well as men:

If a woman chooses a combat route then she is probably capable (to fight and to kill) (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).
In the Defence Force there is one thing that you must always bear in mind - you are a soldier and being a soldier means that there is a request (to fight and to kill) and you have to do that when it is necessary ... I think that a woman can kill just as un-emotionally as a man and I think there is a side danger because sometimes because there is more pressure on women she will be more un-emotional than a man simply because she has to prove something (interviewee 5, 17 March 1998).
Yes. (I think women can fight and kill) Some women are 'bully'. I saw it with my eyes (interviewee 7, 25 March 1998).
Yes (I think women can fight and kill) I met women who could be crueller than men (interviewee 9, 25 March 1998).
I would imagine so (that women can fight and kill), given the situation ... (although) women are caring people by nature (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
Yes (women can fight and kill) It comes with the job (interviewee 17, 23 June 1998).
A 'killer' is a product of a certain training with no regard of gender (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998).

A smaller number of the interviewees (eighteen of twenty-four) maintained that they would personally kill during combat. About two-thirds of them (thirteen of eighteen) qualified their response invoking factors such as "circumstances" or "following orders":

Given time and chance and the necessary aims: I would (kill during combat) (interviewee 4, 16 March 1998).
If I have to (kill during combat) I'll do it (interviewee 5, 17 March 1998; interviewee 17, 23 June 1998).
I'm not the type of person but if I get an order (to kill in combat) I'll do it (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
Yes (I would kill in combat), if needed (interviewee 7, 25 March 1998).
Women were born to give birth and to raise children but if the situation demands ... (I will kill during combat) (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
(I would kill during combat) if my life is under threat (interviewee 12, 2 June 1998).
I think I would (kill during combat) but I have never experienced such a situation (interviewee 13, 18 June 1998).
It's a difficult question (whether I would kill during combat). If they'll send me: that's my job (interviewee 15, 18 June 1998).
Yes (I would kill during combat), if I must, if they give me the chance (interviewee 20, 24 June 1998).
If I had to do it I would do it (kill during combat), but not if it wasn't necessary (interviewee 25, 9 July 1998).

One interviewee maintained that although, personally, she would kill during combat, it didn't mean that other women could do the same:

I would (kill during combat), but some women are sensitive (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).

A quarter of the interviewees (six of twenty-four) said they would not kill during combat and explained it in personal terms:

Maybe some (women) are capable (to kill during combat); physically and psychologically. I would never do it because ... it's not ...(a) psychological part of my life (interviewee 1, 16 March 1998).
That it too heavy for me (to kill during combat) ... I cannot kill ... (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).

The three latter sets of findings point at two main conclusions:
1. The vast majority of the interviewees identify combat roles and fighting and killing during combat with women as well as with men.
2. While at a theoretical level all twenty-five interviewees agreed that women should be allowed to serve in combat roles, a smaller number of them (twenty-two of twenty-

four) approved of the idea of women being able to fight and kill as well as men. The ratio of approval dropped again when the question was rephrased: only three-quarters of the interviewees (eighteen of twenty-four) thought that they could personally fight and kill during combat.

4.3.2.3 *Military leadership and aspiration*

As already stated, the phenomenon of incorporating women into full-time military service has become quite common. As a consequence, there had been a gradual increase in the number of women-soldiers who are high-ranking officers. Yet, no woman is the head of any organised armed force. One of the main explanations of this is the lack of 'combat' experience. In a television play named *The Imitation Game*, Ian McEwan wrote the following: "If girls fired guns, and women general planned the battles, then men would feel there was no morality to war. They would have no one to fight for, nowhere to leave their consciousness ..." (cited in Enloe, 1983, 159).

The responses of this group on the matter also challenge traditional positions. Almost all interviewees (twenty-three of twenty-five) thought that a woman could become the head of the SANDF:

Of course; why not (should a woman become the head of the SANDF)? We must change perceptions. When we speak of a General or of the head of the army, people always picture themselves a man (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).
Why not (should a woman become the head of the SANDF)? There are already two women who are Major Generals. I think one of them has the ability to become the head of the SANDF. She has already proven herself. I see a big chance for that (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
Why not (could a woman become the head of the SANDF)? If she wants to; if she is committed, dedicated (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).
Why not (should a woman become the head of the SANDF); if she is capable? (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
(A woman should become the head of the SANDF) If she is good and capable, knows the job and if she is better than all the other candidates (interviewee 15, 18 June 1998).
(A woman should become the head of the SANDF but) not because of her being a woman. If she has the experience, the skills, the training (interviewee 21, 24 June 1998).
Yes (a woman could become the head of the SANDF); if she knows enough about the Defence Force (interviewee 25, 9 July 1998).

While only two interviewees opposed the idea that a woman **could** become the head of the SANDF, five opposed the idea that a woman **should** become its head. In other words, while almost all interviewees agreed with the theoretical possibility of a woman heading the SANDF, fewer supported the practical possibility of this. The difference between these two options is best illustrated by the dilemma of interviewees two and fourteen:

(A woman) could (become the head of the SANDF) but not should ... (because) only eleven percent of the soldiers are women and (because of the) lack of combat experience (interviewee 2, 16 March 1998).
Yes (I think that a woman could become the head of the SANDF), I wish that would happen - I really do ... (but) No, (I don't think that a woman should become the head of the SANDF because) ...Women ... they ... there are a lot of differences ... I don't think that the men will want that (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).

Two of the interviewees thought that a woman neither could nor should become the head of the SANDF. Their arguments are as follows:

No (a woman could not become the head of the SANDF). I don't think that any of the high ranking women-officers today has the needed experience ... (I don't think a woman should become the head of the SANDF because) the Defence Force is mainly men (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).
No (I don't think that a woman could become the head of the SANDF) ... No (I don't think that a woman should become the head of the SANDF), it doesn't sound right to me. We women think with our hearts (and) not with our mind (interviewee 24, 9 July 1998).

Again, a higher percentage of the interviewees expressed a progressive position at the theoretical level, while, at a more practical level, there was a small withdrawal into more traditional attitudes. Another conclusion which can be drawn from this set of findings, is that some of the interviewees still view the military as a male institution and perceive women-soldiers as no more than 'camp followers', in Enloe's terms. "Women may serve the military, bur they can never be permitted to *be* the military" (Enloe, 1983, 15).

On the theoretical level, the women soldiers interviewed expressed high aspirations concerning their future in the SANDF. About two-thirds of them (sixteen of twenty-three) aimed to achieve a rank of a Colonel or higher. Five of twenty-three interviewees (about a fifth) wish to become a Major General (which is the highest rank available for women at present), and another five wish to achieve an even higher position than that.

A minority group (three of twenty-three) expressed ambitions to become head of the SANDF. Only five of twenty-three interviewees (about a fifth) do not aim at becoming officers at all.

4.3.2.4 *Job categorisation*

Traditional female stereotypes in the military are reflected not only by rank, but also by the type of job. According to Chapkis, most women in all national militaries are overwhelmingly segregated in traditional female jobs such as nursing, secretarial and administrative work (Chapkis, 1988, 111).

Three-fifths of the interviewees (fifteen of twenty-five) considered their job in the SANDF as a 'male' one. Most of them are pioneering new areas for women in the SANDF. While some feel proud about it, others emphasise the difficulties:

I am a Second in Command of an Army base ...This is the first time that a woman is doing this job. My conclusions: not to interfere emotions with work ... to develop good working relations ... to be stable, honest, strict. Self - confidence is the basis ... At the beginning it was hard because some wouldn't trust a woman but that belongs to the past now. I have earned trust through knowledge and professionalism. You mustn't be scared to make decisions (interviewee 6, 17 March 1998).
I am an instructor in the School of Armour ... Until 1996 there were no women in the School of Armour. For me it is a challenge (interviewee 14, 18 June 1998).
I am a tank instructor in the School of Armour ... It is hard work. Sometimes you are sleeping in the field...Last time that we went to the field I was the only girl in the tank and I had to sleep next to my troops. The commander sent someone every now and then to check if I was O.K. ... I feel it is a big competition, that I am being continuously compared to the men (interviewee 16, 18 June 1998).
I am a Combat Officer on the Drakensberg (ship) ... Everyone can do this job ... (but) until 1994 women were not allowed at sea (interviewee 17, 23 June 1998).
I am a Human Resources Officer of a Naval unit ... It (this job) was considered a male one until my appointment ... in 1996, although the type of training suits women...I don't feel anything special about it (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998).
My job is a Surface Weapon operator (on a ship) ... I'm the first woman who is doing this job in the Navy in South Africa ... I feel great (about it) (interviewee 20, 24 June 1998).

Interviewee 12 illustrates the difficulty of challenging people's stereotypes concerning women's positions and occupations:

I am a Chief Medical Officer ... In the department where I work there are seven male-doctors and four female-doctors ... Although my sign reads 'Dr ...' and I wear the stethoscope, people keep calling me 'nurse' (interviewee 12, 2 June 1998).

About a third of the interviewees (n[illegible]-five) considered their military job as a 'female' one. They were all content [illegible]

I am a Deputy Director of Nursing ... [illegible] at is there for me as a female (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).
I am an Assistant Director (of) Nursing [illegible]vices . [illegible]atly nurses are females... I'm happy to do this job. This is the profession which I chose. I am a female (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
I am a Deputy Director in Directorate Psychology ... There are many women psychologists...(But) I also work at a different level (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998).
(My job is) "Military Development ... It's fine with me (interviewee 24, 9 July 1998).

4.3.2.5 *Women's solidarity*

The classical feminist assumption of the existence of some kind of a 'sisterhood' amongst women (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 96) was also challenged by the women-soldiers interviewed. More than half of the interviewees (fourteen of twenty-four) said they related better to their male colleagues than to other women. A third of the interviewees (eight of twenty-four) said that they related well to both men and women and only a minority group (two of twenty-four) reported that they related better to other women. These findings show that these women have been integrated into 'a man's world' (Genovese & Thompson, 1993, 7).

4.3.2.6 *Conflicts between labour and domestic roles*

The rise of capitalism and the nation-state created a new dichotomy within the family. Men were assigned to operate within the 'external' world, while women were directed at and identified with the 'internal' world, i.e. their home, their children and their emotions (Zaretzky, 1976; Elshtain, 1987, 141-142). Although many women are active in the 'external-productive' world, their social image still promotes their domestic and supportive roles (Walker, 1982, 2). Overall, world-wide, fathers spend about one-third the time mothers do with children. All over the world, women do the majority of household labour, even when employed outside the home (Burn, 1996, 155). This background raises the question of whether these women-soldiers have experienced any role-conflict between their 'masculine' job-related obligations and their 'feminine' domestic and familial responsibilities.

The findings show that about three-quarters of the interviewees (eighteen of twenty-five) have never experienced such conflict, in part because they have never married or had children:

No (I have never experienced a conflict between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities), because I never married ... (and) my family always supported me (interviewee 1, 16 March 1998).
No (I have never experienced a conflict between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities). I never married ... My father passed away long ago ... My mother is still alive but she is independent and doesn't expect my help (interviewee 2, 16 March 1998).

Those interviewees who do have children rely on others for support. Some interviewees explained their lack of such conflict by their reliance on their mothers:

No (I have never experienced any conflict between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities). (When I was) in APLA ... my mother helped me and she is still helping me (interviewee 7, 25 March 1998).
No (I have never experienced a conflict between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities). If I am on duty (then) my mother helps me (interviewee 25, 9 July 1998).

Another reason for the lack of such conflict was the convenient hours of duty:

Usually (I do) not (experience a conflict between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities because) night-duty is only once or twice a year (interviewee 8, 25 March 1998).

One interviewee said that although sometimes she had to be absent from home for a long period, she did not experience it as a conflict:

Maybe when I go on courses (I experience a conflict between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities), but in my heart I don't feel a conflict ... I was on a course for ten weeks ... I stayed at home from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon (but) it wasn't an issue, it wasn't a problem (interviewee 10, 5 May 1998).

Around a quarter of the interviewees (seven of twenty-five) reported that they have experienced some conflict between their military job and their family. Of them, two had previous experience of it , when their children were still young and depending on them:

Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities). I think sometimes my children have been left unattended...When I joined (the SADF) the girl was fourteen and the boy (was) eleven ... I was a single

mother then ... He had learning difficulties and I wasn't there for him. When I stayed on duty my parents stayed with them (interviewee 19, 24 June 1998).
Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities), when there was a state of war. We were (MK) a liberation movement, army with distractions ... a lot of children of MK people suffered ... My child suffered also...Sometimes he was with me and sometimes he wasn't (interviewee 22, 6 July 1998).

Four of twenty-five interviewees (less than a fifth) reported that they experienced conflict between their military jobs and their family when they went on courses. Those who have children at home must rely on someone to look after them:

Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities). When I go on courses I have to rely on someone ... Usually I pay my mother to look after the kids (I am a single mother) ... I don't 'pay' her but (rather) 'bribe' her ... I buy her clothes, shoes, I give her money ... Or (she looks after the children) when I stay for a twenty-four hour duty. During the day the older (brother and sister) look after the little one until I get home (interviewee 4, 16 March 1998).
Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities), when I go on courses. My mother lives with me at my house ... My father has already passed away ... I experience a conflict between the (Muslim) tradition and my career. It is difficult for my friends to understand my obligations (during courses) which are contrasted to social responsibilities ... but I have my own priorities ... Career-minded women are not always seen as very friendly people ... (interviewee 5, 17 March 1998).
Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities), because of the courses that don't consider single mothers. Last year I was on a course for ten weeks ... Sometimes I stayed over (for the night) ... A friend helped me to take care of the children (interviewee 11, 2 June 1998).
Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities), when I do courses ... And when I have to serve for two weeks as a 'detached duty' in Kwazulu-Natal and there is no one to look after the child (interviewee 12, 2 June 1998).

Interviewee 22, a psychologist, maintains that the higher the woman's rank, the stronger the conflict between the military and the family. For example, in order to achieve the rank of Colonel one must participate in a course for a whole year. According to her, statistics from 1996 show that there were very few women above Lt. Colonel during that year. She adds that at present it is very rare to find women in such high ranks who have "normal families" or little children (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998). Her views are supported by the private story of interviewee twenty-six, who was mentioned previously : She is a single mother of a nine year old boy. In order to achieve her present rank (Major) she had to participate in an intensive course for three

months. She could do it thanks to her seventy year old mother who came especially from Holland to stay with the child. She would like to achieve a Lt. Colonel rank next year but in order to do that she will have to participate in a six-month course which will cover not only the weekdays but most of the weekends as well. She thinks that the SANDF must establish a better support system for single parents (interviewee 26, 1 July 1998).

Only one of the twenty-five interviewees reported that she was experiencing conflict between her military job and her family on a daily basis. As she has two children under eighteen at home, she also relies on another woman:

Yes (I have experienced conflicts between my military obligations and my familial responsibilities). My children are eleven and thirteen and I would like to spend more time with them at home. They want their mother ... We have a relative who lives with us and who takes care of the children (for a payment) but it's not like your mother (interviewee 3, 16 March 1998).

This interviewee's 'confession' reveals a dilemma. While in response to a former question she expressed an extremely progressive view, we now learn that deep inside her she believes that as a mother she should be at home, with her children.

The next section illustrates how these women-soldiers' experiences are mediated by various sociological characteristics, such as their marital status or their children's age.

4.4 Sociological characteristics influencing gender issues within the military

This section examines the extent to which the interviewees' experiences were shaped by seven different sociological factors, namely: 'age', 'race', 'marital status', 'first military service', 'rank', 'arm of service' and the categorisation of either a 'male' or a 'female' job. The findings show that, regarding the answers reported before, 'age', 'rank' and 'arm of service' were found to be insignificant factors. 'Marital status' has proved itself as the most significant factor and following it, in decreasing order, are 'first military service', 'race' and a male/'female' job.

4.4.1 'Marital status'

Three types of marital status were identified amongst the interviewees: single with no children, married (either with or without children), and single mothers. 'Marital status' emerged as significant with regard to the following seven issues: hours of duty per month, the gendered nature of the job performed, the level of ambition concerning one's future in the SANDF, gendered social relations, the impact of gender on one's military service, conflicts between the military job and the family, and the level of approval of the over-representation of women-soldiers in SAMS.

Single interviewees who don't have children tend to work more hours per month. All six interviewees who are married and six of seven interviewees who are single mothers work less than two hundred and fifty hours a month. In comparison, among the eight interviewees who work more than that seven are singles with no children.

Interviewees who are either married or have children tend to feel their gender impacts more on their military service than those who are single with no children. While the vast majority of both 'the married' and 'the mothers' among the interviewees (eight of ten) reported being treated differently from their male colleagues, about half of those who are single and with no children felt the same way.

Among the interviewees, the women-soldiers who are mothers tended to experience more conflicts between their military jobs and their families in comparison to those who are singles with no children. Half of the interviewees who have children (six of twelve) have experienced such conflicts. Almost all of those who are single with no children (eleven of twelve) reported no such conflicts.

The interviewees who are single and who have no children tended to do a 'male' job while the interviewees who are single mothers tend to do a 'female' job. Almost all interviewees who are single with no children (eleven of twelve) are doing a 'male' job compared to a minority of the interviewees who are either married or have children (four of thirteen). At the same time, almost all interviewees who are single mothers (six of seven) are doing a 'female' job.

The interviewees who are single with no children tend to report better relations with their male colleagues as opposed to the married interviewees and single mothers. While nearly all the interviewees who are single and who have no children (nine of eleven)

relate better to men, less than half of the interviewees who are single mothers (three of seven) and a third of the married ones (two of six) reported feeling the same way.

The married women among the particular group interviewed showed the highest level of ambition concerning their future in the SANDF while the single mothers showed the opposite. Almost all the interviewees who are married (five of six) aim at achieving a rank of Colonel or higher, in contrast to three-quarters of the interviewees who are single with no children (nine of twelve) and half among those who are single mothers (three out of six).

The interviewees who are married (either with or without children) indicated that they did not see anything abnormal or unusual about women-soldiers being represented more highly in the SAMS, in comparison to those who are either single with no children or are single mothers. All the married interviewees (six) thought that it was 'natural' for women-soldiers to serve in SAMS, while about three quarters of the interviewees who are single with no children (nine of twelve) and those who are single mothers (five of seven) felt the same way.

The interviewees who are single with no children tended to work more hours, do a 'male' job, relate better to men, experience less impact on their military service on the part of their gender, and less conflict between their military obligations and their familial responsibilities. In gender terms, these interviewees expressed the highest level of 'masculine' work patterns in comparison to the other interviewees. It can be argued, then, that with the lack of either marriage or motherhood the dichotomy between the genders (in the sense of 'external' and 'internal' worlds) is blurred.

The interviewees who are either married or have children tended to work fewer hours and feel the impact of their gender on their military service to a greater extent. This finding reinforces my argument that the existence of either marriage or motherhood prioritises domestic and familial responsibilities of the women over their activities in the 'external' world.

The married women among the interviewees (either with or without children) tended to:

1. Express the highest level of ambition regarding their future in the SANDF.

2. Express the highest rate of approval concerning the over-representation of women-soldiers in the Medical Services.

These findings are contradictory. The first challenges traditional 'feminine' perceptions, while the second reinforces them. This is an excellent example of the gap between theory and practice. Considering the fact that such a contradiction was revealed amongst the married interviewees, a number of explanations can be suggested. First, one of the two most high-ranking women-officers in the SANDF is married. It can be argued, then, that this woman serves as a role-model in this context. Second, while the marriage institution is demanding, it also provides emotional and economic support. Therefore, the married women might have the benefit of relying on their family while striving for promotion. Third, the marriage institution is also a traditional one. In this sense it is understandable why the married interviewees expressed traditional views as well, concerning the role of women in the military.

The mothers among the interviewees (both married and single) tended to experience the highest levels of conflict between their military obligations and their familial responsibilities. This finding reinforces the assumption that motherhood is still conceived as the woman's primary duty, regardless of her professional status.

Single mothers amongst the interviewees tended to do 'female' jobs and expressed the lowest level of ambition concerning their futures in the SANDF. The explanation of these findings lies in the fact that single mothers bear all the difficulties of running a household and raising children by themselves. This position limits their options to choose a job or to aim at a high-level rank, because they must prioritise their domestic obligations over their personal ambitions.

4.4.2 Experience of military service

This section examines the impact of the first military service of the women-soldiers interviewed on their responses regarding gender issues. As already explained, the interviewees had either joined the SANDF directly, or indirectly, from military service in the SADF, MK, or APLA.

The factor 'first military service' was found significant in the following five areas: being able to kill during combat, approval of the idea that a woman both could and should

become the head of the SANDF, experience of sexual harassment, and the experience of conflicts between the military and the family. The findings show that the former SADF members among the interviewees held the most traditional views in relation to the first three issues:

Interviewees who are former SADF members were less willing to kill during combat in comparison to the other interviewees. Almost all interviewees who joined the SANDF directly (eight of nine) said they could kill during combat. Similarly, almost all interviewees who are former members of either MK or APLA (five of six) said they could kill. But nearly half of the interviewees who are former SADF members (four of nine) said they could not kill during combat.

Interviewees who are former SADF members gave less support to the idea that a women could become the head of the SANDF. All nine interviewees who joined the SANDF directly and all seven interviewees who are former members of either MK or APLA approved of the idea that a woman could become the head of the SANDF. A smaller number amongst the interviewees who are former SADF members (seven of nine) thought the same way.

Former SADF members amongst the interviewees approved less of the idea that a woman should become the head of the SANDF. All six interviewees who are former members of either MK or APLA agreed that a woman should become the head of the SANDF. In comparison, almost all interviewees who joined the SANDF directly (eight of nine), and half of the interviewees who are former SADF members (four of eight), agreed with this statement.

Interviewees who joined the SANDF directly experienced the lowest levels of sexual harassment Only one of nine interviewees who joined the SANDF directly had an individual experience of sexual harassment. In contrast, a quarter of the interviewees who are former SADF members (two of eight), and almost half of the interviewees who are former members of MK or APLA (three of seven), reported having experienced such harassment..

Interviewees who served in statutory (conventional) forces tended to experience less conflicts between the military and their family, compared to those interviewees who served in non-statutory (guerrilla) forces. All nine interviewees who joined the SANDF directly and most of the interviewees who are former SADF members (seven of nine)

reported that they have never experienced any conflict between their military obligations and their familial responsibilities. However, all four interviewees who are former MK members and two of the three interviewees who are former APLA members maintained that they have experienced such conflicts.

The interviewees who are former SADF members expressed less willingness to kill during combat and lower levels of approval of the idea that a woman both could and should become the head of the SANDF. This could be explained by the fact that within the SADF gender roles were segregated: Women were not allowed in combat roles and were utilised, hence, as a supportive force for the 'fighting' men. Due to their lack of 'combat' experience their promotion was also limited. This background explains their traditional vision concerning women as military leaders.

Former members of both MK and APLA among the interviewees have experienced:
1. The highest levels of sexual harassment.
2. The highest levels of conflicts between the military and their family.

The first finding seems surprising given that the MK have claimed to implement gender equality (Cock, 1991a, 161; Mtintso, 1993, 1). Yet, it takes more than ideology to change reality. Connell maintains that in order to change a social phenomenon one needs to do much more than poke a finger at it. This finding suggests also a gap between the views held by the intellectual leadership of the non-statutory forces (especially MK) and those held by their followers. The latter finding is not surprising because the non-statutory forces did not enable their members to combine military service with 'normal' civil life. Those who joined them served mainly in exile, living in temporary camps and being subjected to armed attacks by the SADF. Therefore, in comparison to the other interviewees, they paid the highest price concerning their private life.

Those interviewees who joined the SANDF directly experienced the lowest levels of sexual harassment. From some points of view this finding is surprising and from others it is not. As already suggested, sexual harassment in the military is influenced by a number of factors. Among them: the woman's power (rank), the number of women in the military, the existence of mixed units, the 'occupation' of traditionally 'male' jobs by women and the legal framework of the country. Given that most of the interviewees who joined the SANDF directly are at lower ranks, serving in mixed units and

pioneering new areas, one could assume that they would be subjected to a high rate of sexual harassment. On the other hand, it seems that the significant factors in this context are the new South African Constitution and the equal-opportunity policies implemented within the SANDF.

4.4.3 The influence of 'race'

This research uses the racial categorisation which was inherited from Apartheid and is still used in contemporary formal statistics. This attitude differentiates between four racial groups, namely: African (Black), White (European, Chinese, Japanese), Coloured (the Coloured community) and Asian (Indian and Malaysian).

The influence of 'race' was examined in relation to the following four issues: professional ambition, the gendered categorisation of job, the highest targeted rank, and gendered social relations.

White and African interviewees held more traditional ambitions concerning their profession as adults, in comparison to the Coloured interviewees. Almost all White (eleven of twelve), and African interviewees (seven of eight) reported that as teenagers they thought of becoming either teachers or medical professionals, which were considered traditional women's jobs. In comparison, all three Coloured interviewees had different visions. Amongst the two Asian interviewees one wanted to become a dentist (following the model of the woman-dentist at school) and the other wanted to become a diplomat.

The White interviewees had the highest proportion of those doing a 'male' job. Three-quarters of the White interviewees (nine of twelve) were doing a 'male' job, in comparison to two-thirds of the Coloured interviewees (two of three), and less than half of the African interviewees (three of eight). Of the two Asian interviewees one was doing a 'male' job and the other was doing a 'female' job.

The two Asian women among the interviewees expressed the highest levels of ambition concerning their future in the SANDF. Both Asian interviewees aimed to achieve a rank of Major General or higher. Almost all White interviewees (nine of eleven) aimed at a rank of Colonel or higher, compared to about half of the African interviewees (four of seven), and a third of the Coloured interviewees (one of three).

The African interviewees tended to relate less to their male colleagues. Less than half of the African interviewees said that they related better to their male colleagues. In comparison, both Asian interviewees, two-thirds of the Coloured interviewees (two of three), and about two-thirds of the White interviewees (seven of eleven), reported that they related better to their male colleagues than to their female ones.

The White interviewees tended to hold more 'male' jobs in relation to women from the other racial groups. The immediate explanation which comes into mind is that the White interviewees were more 'liberal' in the sense of challenging traditional women's roles in the military. But this explanation is not satisfactory on its own. Theories concerning organisational behaviour maintain that every organisation's elite aims at promoting those who resemble it. According to the DoD *Annual Reports* of 1994/5 and 1995/6, White men comprised the majority amongst all officers in the SANDF. Therefore, following the 1994 transition, when the military leadership was ordered to allow women into former 'male-only' jobs, it was more likely that they would start promoting the White women first.

The African interviewees tended to hold more 'female' jobs and to relate less to their male colleagues. These findings are difficult to explain. Although it could be argued that the African women among the interviewees are more 'traditional', regarding gender issues, it seems too simplistic. Therefore, it should be explained in relation to other sociological characteristics. Almost all the African interviewees (seven of eight) are either married with children or single mothers. As has already been argued and explained, women who have the obligations of marriage and children are less likely to do a 'male' job and to relate to men.

The three Coloured interviewees held the most non-traditional visions regarding their futures as adults. Although my knowledge of the South African Coloured community is very limited, I find it hard to believe that this particular racial group is not marked by a traditional gender division of labour. Therefore, I suggest that this finding reflects individuals' perceptions only.

The three Coloured interviewees held the lowest levels of ambition concerning their futures in the SANDF. In contrast, the two Asian interviewees expressed the highest levels of ambition in this regard. Any explanation able to clarify the findings concerning one of these two racial groups contradicts itself when applied to the other. This is due

to a number of similarities between these groups. Both Coloured and Asian women are relatively new in the South African military. The Coloured people have been allowed to join the SADF since 1986 (Seegers, 1996, 269), and the Asian community was permitted to do so a short time afterwards (interviewee 21, 24.6.98). As already mentioned, both groups comprise a small minority of the women-soldiers employed in the SANDF. From one point of view the role-model theory can make sense here. By February 1997 the highest rank held by Coloured women-soldiers was Captain, while the highest rank held by Asian women-soldiers was Lt. Colonel. It could be argued, then, that the low level of ambition amongst the Coloured women interviewed was due to the lack of high-ranking Coloured women-officers serving as role-models. On the other hand, this theory does not explain why both Asian interviewees aimed at a rank of Major General and above.

Therefore, with the lack of any theoretical explanation of the above findings, it can only be argued that they reflect individuals' perceptions only.

4.4.4 The gendered division of labour

The gendered categorisation of the jobs performed by the interviewees was significant in three areas, namely: hours of duty per month, gendered social relations, and experiences of sexual harassment.

The interviewees who hold 'female' jobs tended to work fewer hours than those doing 'male' jobs. While almost all interviewees who held 'female' jobs (eight of nine) worked less than two hundred and fifty hours per month, about half of the interviewees who held 'male' jobs (seven of fifteen) worked longer hours than this.

The women doing 'male' jobs tended to relate better to their male colleagues than those doing 'female' jobs. While about two-thirds of the interviewees who held 'male' jobs (ten of fourteen) related better to their male colleagues, less than half of the interviewees who held 'female' jobs (four out of nine) reported feeling the same way.

The interviewees who held 'male' jobs reported having experienced more sexual harassment than the interviewees who held 'female' jobs. While more than half of the interviewees doing 'male' jobs (eight of fourteen) have experienced some kind of sexual harassment (individual or other), only a third of those interviewees doing 'female' jobs (three of nine) reported having similar experiences.

The interviewees who held 'male' jobs were more likely to:
1. Work longer hours,
2. Have better relations with their male colleagues, and
3. Experience some form of sexual harassment.

The first finding is obvious. A 'male' job is most likely to demand longer hours of duty. The second finding reinforces my earlier suggestion that women adapt in order to be able to cope with men when operating within a masculine environment. The third finding may seem surprising at first but it is actually not. It reinforces Enloe's argument that women who 'conquered' former 'male' areas within the military were more likely to experience sexual harassment than others (Enloe, 1983, 147).

4.5 Conclusion

The various findings of this research were presented and interpreted in relation to two main themes. One concerned the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF, and the other examined gender issues regarding the military. The main general finding of this research is that the experiences of this particular group of women-soldiers varied according to sociological differences, such as previous military experience, race, marital status, and so on. In other words, women-soldiers serving in the SANDF do not consist of a homogenous category.

The first part of the findings referred to the various responses of the interviewees vis-a-vis the transition and the establishment of the SANDF. The central finding, concerning this theme, was that only a small minority amongst the interviewees experienced the transition into the SANDF in a positive way. Two-thirds of the interviewees experienced the transition into the SANDF (either from a former armed force or from civil life) with ambiguous feelings. These interviewees' responses originated from three main sources, namely: the gap between expectations and reality, gender issues (women's positions), and (racial) integration.

The interviewees' responses to data concerning the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF were examined next. Two-thirds of the interviewees felt that the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF was not representative of the wider society. They explained it as a legacy of the past (Apartheid), arguing that it was changing in the 'right' direction. A little more than half of the interviewees felt that the over- representation of White women in the Air-Force reflected some form of

discriminatory policy. With respect to the high representation of African women-soldiers in the Army, nearly a quarter of the interviewees identified these women with the non-statutory forces of the pre-transition era. In contrast, an identical number of interviewees explained this phenomenon in terms of personal choice. The findings concerning the over-representation of Coloured women-soldiers in the Navy showed that a little more than half of the interviewees considered geographical factors relevant. The last issue in this context was the process of rationalisation. Most of the interviewees expressed negative feelings in this regard, while less than a quarter said that although unpleasant, it needed to be carried out.

Three factors were identified as influencing the interviewees' responses to the latter set of findings: 'experience of military service', 'race', and 'arm of service'. The most significant factor was 'experience of military service'. The findings showed that those interviewees who were integrated into the SANDF from the non-statutory forces (MK and APLA) were more likely to experience the transition into the SANDF in a negative manner. According to the findings concerning 'race', African interviewees were also more likely to experience the transition into the SANDF negatively. Therefore, it was suggested that in spite of the transition, the SANDF still resembled the former SADF. Another finding, regarding 'race', showed that the Coloured women amongst the interviewees were less likely to explain the over-representation of Coloured women in the Navy in geographical terms. This was an excellent example of the level of racial stereotyping held by the interviewees in connection with their women-colleagues.

Regarding the theme of women in the military, the main conclusion was that these women-soldiers expressed contradictory and incompatible positions and views, although most of the findings challenged traditional views. All twenty-five interviewees thought that women should be allowed to serve in combat roles. Almost all of them maintained that women could fight and kill during combat, although a smaller number agreed to the idea that they could personally do that. While almost all interviewees argued that a woman could become the head of the SANDF, a smaller number thought that a woman should. On the theoretical level, nearly seventy percent of the interviewees aimed at achieving a rank of Colonel or higher. Most of them considered their military job as a 'male' one, and their feelings about it revealed both pride and problems. The majority of the interviewees reported having better relations with their

male colleagues than with other women. Nearly three-quarters of them claimed that they never experienced any conflict between their military jobs and their families.

A much smaller number of findings reflected traditional views concerning women in the military. Four-fifths of the interviewees found it 'natural' for women-soldiers to serve in the medical services. A little more than half of them reported being treated differently from their male-colleagues. Half of the interviewees have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their military services. Those who considered their military job as a 'female' one (nine of twenty-five) felt that it suited them as women.

Four sociological characteristics were examined in connection with the interviewees' responses on gender issues: 'marital status', 'experience of military service', 'gendered division of work', and 'race'. 'Marital status' was found to be the most significant in this regard. The findings showed that single women-soldiers with no children identified most strongly with 'masculine' work patterns and perceptions, in contrast to single mothers. Concerning 'experience of military service', the findings suggested that those interviewees who were former SADF members held the most traditional views regarding these issues. Supporting Enloe's argument (Enloe, 1983, 146-147), this research also found that women-soldiers who were doing a 'male' job were more likely to experience sexual harassment.

This chapter described, analysed and interpreted the findings of this research. The next chapter will conclude the whole research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the experiences of a small group of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF in relation to two key sociological concerns. The first issue was the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF. The second concern was gender issues within the military.

It was noted that very little has been written about women in the SANDF. Cock's studies (1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1995) were mentioned as the major academic source in this regard. Therefore, this research provides a narrow and limited attempt to enrich the written material concerning women-soldiers serving in the SANDF and to highlight major questions and dilemmas in this regard.

The new South African Constitution introduced two main features in relation to the past. The first is the subordination of all security agencies to civilian control (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1997, 112). The second forbids any discrimination on the basis of gender, among other characteristics (*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1997, 7). As a result, all posts in the SANDF were legally open for both men and women. In spite of these formal policy changes, the military, in general, and the SANDF, in particular, are still perceived as 'male domains' (Cock, 1991b, 30; Cock, 1993, 50; Cock, 1995, 105). This study aimed to involve women-soldiers in the South African agenda, through revealing their personal experiences regarding their service in the SANDF.

There is no consensus over the issue of women in the military, either in South Africa or overseas. This research illustrated how responses to basic predicaments concerning women in the army, such as women in combat or women as military leaders, varied amongst the interviewees and in the international feminist literature (Cock, 1991a, 189-190), and legal policies in South Africa, the USA (Armor, 1996, 25), the UK, and Israel (Fleesler, 1995). This study has, hence, acknowledged the complexity of this issue, and attempted to analyse and interpret the key components of the above area of concern.

This research pointed to the scarcity of local literature on the special needs of women serving in combat units. Commanding Officers (COs) in the SANDF who face the phenomenon of women-soldiers in former 'male-only' jobs have to draw on international literature, mainly American and British, in order to address this new

situation (interview, 24 June 1998; interview, 18 August 1998). One of the aims of this study is to encourage local research which will fill this vacuum.

This research report contains three chapters, excluding the introduction and the conclusion. Chapter Two examined relevant literature for this study; Chapter Three detailed the use of the research methods utilised; and Chapter Four presented, explained, and interpreted the main findings of the research.

Chapter Two explored relevant literature concerning the following four topics; gender; militarism; women-soldiers in the SANDF; and women-soldiers in the armed forces in the USA, the UK, and Israel. With regard to gender there were several significant findings in the literature. Gender identity is seen as a social construction, gender differentiation is shaped, mainly, by social and cultural factors (de Beauvoir, 1953, 9-12; Bem, 1987, 304; Burn, 1996, xix). Concerning gender divisions of labour, it was found that the labour force is sex-segregated, as most jobs are occupied, primarily, by one of the sexes (Burn, 1996, 84). It was also found that neither 'women' nor 'men' are homogenous categories, and that other social characteristics, such as class and race, play a significant role in shaping individuals' experiences and positions as well (Brod, 1987, 3; Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 116).

The militarism section focused on a gender perspective, arguing that militarism, as a concept, is constructed on a gender dichotomy between the male protectors and the protected females (Elshtain, 1987, 164; Chapkis, 1988, 108; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 89). The literature review illustrated how this gender dichotomy is being currently reinforced, in spite of various social, historical, and political developments (Enloe, 1983, 15; Isaksson, 1988, 2; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 114).

Following this, an overview was presented of the contemporary position of women-soldiers in the SANDF, including an historical analysis of the role of women-soldiers in the former SADF and MK. In both armies, women's conscription increased between 1976 (the Soweto riots) and 1989 (beginning of negotiations), women were excluded from combat roles, and have been concentrated in the lower ranks (Cock, 1991a, 162; Cock, 1995, 99). The section on the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF highlighted the need to include gender issues in this process and to ensure that the SANDF would reflect the social and political changes in South Africa (Cock, 1991b, 30; Cock, 1995, 50; Nathan, 1994, 3; Cock, 1995, 99). An examination of the current position of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF showed that in spite of

progress in the direction of gender equality, the SANDF still shows evidence of male dominance and gender divisions of labour. Women are significally under-represented within the military, in relation to their relative size in the general population, making up only thirteen percent of all SANDF soldiers (*DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998). In relation to the various arms of service of the SANDF, women-soldiers are over-represented in the SAMS (at forty-five percent), which is a traditional feminine domain, and under-represented in the army (at less than 7.5 percent), which involves ground combat. Women-soldiers comprise more than forty-five percent of the SAMS personnel, and less than 7.5 percent of that of the Army (*Annual Report*, 1997, 36).

The fourth section of Chapter Two examined the position of women-soldiers in the militaries of the USA, the UK, and Israel. This section pointed out that the 1991 Gulf War was a turning point in relation to the position of women-soldiers in these armies. During that war, traditional militarist dichotomies, such as 'front' and 'rear', were blurred, followed by confusion concerning the separation between males as protectors and women as protected. This, combined with the general progress in women's positions in the Western world, has influenced the utilisation of women within the military.

Chapter Three detailed the research design, strategy, and methods of this study. It focused on the methods of structured in-depth interviews and quota sampling techniques. All twenty-seven participants in this research were interviewed through an in-depth interview, in order to reveal the experiences of a particular group of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF. Out of twenty-eight in-depth interviews conducted, twenty-five interviews were structured, and three were semi-structured (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, 199-200), due to time limitations. This chapter also described the means of creating trust and empathy between the researcher and the research subjects. Concerning sampling, this research used the quota sampling technique, which is one type of non-probability sampling (Moser & Kalton, 1971, 129 cited in de Vaus, 1991, 78). The meaning of this is that the findings of this study cannot be generalised beyond the particular group researched. The quota sampling was constructed in relation to two characteristics, 'race' and 'arm of service', according to the *DoD Statistics* in its 1997 Annual Report. In addition, an effort was made to incorporate a variety of additional characteristics, namely: age, rank, former military service, job categorisation, and marital status. Lastly, this chapter also analysed the problems and limitations which might have affected the responses of the interviewees. It pointed at the factors of

language, race, gender, locality, life experience, and ethical considerations as relevant factors in this regard.

Chapter Four presented, explained and interpreted the major findings of this study according to the two main themes researched. The findings illustrated how women-soldiers serving in the SANDF comprise a group of individuals who have had different experiences and hold different attitudes. It also illustrated how different sociological characteristics, such as race, marital status, or previous military service, influenced the interviewees' experiences and attitudes.

The main findings concerning the transition and the establishment of the SANDF suggest that the social composition of the SANDF, as well as the views held by the women-soldiers serving in it, reflect the former SADF. It was found that only two of the interviewees experienced the transition into the SANDF in a positive manner. A deeper analysis revealed that the African interviewees, as well as the former members of the non-statutory forces, were more likely to experience the integration into the SANDF negatively. It was also found that the majority of the interviewees thought that the racial distribution of women-soldiers in the SANDF was not representative in relation to the South African population. However, the respondents explained the current distribution in terms of the legacy of the Apartheid Regime, maintaining that it was, however, becoming more representative. At the same time, the informants' responses on race issues revealed that some of them hold racial stereotypes concerning their colleagues. Furthermore, while the process of rationalisation symbolises the transition of the South African military, most of the interviewees expressed negative feelings in this regard.

Regarding gender issues within the military, the findings show disagreements amongst this group of women-soldiers. Furthermore, it was found that the women-soldiers interviewed hold, individually, both traditional and progressive attitudes. While some of the responses reflected traditional women's roles within the military, such as the concentration of women in the medical services, most of the responses challenged such roles, arguing, for example, that women should be allowed to serve in combat roles and to get involved in ground combat. It was also illustrated how the interviewees tended to express more radical views on the theoretical level in comparison to the same issue when presented on a practical level. Concerning this theme, 'marital status' appeared as the most significant influence in shaping the respondents' experiences. The findings showed that single women-soldiers without children tended to challenge traditional

female roles more than those who were married or mothers. This finding suggests that women, as individuals, do not differ from men both in their tendencies and abilities. Rather, it is the social demands and expectations that face wives and mothers which explains their concentration in 'feminine' domains.

The significance of this research lies in the fact that it covers an area which has not been previously researched . First of all, as already stated, women-soldiers are rarely included in either academic or public discussions concerning the military in South Africa. Furthermore, the South African transition and the establishment of the SANDF are quite recent developments. Therefore, there has not been enough time to analyse, thoroughly, the changes taking place in women's positions and roles within the SANDF. This research report is an initial and modest attempt to study the experiences of women-soldiers serving in the SANDF in relation to both socio-political and gender issues.

A study of women-soldiers in the SANDF might be useful in relation to the international debate concerning women in the military. As detailed earlier, questions concerning women's utilisation in armed forces are continuously debated around the world within feminist circles, the academia, and different legal systems. South Africa has the most egalitarian policy to date on these issues, as it allows the participation of women in any post, excluding the submarines. The experiences and consequences of this current policy, if collected and documented, could serve as a case study for other nations.

This research has touched on additional research areas which could not be analysed further within the limits of this study. One of these areas is the debate concerning the SANDF's proportion of the national budget. At the beginning of 1997, a number of NGOs, including The Cease-fire Campaign, attacked the Government's decision to purchase two attack helicopters. Mo ecently, The Cease-Fire Campaign, Gun Free South Africa, and the Southern African Non-Governmental Organisation Network For Human Rights, condemned the Cabinet's decision to proceed with a R29-billion arms procurement programme (*The Star*, 20 November 1998). The criticism concerning these purchases is twofold. On the one hand, it is argued that by taking this step the DoD contradicts the policy requirements of the Defence Review (*The Star*, 20 November 1998). In other words, it is incompatible with South African demilitarisation and regional peace-keeping policies. On the other hand, it is also

maintained that the resources diverted to such arms procurement are taken away from more urgent social needs, such as poverty (*The Star*, 20 November 1998).

The debate regarding the necessity of a big, modern, and well-equipped armed force in contemporary South Africa cannot focus on women only, but it must not ignore them either. Between 1994 and 1998, the number of male-soldiers has dropped by approximately three thousand, while the number of women-soldiers has risen by more than 10.5 thousand (*Annual Report*, 1994/5, 16; *DoD Statistics*, 15 June 1998). Excluding gender-equality considerations, it is debatable whether the recruitment of so many women-soldiers is in line with current defence policies and budget priorities. Furthermore, as this research has argued, women must be included in any discussion concerning the military. Therefore, it is suggested that additional studies should examine the position of the SANDF in relation to the broader South African transition.

A second area of sociological concern, which can be pursued on the base of this research, is the nature of the military, in general, and of war, in particular. Yuval-Davis argues that public discussions concerning women-soldiers in the Amerir .n army ignore the general social and political context of the military and its use (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 90). This study highlighted the key role of the Gulf War in connection with advancing gender equality within the militaries of the USA, the UK, and Israel. However, this research ignored further moral aspects of that war, such as bombing civilian settings using remote control technological equipment. When asked whether she could, personally, fight and kill during combat, one interviewee, a psychologist, replied that in current warfare fighting and killing are remote and detached and, hence, lack any emotional implications (interviewee 22, 3 July 1998). During the past two decades, the majority of the Israeli Air-Force missions have been bombing 'terrorist concentrations' in Lebanon. The pilots are ordered to bomb a specific setting without knowing, for sure, who they are bombing. Therefore, when advocating women's acceptance as combat-pilots in the IDF, one must not ignore broader moral questions concerning the utilisation of pilots.

Similarly, the opening of combat posts to women in the SANDF should be followed by a wider discussion concerning the foreign policy of South Africa. It was confirmed, by the SANDF School of Armour, that a woman-Lieutenant was sent with her tank crew into Lesotho in October 1998. Can the gains in women's equality into combat positions within the military be separated from the moral implications surrounding invasions into neighbouring countries? In my opinion, these issues cannot and should not be

separated. Equal opportunity policies must not take the place of crucial moral and strategic discussions concerning militarism in the new South Africa.

The social composition of the military might influence social relationships within the wider society. The military service offers soldiers an opportunity to interact with persons from various social backgrounds, sometimes in extreme circumstances, such as field training or even war. A potential positive result might be the breakdown of racial, gender, ethnic, religious, or class stereotypes. In the South African context, the establishment of the SANDF has integrated soldiers from a variety of personal and social backgrounds, as detailed by the women-soldiers interviewed. One must not assume that the enforcement of equal-opportunity policies will result in racial and gender harmony. On the contrary, even the limited number of interviews conducted for this research illustrated the depth of the stereotypes, suspicions, and even hostilities held by the different social groups within the SANDF. The literature review regarding the militaries of South Africa, the USA, the UK, and Israel pointed to the reciprocal relationship between the military and wider society by illustrating how changes in society affected changes in the military, and visa versa. This research suggests that successful race and gender integration within the SANDF can influence social relationships within the greater South African society. Therefore, equal opportunity projects, such as the Equal Opportunity Advisors Course which takes place in the USA, must be further encouraged and developed, and incorporated into civil society as well.

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APPENDIX

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE[8]

Personal particulars

1. What is your first name?

2. What is your surname?

3. When were you born?

4. Where were you born?

5. How do you define your race and/or your ethnicity?

6. How do you define your marital status?

7. Do you have any children? If yes, how many, and at what ages?

8. When did you join the SANDF?

9. What is your current rank? What is your current position?

Personal and military background

1. Looking backwards at your childhood, how did you understand the meaning of being a girl, in comparison to boys?

2. As a teenager, what was your vision, concerning your future as an adult?

3. Tell me about your decision to join an armed force (when, why, which force, political & personal contexts).

4. What was your job in the previous army? (if relevant)

5. How did you experience the transition into the SANDF, in general and as a woman?

6. Tell me about your current job, also in terms of hours of duty, leaves, benefits, etc.

Gender issues within the military

1. According to your knowledge, do men and women, serving in the SANDF, enjoy the same conditions of service, such as pension, medical aid, housing, and so on?

(8) The following questions served as a guide. Not all questions were asked in the order presented.

2. Concerning your current military job, is it usually considered a 'male' or a 'female' one? How do you feel about it?

3. Do you think that women-soldiers should serve in any military job in which they are interested and are capable of, including direct combat roles?

4. (If answered 'yes' to 3 above) Do you think that women can fight and kill, just as men do?

5. (If answered 'yes' to 4 above) Could you kill, during combat?

6. As a soldier, who do you protect and from whom do you defend?

7. What is the highest position you would like to achieve in your military service? Do you think you can achieve it?

8. Do you think that a woman could become the head of the SANDF?

9. Should a woman become head of the SANDF?

10. Who do you feel more related to (in general): other non-soldiers women or male colleagues in the SANDF?

11. What kind of impact does your biological sex have on your military service in the SANDF? Do you find this impact similar to that of your former military service? (if relevant)

12. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment (as you understand it), during any of your military services?

13. Have you experienced any conflicts between your military obligations and your familial responsibilities?

14. To your knowledge, in which armed forces, around the world, do women enjoy the most equal positions and status?

Responses to and understandings of statistical data concerning the SANDF (according to the DoD 1997 *Annual Report*)

1. Women-soldiers comprise 10.18 percent (a tenth) of all full-time uniform in the SANDF. Their percentage in the Army is 6.30 percent, in the Navy 7.16 percent, in the

Air-Force 11.30 percent, and in the Medical Services 45.20 percent (nearly half)! How do you understand and explain this?

2. Among all women-soldiers serving full-time in the SANDF: White women comprise 70.12 percent, African women comprise 22.96 percent, Coloured women comprise 5.98 percent, and Asian women comprise 0.9 percent. What do you think and how do you feel about these percentages?

3. Although White women-soldiers comprise around seventy percent of all women-soldiers serving in the SANDF, they comprise nearly ninety percent of all women-soldiers serving in the Air-Force. How do you understand and explain this over-representation?

4. Although African women-soldiers comprise about twenty-three percent of all women-soldiers serving in the SANDF, they are under-represented in the Air-Force (4.29 percent) and in the Navy (9.39 percent), but over-represented in the Army (32.15 percent). How do you understand and explain this phenomenon?

5. While Coloured women-soldiers comprise less than six percent of all women-soldiers serving in the SANDF, they comprise over 22.5 percent (nearly a quarter) of women-soldiers serving in the Navy. How do you understand and explain this?

Responses on and understandings of the process of rationalising the SANDF

1. How do you experience the process of rationalisation of the SANDF?

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