

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY

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The views expressed in this student academic paper are those of the researcher and do not reflect the official policy or position of the South African National Defence Force.

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Abstract

Although the breakthrough came in 1998 for women to join the combat corps, twenty years later, the SANDF is still facing the challenge of not being able to increase the number of women, and to meet the national target of a 50:50 male versus female ratio in the combat environment. The purpose of this research was to explore the reasons why the SANDF had not been able to achieve a 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment and to consider possible implications for the gender transformation mandate of the SANDF. Patriarchy stood out to be the biggest challenge women face in the military. Some of the symptoms of patriarchy visible in the SANDF is that the leadership of the SANDF is predominantly male, policies are not gender neutral and the continuous sexual harassment of women to the extent where the MOD & MV had to intervene. The perception that women must behave like men to achieve military objectives must end however, the military remains a “*man’s world*” and as Heineken (2016) claims, “*..the only way to ‘regender’ the military is to stop privileging masculinity over femininity*”.

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Security) at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Ammerentia Petronella Prins

31 March 2020

Dedication

To my late husband, Willem Prins, your support, and motivation brought me thus far. I am sad that you are not here to enjoy this final product with me.

To my daughter, Michelle Deiner, and son, Bevan Deiner, thank you for believing in me and helping me to get there.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Abbreviations.....	xi
List of Tables.....	xiii
Table of Figures.....	xiv
Chapter 1.....	1
Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	4
1.2 Problem Statement.....	6
1.3 Purpose Statement.....	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	7
Chapter 2.....	8
Literature Review.....	8
2.1 Gender transformation in the South African Workforce.....	10
2.1 International Trends in the Military.....	12
2.1.1 USA.....	12
2.1.2 Israel.....	14
2.1.3 Australia.....	15
2.1.4 Canada.....	15
2.1.5 Norway.....	16
2.2 Occupational Segregation.....	17
2.2.1 Physical differences.....	18
2.2.2 Psychological differences.....	22
2.2.3 Equipment and clothing.....	22

2.3	Policy Position	23
2.4	Training Requirements.....	23
2.5	Women’s Leadership Challenges	24
2.5.1	Patriarchy	25
2.5.2	Leadership	26
2.5.3	Career management	27
2.6	Women in the Mission Area – Physical and Psychological Capabilities 27	
2.7	Theoretical Framework	29
2.8	Conclusions	31
	Chapter 3	34
	Research Methodology	34
3.1	Research Design	34
3.2	Data Collection	34
3.2.1	Literature study.....	35
3.2.2	Individual interviews	35
3.3.3	Questionnaires	37
3.4	Sampling (Unit of Analysis).....	38
3.5	Data Analysis.....	38
3.6	Limitations of the study	39
3.7	Ethical Considerations	39
3.8	Significance of the Research	40
	Chapter 4	42
	Policies Impacting on Gender Representivity in the South African Military ...	42
4.1	Recruitment	43
4.1.1	Infantry	50
4.1.2	Armour	51

4.1.3	Artillery	52
4.2	Conclusion	52
Chapter 5	.....	55
Women’s Leadership Challenges in the South African Military	.....	55
5.1	Patriarchy.....	55
5.2	Sexual Harassment	57
5.3	Career management.....	58
5.4	HR separation.....	63
5.5	Leadership	65
5.6	Women in the mission area – Physical and psychological capabilities 66	
5.7	Equipment and clothing	69
5.8	Cohesion.....	70
5.9	Female hygiene	71
5.10	Social challenges.....	72
5.11	Conclusions	73
Chapter 6	.....	75
Reasons for Women Underrepresentation in the Combat Environment	.....	75
6.12	Conclusions	93
Chapter 7	.....	95
Conclusions and Recommendations.....		95
7.1	Conclusions	95
7.2	Recommendations.....	99
7.2.1	Policies.....	100
7.2.1.1	Combat Profile	100
7.2.1.2	Training.....	101
7.2.1.3	Recruitment.....	103

7.2.2	Women’s Leadership Challenges.....	105
7.2.3	Contribution to knowledge.....	105
	References.....	108
	Appendix A – MSDS Questionnaire	119
	SECTION 1.....	121
	SECTION 2.....	122
	SECTION 3.....	123
	Appendix B – Interview Schedule	124
	Appendix C – Policies	127
1	Policies.....	127
1.1	United Nations policies.....	127
1.2	African Union Policies	130
1.3	Southern African Development Community (SADC) policies ..	130
1.4	South African policies.....	131
1.4.1	Constitution of South Africa.....	131
1.5	SANDF policies	132
1.5.1	White Paper on Defence, 1996.....	133
1.5.2	Defence Act No. 42 of 2002.....	134
1.5.3	Defence Review, 2015.....	134
1.5.4	Policy on Transformation Management in the Department of Defence.....	135
1.5.5	Transformation Management Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the DOD	135
1.5.5.1	Financial Year 2019/20.....	135
1.5.5.2	Financial Year 2020/21	136
1.5.6	SA Army Policy on Transformation	137
2	Combat Profile Policies	137
2.1	Infantry	138

2.2	Armour	139
2.3	Artillery	140
3	Training Policies.....	141
3.1	Physical training, sport, and recreation training.....	142
3.2	Functional (corps) training.....	144
3.2.1	Infantry.....	144
3.2.2	Armour	146
3.2.3	Artillery.....	146

List of Abbreviations

15 SAI Bn	15 South African Infantry Battalion
2IC	Second in Command
9 SAI Bn	9 South African Infantry Battalion
AAD	Africa Aerospace and Defence
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AU	African Union
BMT	Basic Military Training
C SA Army	Chief of the South African Army
CDTM	Chief Directorate Transformation Management
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CF	Canadian Force
CHR	Chief Human Resources
CJ Ops	Chief Joint Operations
D HR Acq	Directorate HR Acquisition
D HR Sep	Directorate HR Separation
DDS	Directorate Departmental Security
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DOD	Department of Defence
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ERGOTECH	ERGOnomics TECHnologies
HR	Human Resource
ICSPP	International Congress of Soldiers' Physical Performance
IDF	Israeli Defence Force
IG	Defence Inspectorate General
JMCC	Joint Military Co-ordinating Council
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MOD & MV	Minister of Defence and Military Veterans
MPI	Military Psychological Institute
MSDS	Military Skills Development System
NAP	National Action Plan
NCOs	Non-commissioned Officers
PSA	Public Servants Association of South Africa
PTIs	Physical Training Instructors
PTSR	Physical Training, Sport and Recreation
RSA	Republic of South Africa

SA	South African
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAMHS	South African Military Health Service
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SEALS	Israel's Sea, Air and Land special forces
SG	Department of Public Service and Administration
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USA	United States of America
WEF	World Economic Forum
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

List of Tables

Table 2: MSDS Questionnaire Results in Selecting a Mustering	46
Table 3: Entry-level MSDS Male to Female Ratio from 2011 to 2018.....	48
Table 4: Male vs Female Ratio in the Combat Corps, Infantry, Armoured and Artillery, from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019.....	58
Table 6: Female Re-mustering to and from Combat Corps for the Period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018.....	60
Table 7: Female Re-mustering form Support Corps to Combat Corps for the Period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018	61
Table 8: Female Re-mustering to Support Corps from Combat Corps for the Period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018	61
Table 9: Female Combat Soldiers Who Left the SANDF and Completed the Exit Questionnaire (Excluding MSDS) from November 2016 to December 2018	63

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Results of total group (Shaba, 2010).	20
Figure 2: Results per Gender (Shaba, 2010).	21
Figure 3: SA Army MSDS Recruitment Page (DOD, 2020)	44
Figure 4: SA Army Armour Corps information for MSDS candidates (DOD, 2020).....	45

Chapter 1

Introduction

Note: False names have been used to protect the identities of individual members

On 24 August 2014, the South African Deputy Minister of State Security, Ellen Molekane, quoted what the late President Nelson Mandela said during his first state of the nation address in Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa, on 24 May 1994, demonstrating the commitment of government to ensure that women are afforded equal representation not only in society but also in the workplace.

“Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. To this end, we have acknowledged that the objectives of our reconstruction and development cannot be realised unless we see in visible and practical terms that the conditions of women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that women at every level have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society. My government is committed to a reallocation of resources to ensure the achievement of this objective” (Molekane, 2014).

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) published an article (Stats SA, 2017) indicating that women represent 51% of the total population; however, they are still relatively underrepresented in positions of authority and power in the workplace. This is particularly so in the military, as depicted in an article of the defenceWeb (2019b) in which the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans (MOD & MV) was quoted, saying that *“..more needed to be done to ensure our armed forces are fully representative of the men and women of South Africa and reflect the demographics”* (Molekane, 2014). In the address mentioned above, the minister argued that although discrimination was gradually disappearing and opportunities for women in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) were increasing, they were still underrepresented in all environments of the SANDF, especially in the decision-making and combat

environments. In other words, the challenges experienced are less about discrimination but rather transformation.

The South African government and the SANDF are committed to improve the conditions of women and therefore support policies and programmes, internationally, continentally, regionally, and domestically to ensure women have access to participate in decision-making processes and access to power to achieve equality and development. The issue of transformation is not isolated to the SANDF but can be seen across government departments and the private sector, although concerted efforts have been made to level the playing field of gender equity. During the announcement of the cabinet of President Ramaphosa on 29 May 2019, it was evident that government at national level took gender-equality seriously, as 14 of the 28 (50 percent) ministers appointed were women (BusinessTech, 2019). A key question remains: Why are women still underrepresented in command and combat positions in the SANDF after 25 years of having all these support systems, programmes, and policies in place?

In an article for the Institute for Security Studies, the Deputy Minister (Molekane, 1996), who was an officer in the SANDF at the time, described the integration process of all statutory and non-statutory military forces prior to the elections in 1994. Inputs formulated after the integration process by the Joint Military Co-ordinating Council (JMCC) to shape the new National Defence Force of South Africa were taken up in the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993) and finally captured in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). One of the key elements of this policy was the inclusion of women in the combat environment (combat¹ and combat support²). South Africa was one of the few countries in the world, at the time (1998), that have lifted the exclusion of women in the combat environment, with no conditions attached, and with effect from 1998, women were allowed to join the combat corps voluntarily (South African

¹ **Definition of combat:** "To engage in direct confrontation with enemy forces to kill or capture them, to break their will to continue the fight, and to seize and hold terrain or to deny it to the enemy" (combat effectiveness | military | Britannica.com, 2016)

² **Definition of combat support:** "To provide direct support of the forces on the battlefield by providing intelligence, communications, engineering, and chemical warfare services of immediate impact on the course of the battle" (combat effectiveness | military | Britannica.com, 2016)

Defence Review, 1998). Since 1998 women have been deployed in the full spectrum of warfare, from peacekeeping to force intervention, internal and external to the borders of South Africa. It should also be noted that no modern military force has an equal representation (50:50) of male and females in their combat environments (Visagie, 2018).

Donnelly (2016) indicates that the risk for women deployed in the combat environment was much higher than for men, for several reasons, mainly based on physical capabilities. Her main critique, as well as that of Bumiller and Shanker (2016), was levelled against politicians that were pressuring the military to include women in the combat environment and then indicated that “*gender diversity*” was a strategic imperative. Donnelly (2016) argues that the military still needs to ensure that policies, facilities, and equipment must be addressed before women could be accommodated. In the United States of America (USA), the requirement is that women should represent 25% of the military (Donnelly, 2016); however, the total representation of women in the US is 16%, while only three percent are employed in the combat environment, far from the intended target set by government. The South African Defence Review (2015b) does not quote any targets for gender representation in the Department of Defence (DOD) or in the combat environment. According to the Defence Review (2015b, p. 11-2), “*the Defence Force is broadly representative of the people of South Africa, with due consideration being given to matters of equity, including gender and otherwise enabled persons*”.

Therefore, the intention of the DOD, as stated in the Defence Review (2015b, p. 11-1), -is that the

“Defence Force will be an equitable, broadly representative and gender-aligned national asset based on a through-life assessment and selection system that will be established to inform merit-based career advancement for all soldiers, coupled to education, training and development achievement. Military leadership is rooted in the burden of command and there can be no compromise in the development of confident and competent men and women who will be placed in positions

of authority. Throughout human history, military action has been shaped by the character and competence of those in command”.

The current overall gender representation, including civilian personnel, adheres to the 70:30 male to female ratio. However, the picture changes drastically when the analysis is made on the military command and combat environment where women represent 19% at command level and 18% in the combat environment (DOD, 2017a).

The current target of the SANDF to have 50% women in the combat environment (DOD, 2015a) was set internally based on the national target to ensure women reflected the national demographics of the country. This target was reviewed for the financial year 2020/21 whereby services must determine their own gender targets based on the requirement in each environment. To date, the targets have not been determined, and the only target towards which services work is to achieve an overall target of a male to female ratio of 60:40 for the annual Military Skills Development System (MSDS)³ intake. Allowing the services to set their own gender targets may affect the SANDF target, as the corporate target is rolled up from the services.

1.1 Background of the Study

Although the breakthrough for women to join the combat corps came in 1998, the SANDF, 20 years later, is still facing the challenge of not being able to increase the number of women in the combat environment and meet the set target of 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment (DOD, 2015a). Over the last four years, an average of 40% of the soldiers in the combat environment that left the SANDF either by resignation or contract expiry were women (DOD, 2017a).

Women in the SANDF were placed under tremendous pressure to meet these prescribed targets, and various reasons why women were generally perceived as less able than men, such as their relative lack of physical strength, were

³ **Definition of Military Skills Development System (MSDS):** This refers to the first career stage of the new service system of the SANDF and serves as the entry point for most new recruits who serve for a two-year period in the Regular Force. This ensures a constant throughput of young and fit members for operational deployment purposes (DOD, 2017).

given (Heinecken, 2016). According to Heinecken (2016), in upholding the Constitution, the SANDF tried to include gender integration; however, it came with its own problems linked to equal opportunities and progress according to merit. Heinecken (2016) also claims that gender integration created strained relationships when and where attempts were made to accommodate gender differences and values. The number of women in the SANDF has increased, but they are still perceived as “othered”, which makes it very difficult for women to bring about the needed changes for them to be treated and respected in the same manner as their male colleagues (Heinecken, n.d.).

According to Heinecken (2009), there was a requirement to increase the number of women in the military, especially during non-combat missions where interaction with the local communities and building trust was high on the agenda. Heinecken (2009) continues to emphasise the significant role women are playing, especially in preventing and resolving conflicts and in peace-keeping operations. Women formed part of the former South African Defence Force (SADF) as well as Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK); however, in both instances, women were never allowed in the combat environments and served only in supporting roles (Heinecken, n.d.). Since the integration of 1994, the SANDF has established targets for females in the military and then worked effortlessly to achieve these targets. In 2019, the SANDF achieved a 30% female representation, including civilian personnel, and 36% at entry level. The challenge remained in the combat environment, where it was about 18%, as well as in the middle (colonel/captain – Navy) and senior management (brigadier general to general) ranks, where it was 22% (DOD, 2019b).

Various authors (Berkshire Consultancy, 2009; Cawkill, Rogers, Knight, and Spear, 2010; Ulysses, Ploger, Duffy, Young, and Bell, 1983) argue that women have to demonstrate that they are worthy of being part of a combat unit. They must earn the trust and respect of their colleagues, especially where there are men with distrustful attitudes and outlooks towards women’s capabilities. Thus, this can affect the gender transformation mandate of the SANDF, as policies and processes might be in place, but attitudes and hidden discrimination prevented women from continuing a career in the combat environment.

In developed countries such as USA, Australia, and the United Kingdom (UK), there is no consensus with regard to the employment of women in combat (Kirkwood, 2013) in the same way as scholars in South Africa outline above.

Kirkwood (2013) argues that sending women into gunfire could not be compared to her walking into a courtroom or an operating room. According to Heinecken (2016), the general perception in the SANDF is that women do not belong in direct combat operations – “*as it’s a man’s world*” – and that they are included mainly for political reasons.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to the transformation guidelines issued by the DOD (2015a), annually, the male to female staffing ratio should be 70:30 at command level, 60:40 at entry level (recruits) and 50:50 in the combat environment. It further states that strategies and support plans for the retention of women in the combat environment must be implemented. These guidelines also emphasise that female MSDS members must be counselled and exposed to the core mustering⁴ (combat) of the SANDF, so that the number of women interested in joining the combat environment can be increased. Since women were accepted into the combat environment in 1998, the SANDF has been unable to achieve 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment and 70:30 in the command group. The current male to female ratio in the combat environment in the SANDF is 82:18 (DOD, 2017a), while the male to female ratio in the support environment is 63:37 on average (DOD, 2017b), which is closer to the target.

1.3 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to conduct a qualitative study to explore those critical factors that impacts the achievement of gender representation in the combat environment of the SA Army and to consider the implications for the

⁴ **Definition of mustering:** It refers to a specific military occupational class for which SANDF members are trained and in which capacity they are utilised. All the musterings in the SANDF can be grouped into combat, combat support, and combat service support macro mustering groups (SA Army, 2017)

gender transformation mandate of the SANDF. The focus was on the Infantry, Armoured and Artillery Corps within the SA Army.

1.4 Research Questions

The study explored the reasons why the SANDF had not been able to achieve a 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment. To achieve this objective, the research endeavoured to answer the following primary question:

How the SANDF attended to its gender representation mandate?

To provide an answer to the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were also addressed:

What role does the recruitment processes play in increasing gender representation in the combat environment?

What are the contributing factors to the current gender representation in the SANDF?

What is the relationship between the combat environment and career pathing?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to provide an overview of academic literature and where appropriate, internal military reports/policies/instructions on the utilisation of women in the combat environment, evaluate the literature, and generate a position on the utilisation of women in the combat environment with specific emphasis on gender transformation in the combat environment. The outcome of this research is aimed at providing a possible policy direction to the SANDF regarding gender transformation in the combat environment.

In the literature review there are various positions and arguments for and against the inclusion of women in the combat environment. The arguments differ mainly on foundational issues; however, the key aspects that raised the most concern throughout the research were the combat readiness and operational effectiveness of military forces. Kirkwood (2013) argues that the USA, Australia, and the UK were against the employment of women in combat roles although they had opened the combat environment to women, while other countries such as New Zealand, Canada and South Africa were supportive of women in combat roles and encouraged women to join the military on a voluntarily basis. On the other hand, a country like Israel conscripted women to military service and allowed them in combat roles but would not deploy them in direct combat with the enemy because they feared the effectiveness of operations would be affected (Kirkwood, 2013).

A central piece of literature done by the Berkshire Consultancy (2009) is highlighted in the literature review, as this study included a broad spectrum of topics such as training differences, physical and psychological differences, equipment not designed for women, and how some of these aspects have resulted in women leaving the combat environment or the military. The British government requested this research to determine the effect mixed gender groups had on the cohesion of the unit and ultimately on the combat readiness of such a unit. The outcome of this research was used in defending the position of the government as to why they were against the utilisation of women in the combat environment (Kirkwood, 2013). The study done by Berkshire

Consultancy (2009) revealed that in general, men in the military did not have any objection employing women in the combat environment. Their only concern was how to keep these women safe during operations, and they were not comfortable with the idea of women killing the enemy or being killed by the enemy. An interesting aspect highlighted in this study was that many of the women interviewed indicated that they would not want to be employed in the combat environment.

The SANDF commissioned studies to determine the progress of gender transformation within the SANDF. The first study was done by Van Breda (2010) to study women's experiences and views of their involvement in military operations, determine the role that women play in military operations and to study the challenges these women experienced during operations. Van Breda (2016) did a follow-up study with the aim to determine the progress of the SANDF towards gender equity and to help map the way forward. According to Van Breda (2010), the study intended to highlight the successes of the SANDF regarding the staffing, preparation and employment service of women in the SANDF, the gaps and challenges currently experienced by women and to recommend methods to advance the gender mainstreaming agenda.

Colman and Heineken (n.d) conducted a study to reveal the factors that influence the recruitment of young people into the SANDF and especially the tendency of women to enlist in the SANDF.

The literature review took existing studies as a starting point, but also included thorough research of SANDF policies on transformation, training policies, discussing the differences in training standards, and focussing on the physical and psychological differences between men and women.

A brief overview is given in terms of gender transformation in the South African workplace (private and public service) as well as other nations' stance, allowing women into the combat environment, and indicating what South Africa was doing in this regard. The information gathered for the literature review was mainly from secondary data sources. The information from primary data sources was made available during the data collection by means of interviews that were conducted with identified participants, questionnaires completed by

the SA Army MSDS, management information on gender issues and the policy documentation from within the DOD.

2.1 Gender transformation in the South African Workforce

Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand (PwC), South Africa (2019) report on increasing women in leadership positions, released in 2019, pleaded for urgent interventions to close the gender imbalances in the South African workplace. According to PwC (2019) one of the biggest challenges business leaders face today is to achieve gender equality in the workplace. PwC (2019) argues that women bring skills and experience to the workplace that are crucial for the survival of businesses. The PwC (2019) report illustrates that of all the companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock exchange (JSE) 96.6% of all CEOs are male, 87.2% of CFOs are male, and 91% of executive directors are male. Women are under-represented in leadership positions. The World Economic Forum (WEF) projects that it will take 108 years to close the global gender gap and 202 years to close the economic gap (PwC, 2019). According to Sandberg (2018) private companies continue to report on their gender transformation commitments and progress (as required by law) yet, women remain underrepresented in the workforce. Sandberg (2018) further argues that daily discrimination in the workplace is a reality and microaggressions⁵ are directed at those with less power, such as women. Sandberg (2018) is also of the opinion that attrition/separation questionnaires does not provide reasons why women are leaving organisations. In the data collected during the research it was found that the separation questionnaire did not assist in determining the reasons why women are leaving the SANDF.

A recent study on South African Women in Business, published by Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) of South Africa (2019), quoted Helene Vermaak, business director and co-founder of The Human Edge, according to her women want to be in leadership positions however, there are reasons that impacts the achievements of women in the workplace namely: proving themselves equal or even better than their male colleagues; balancing family

⁵ Microaggression according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2020b) is a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority).

responsibilities; the 'motherhood penalty'⁶; gender discrimination; and the fact that women are less aggressive in their approach when it comes to ask for a promotion or a raise. According to Vermaak women avoid these issues fearing they will be judged and victimised (CHRO of South Africa, 2019). Vermaak is of the opinion that these are valid reasons why women have not pursued advancement in the workplace and support the arguments of Sandberg (CHRO of South Africa, 2019).

The Public Servants Association⁷ (PSA), (2019b) argues that gender imbalances are a reality in today's society and is not isolated to South Africa only, it is a global phenomenon that is more prominent in the developing world. In countries such as South Africa, gender equality is recognised in the Constitution however, it lacks implementation and execution (PSA, 2019b). The PSA (2019b) is of the opinion that the struggle for gender equality needs to be addressed outside the workplace by changing the mindsets and learned behaviour, else constitutional commitments and legislation will remain words on paper. The PSA (2019b) argues that greater awareness should be created from primary school level and children should be empowered to challenge the traditional roles assigned to men and women. The PSA (2019b) supports the idea that the performance of leaders should be coupled to the achievement of gender equality in the workforce at all levels. The PSA (2019b) argues that although the Constitution and Acts are in place, promoting gender equality, the judicial structures are not strong enough to enforce compliance in the workplace and have inadequate influence at home.

Data published by Stats SA (2016) reveals that, despite the fact that half of the South African population is women, men still dominate the overall workplace, for every 10 men employed only eight women are employed or seeking employment (PwC, 2019). Men occupies 60% of senior management positions in government (Stats SA, 2016). The general perception of the community is that women is responsible to oversee housekeeping duties, as it is perceived to be a woman's work, and a high percentage of the unemployed population

⁶ According to the Collins dictionary (2020), motherhood penalty means "disparity in pay, workplace esteem, etc encountered by women who are mothers compared to men or women without children".

⁷ The Public Servants Association of South Africa is a registered trade union, representing employees in the Public Service (PSA, 2019b).

(women) provided “*home keeping*” as a reason for not working, especially married women (Stats SA, 2014). According to Stats SA (2014) gender stereotyping may have caused women not participating in the workforce. The South African Constitution is clear on government’s commitment to ensure gender equity in the community and workplace however, implementation remains the biggest challenge. In my opinion it seems as if leaders are unsure what steps to take to bring about gender transformation in the workplace and retain it. It is also evident from the literature that this is a global challenge, in all workplaces. The gender gap will not be bridged overnight and since the inception of the Constitution in 1996 (24 years later) women in South Africa are still under-represented in the workplace.

2.1 International Trends in the Military

After World War II (WWII), women could join military organisations, but they were excluded from the combat roles. As time passed and women started playing a more prominent role in society, the United Nations (UN) took the lead in promoting gender equality, and many developing countries supported the UN in adopting their military policies and allowed women to serve in combat roles, voluntarily. Donnelly (2016) states that countries like the USA, UK and Australia allow women in certain combat positions but still exclude them from the direct combat environment. Feminist groups and politicians have criticised this exclusion.

Many countries throughout the world have opened their military forces to women; however, in most of the major countries, as discussed below, there are still conflicting arguments for and against women, specifically in the combat environment and the effect their presence will have on operational effectiveness.

2.1.1 USA

During WWII, the USA used women in a supporting role, but they were never used in the combat role. After the war had ended, the number of women in the defence force dropped and they were used in supporting environments. Goodell (2010) refers to a study conducted during WWII, where women were used in the anti-air artillery environment, and it was found that they had the

required strength and intellect to be employed in this specific combat support corps, but at the end of the war, they were no longer needed in the anti-air environment and therefore employed in environments such as administration. In 1972, more military positions were opened to women, and the number of women increased significantly to 13% in 2009 (Donnelly, 2016). The USA opened their combat environment to women with effect from Jan 2016 (Bumiller and Shanker, 2016) but their policies were not in place. Moore and Swick (2018) report that two years since the formal implementation of the female integration policy, a small number of women entered the combat environment. Moore and Swick (2018) claim that the military struggled to recruit females that were interested and capable to serve in the combat environment. According to Moore and Swick (2018), each service began to invest in research to evaluate the current service standards and had slowly started formulating and implementing unbiased gender standards for the specific combat profiles. Moore and Swick (2018) compliment the US Army that started a process known as the *“leaders first”* approach in which they first integrated and trained female officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) before they started recruiting junior female candidates to create a situation in which the officers and NCOs could mentor junior recruits and served as role models. The one area of the military that still posed a challenge to women was the Special Forces environment due to the extremely high physical standards required for these units to remain combat ready (Moore and Swick, 2018).

Snow (2018, p. 1) cites the spokesperson of the US Marines Corps: *“There is no target number or quota for how many female Marines should be in ground combat fields or units; the focus is on combat effectiveness.”* According to Snow (2018), the US Marine Corps was adamant that they would integrate women into the Corps systematically and will not focus on the number of women to be recruited, but rather on maintaining the standards of the US Marine Corps to ensure combat readiness and effectiveness. Moore and Swick (2018) were also of the opinion that the USA was forced to open all combat environments to women due to insufficient young men, voluntarily, joining the military, hoping they could make up their targets by recruiting more women in the combat corps.

In this case, the issue was that the US military allowed women into the combat environment before they had their policies on gender standards in place, and that could have led to the low representation of females. In my opinion, one aspect that the US Army specifically did well is the establishment of their female leader group before they started recruiting female cadets; thus, resolving gender issues before the cadets reported.

2.1.2 Israel

Israel allowed women to take part in several wars between 1947 and 1949; few women were deployed in the close ground combat units. Since the establishment of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in 1948, all combat positions were closed to women (Cawkill et al., 2010). In 1996 the first female pilot qualified, and thereafter, more women joined the IDF. Today they have one light infantry battalion that consists only of women, but they were not deployed where they face direct combat with the enemy that could undermine the effectiveness of a mission (Browne, 2012; Epstein, Yoram, Yanovich, Moran, and Heled, 2013). Several other positions were open to women, but they were still restricted in close combat roles where there was a high possibility of direct hand-to-hand combat with the enemy and extreme physical fitness was required such as their elite infantry and Sea, Air and Land specialised forces (SEALS) (Goodell, 2010). According to Cawkill et al. (2010), Israel was one of two countries in the world where it was expected of women to serve in the armed forces, and the reason for compulsory service is that the entire society is responsible for the security of the country and not only the IDF. According to Moore (2020) there are instances where Israeli women are exempted from service such as marriage therefore the IDF only selected the number of women it needed to meet its personnel quota on an annual basis. Moore (2020) claims that men and women in the IDF train together, most women serving in the IDF are utilised in female roles and their service is not regarded as highly as men. Of the 34% females serving in the IDF only 4.6% of them serve as combat soldiers. Moore (2020) claims that those women who serve in mixed-gender combat units work harder than men as to prove themselves, and they believe that by proving themselves they gained self-confidence and feel self-empowered.

In this case, we can see that Israel is dedicated defending their country at all costs therefore requires the participation of all citizens. Although females are contributing to the security of Israel, they are still excluded from the combat environment based on the argument that they need male protection, and that may impact the loyalty and morale of the women.

2.1.3 Australia

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) excluded women from combat roles, arguing that the exclusion of women was based on operational needs where physical strength, power and load-carrying stamina were required. The ADF stated that women were more likely to be injured, since they would be exposed to doing the same jobs as the men under the same conditions. The ADF also argued that due to operational, moral and occupational health reasons, it could not allow women to engage the enemy physically, directly and continually as part of their core functions (Donnelly, 2016). According to Moore (2020) women in the Australian Army represents only 12% of the force and are underrepresented in the senior ranks.

Promotion in the ADF is based on performance and potential. Gender was not a consideration, and across the services, women were promoted at a similar rate as men were (Australian Department of Defence, 2017). Moore (2020) is of the opinion that the promotion policy of the ADF echoes the values and biases of the leader group, which are all male, and therefore women are not promoted to more senior positions.

The issues highlighted in this case are that women are still regarded as the weaker sex due to their lack in physical strength; therefore, they are regarded as less capable, which limits their roles in the combat environment. The fact that the ADF did not amend their promotion policies to achieve gender equality goals is indicative of the inherent bias in the merit system.

2.1.4 Canada

The Canadian Force (CF) allowed women to join voluntarily in all its combat environments since 2001 (Epstein et al., 2013). The successful integration of women with the CF required that all members of the Army (women included)

achieve one standard that met operational requirements and that everyone was trained and treated equally.

Brewster (2018) reports that Canada will be opening its Special Forces environment to attract more women, as the enemy was constantly changing, and the new requirement was to fight terrorists and no longer armies. According to Brewster (2018), military forces therefore need a different kind of soldier, one that is intelligent and can blend with the environment, and no longer soldiers kicking down doors.

Brewster (2018, p. 1) quotes Major General Mike Rouleau, commander of Canada's Special Forces, who said that *“a cultural change is needed within the special forces environment that recognizes not only the value of women in the field, but the fact that the elite troops are capable of doing more than assaulting a target”*.

In this case, the Canadian military has recognised the value of women in the combat environment, other than focussing on physical strength, and acknowledged that the battlefield has changed, which has opened the combat environment for women.

2.1.5 Norway

Angerer (2017) and Ponniah (2017) highlight the fact that although gender equality was an issue in Norway and its target for representation of women in all organisations was 40%, only men were called for compulsory military service. Therefore, in 2016, Norway's parliament passed a bill that compels all women between the ages of 19 and 44 to enrol to achieve their equity target.

Angerer (2017) explains that 'Jegertroppen' means 'Hunter Troops', a unit that was established in 2014 and the world's first female-only Special Forces unit. According to Angerer (2017), this step in the Norwegian military was to the advantage of the women by ensuring that they are respected by their male colleagues. They do the same training, carry the same weight and equipment as their male colleagues and to achieve the same standards to qualify and operate as special forces operators (Angerer, 2017).

Ponniah (2017) explains that military commanders recognised an operational necessity during the Afghanistan War for well-trained female soldiers who could not only collect intelligence but also mingle with women and children in traditional cultures. However, to date, the Jegertroppen has not deploy in any operation.

In this case, Norway acknowledged the changing battlefield and started to prepare for these changes. However, they had to force women by law to join the military to train for the changing battlefield and achieve their equity targets. Therefore, as in the case of Israel, the loyalty of such female soldiers could be questioned, as they are not in the military of their own free will and may affect operations.

Although all the countries listed above opened their military forces to women, they have the same dilemma as South Africa, where the number of women in the combat environment continuously remain low. In the case of the USA, policies were not in place, and in Norway, compulsory military service had to be instituted to achieve its transformation targets, while in countries such as Australia and Israel, politicians refuse women to participate in the combat environment. The difference between these countries and South Africa is that policies in South Africa have been in place from the beginning (1998). Women may join the combat environment voluntarily, and government fully support women in the military. However, South Africa still cannot increase the number of women in the combat environment with all the support it has, which requires further investigation in terms of the actual reasons why women are not represented equally in the combat environment.

2.2 Occupational Segregation

As indicated in the article by Stats SA (2017), *Women in power: what do the statistics say?*, women in South Africa make up 51% of the total population; however, they are still relatively underrepresented in positions of authority and power. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2020), occupational segregation is defined as “...*some jobs are more typically done by men or women, by people of particular races, religions*”. By applying the definition to the military, specifically the SANDF, it literally means that the combat

environment is associated with a man's job and a man's world. Heinecken (2016, p. 101) claims that *"The SANDF has a warrior-like military culture, where masculinity is embedded in each and every layer of the military: in the training, the culture, the uniform and the technology"*. The concern raised by Heinecken is not new, in her report, Cock (1992), quoted Virginia Wolf *"How can we alter the crest and spur of the fighting cock?"*. According to Cock (1992) Wolf's concern was how to uncouple masculinity from militarism. This concern was raised by Wolf in 1940 and is still relevant today resulting in this research report.

The next section will focus on the physical and psychological differences between men and women and, most importantly, the challenges women experience wearing military uniform, handling of equipment and in executing command.

2.2.1 Physical differences

The modern era of combat has not changed much in terms of the physical requirements of a soldier. Soldiers still need to be strong and endure difficult and stressful situations, and the reality is that today's soldiers must carry more gear with them than they did during WWII (Berkshire Consultancy, 2009). However, the way in which wars were conducted has changed drastically over the decades, and it is no longer required of most soldiers to fight the enemy in hand-to-hand combat (Berkshire Consultancy, 2009). Some may still need to engage in close combat, but the assumption is that it will be executed mostly in special operations environments. Physical strength is required not only in combat environments (Browne, 2012; Cawkill et al., 2010). Other environments such as the support environment require soldiers to lift heavy equipment and dig trenches. If one then puts women in the same conditions as men, it should be expected that they may not perform on the same level as men do (Browne, 2012; Donnelly, 2016). Observers report that women in the IDF do not have the physical capability to continue loading heavy tank shells for extended periods; however, they are trained in specialist environments such as snipers and deployed to the borders of Israel, which means they are

employed in the combat environment but in a different role (Epstein et al., 2013).

Several militaries, in cooperation with medical research institutes, have conducted numerous medical evaluations and research over many years to evaluate the differences between the average man and average women in the military. The results of these evaluations have informed us that a woman's body differs from the body of a man (Berkshire Consultancy, 2009; Browne, 2012; Epstein et al., 2013).

The Berkshire Consultancy (2009) report claims that women are prone to tire much quicker than men do, and this contributes to the high rate of incidents of overused injuries such as stress fractures. The injury rate of women was found to be six times higher than that of males because they tried to keep up with their male counterparts and pushed themselves beyond their own abilities, which eventually resulted in medical retirement from the military (Berkshire Consultancy, 2009; Browne, 2012;). According to Cawkill et al. (2010), the UK's argument against women in the combat environment was not based on lower physical capacity or lack of aggression; rather, it was based on the effect women would have on the cohesion of smaller groups during close combat and the outcome of combat effectiveness.

According to Heinecken (2017) other international studies have concluded that the key measure of a woman's acceptance in the military, is the ability to meet the physical training standards. Heinecken (2017) argues that the SANDF is not in favour of gender-segregated training because the perception exists it will lead to double standards. Heinecken (2017) further argues that women need to adapt to the combat requirements to prove that they are as competent as men, and to prevent being considered not capable to meet these standards. According to Heinecken (2017) this put women under immense pressure, due to the fact that they do not have the same physical strength and stamina as men, and to prove their competence usually ends up in injuries.

In South Africa, the SA Army Artillery Formation, in conjunction with ERGOTECH, compiled selection criteria for Artillery Corps members in 2010. The selection criteria were based on the physical requirements of the post,

non-discriminatory with regard to gender, age and skill, and allowed training and physical conditioning improvements (Shaba, 2010). A sample of Artillery Corps members was compiled by ERGOTECH (see Table 1) to test the selection criteria and to ensure the necessary objectivity was adhered to and to determine if the tests should be adapted.

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample Group (Shaba, 2010)

Crew	Male	Female	Total
G6	10	3	13
G5	12	4	16
MRL	9	3	12
Mortar	11	0	11
Drivers	8	0	8
Total	50	10	60

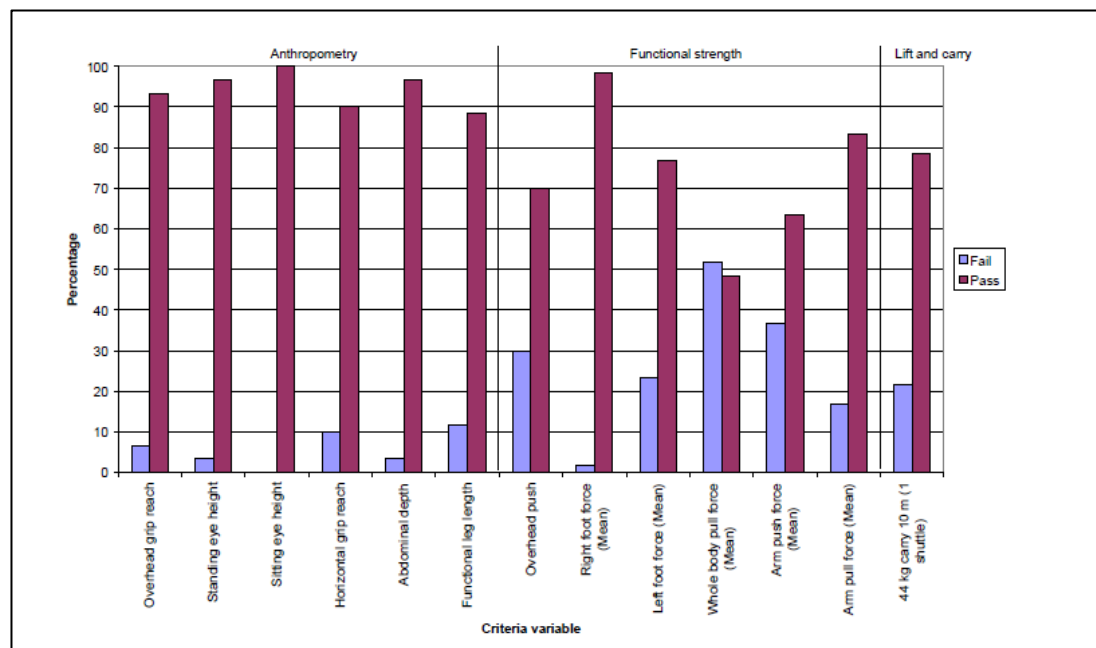


Figure 1: Results of total group (Shaba, 2010).

The test battery was scientifically constructed by ERGOTECH on the physical job demands of the post profiles and the criteria was non-discriminatory for gender. The results of the tests of the sample Table 1 are depicted in Figure 1: 94.2% passed the anthropometry measurements, 73.3% passed the functional strength tests, and 78.3% passed the functional lift and carry tests (Shaba, 2010). The 16.7% that failed did not have sufficient body strength to

apply the required force, or they had insufficient capacity to lift and carry the 44 kg ammunition box (Shaba, 2010).

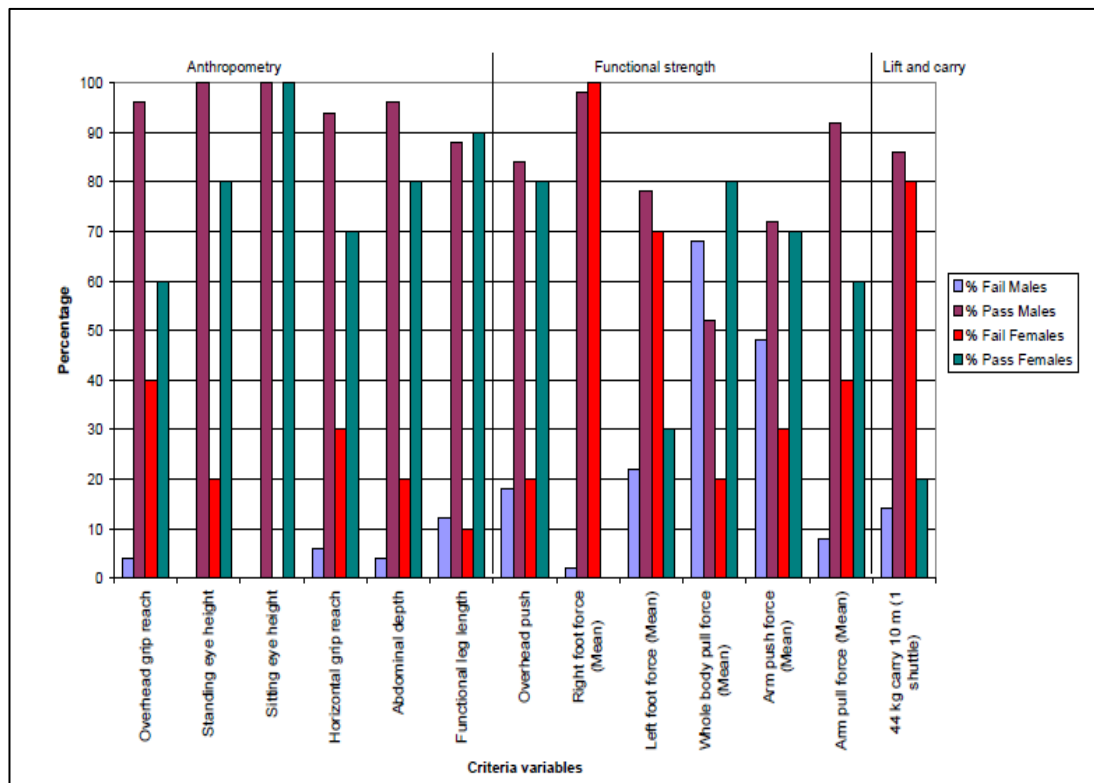


Figure 2: Results per Gender (Shaba, 2010).

The results depicted in Figure 2 show that females have a natural leg strength of 60% and upper body strength of 40% of the males' strength capability. Individual females had body strength capacity like males. In other tests, females performed better than some of the males did. The test battery proved non-discriminatory for gender. The greatest challenge for the females was the inability to lift and carry the 44 kg ammunition box. The test battery was found to be effective for the selection of individuals for post profiles that require high physical demands (Shaba, 2010).

The arguments surrounding the physical inability of women to perform combat duties and other support environments have been tested scientifically by several environments worldwide and in South Africa, as can be seen in the literature. Therefore, the data presented during the research highlighted the gender-related differences that may impact on the ability of women to compete equally with men, doing the same task.

2.2.2 Psychological differences

Researchers claim that sexes differ not only with regard to physical attributes but also with regard to a variety of psychological attributes, such as risk taking, physical aggression, fear, and empathy (Cawkill et al., 2010). These differences can be observed from early childhood and increase quite drastically when the person reaches puberty. Just as physical sex differences have serious effects on combat effectiveness, so do these psychological differences (Smith, Jacobson, Smith, Hooper, and Ryan, 2007). A study by Browne (2012) on male and female soldiers deployed in support positions during the Gulf War, not seen or actively participated in combat, found that women experienced much higher psychological stress than men did, especially stress related to the anticipation of combat, and cited it as one of the reasons they had left the military. Authors such as Culler, Crawford, and Eitelberg (2000) and Sheppard (2007) state that although men may be physically stronger than women, women are psychologically stronger than men, and on the battlefield it is important to rather have someone who is mentally stable and emotionally disciplined than someone who is violent that may compromise operations or even violate human rights.

2.2.3 Equipment and clothing

Typically, the military environment is regarded as a man's world, and equipment and clothes have been designed to fit the male body and required strength for operations (Goodell, 2010). The dimensions and the weight of equipment, weapons, rucksacks, helmets, reconnaissance, and camouflage equipment were designed to suit the average male soldier. Even boots, uniforms, and protective gear such as bullet-proof vests and goggles were not designed to suit the female body. Epstein, Fleischmann, Yanovich, and Heled (2015) argue that equipment and clothing are unfit for females to wear and increase the risk of injury or even death and make women think twice to put themselves in dangerous situations without suitable protection.

In the literature, little evidence was found that ill-fitting equipment and clothing were reasons for women to retire from the military. However, in the studies of Epstein et al. (2015), these were cited as reasons for a higher injury rate in

women that resulted in medical retirement. It could be some of the reasons deterring women to remain in the combat environment. Thus, the conclusion can be made that women will rather bear the risk of injury or death and uncomfortable clothes and equipment than leave the military.

2.3 Policy Position

According to the Australian Business Solutions Group (2013), policies play an important role in the workplace to prevent double standards, ensure that employees understand what is expected of them, and assist employers to understand what is acceptable or not in the workplace. The military also provides policies to soldiers and leaders to ensure they perform their duties to achieve the mandate of such a force. The policies that were addressed in this report related to international, continental, regional and national policies with specific focus on gender equity and how it affected the gender representation mandate of the SANDF. These policies were discussed in Appendix C.

2.4 Training Requirements

A concern shared by authors (Burrelli, 2013 and Donnelly, 2016;) is the intent and trend of militaries to reduce their training standards when including women in combat environments. Reducing the training standards of the military and specifically in specialised or combat units could result in soldiers being less prepared and women may be targeted because of resentment. The norm was that most men respected women, but when they were put in a dangerous or difficult situations, and put their lives at risk on a daily basis, they needed to know that their comrades (male or female) were trained and could function at the same level and that they could depend on them at any time (Browne, 2012; Cawkill et al., 2010; Hoge, Clark and Castro, 2007).

The fact that the military has different physical-fitness and training standards for the two sexes is proof that it recognises the sex differences. Throughout the reports provided, the authors quote the differences in training standards and the effect they have not only on the cohesion of these groups but also on the morale of women (Browne, 2012 and Epstein et al., 2013). When there are different sets of rules distinguishing between men and women, there are

women who feel they are inferior to their male colleagues, which may result in conflicts within the group and subsequently have an impact on the effectiveness of operations and could lead to women leaving the military, impacting the gender transformation mandate.

In South Africa, the SANDF has different sets of requirements (Heinecken, 2016) with regard to the fitness levels of men and women, from shooting tables to fitness and battle training (Cock, 1992; Molekane, 1996). Cock (1992); Heinecken (2016), and Molekane (1996) believe if women are taken through the process, they may achieve higher levels of fitness, although they are certain that women would never match the fitness levels of their male counterparts.

Although the authors indicate that the physical differences between male and female played a definite role in determining training programmes, there is no clear indication where training standards were lowered (not significantly), to allow both men and women to do the same training and to participate in exercises or operations, as well as to see if the lowering of standards will influence the outcome of operations. As the research will demonstrate later, there are environments such as the personnel and finance corps, where a difference in training standards may be acceptable, as it will not affect operations directly.

Throughout the literature, it is evident that politicians and senior military personnel formulated policies on including women in the combat environment without fully appreciating the concept of what inclusion meant. This implied that even training standards were reduced to accommodate females to achieve targets without considering the effect on operations and the effect it would have on the female soldiers' confidence and performance. Therefore, the exercise was reduced to a set of targets, or a tick-box procedure.

2.5 Women's Leadership Challenges

According to Vogt et al. (2011), deployments may be very stressful to women with a husband/life partner/children, and in many instances, women rather

choose to re-muster to a support environment or leave the military because they cannot achieve the balance between their social and military lives.

2.5.1 Patriarchy

A study that would cover the status of women since integration was requested, and Van Breda (2010) and his team of researchers compiled such a report. Van Breda (2010) reports that more than half of the male participants believed that women should do the cooking and take care of the children; men should be the head of the family and have authority over women; women should submit to the authority of men; and attend to being good wives or mothers and not be concerned about their rights.

According to Van Breda (2010), 30% to 43% of the women supported the above-mentioned statements, and more than 50% believed that men should still be treated and respected as the heads of households. Van Breda (2010) reports that these findings are consistent with other studies on patriarchy previously done in the DOD. The results indicate that SANDF members who have private beliefs about subordination of women at home tend to have negative perceptions about a women's role in the SANDF. Therefore, the perception of these participants remained that women are lazy, not committed, use menstruation as an excuse to avoid work, and do not have the emotional strength to be in the military.

According to Heinecken (2016), commanders consider field operations too dangerous for women and often leave them behind at the unit for fear that they may be raped. Heinecken (2016) further claims that commanders see women as a security risk and that they reduce the capability of their sections/platoons, exposing them to attacks. According to Heinecken (2016), during interviews with female soldiers, they were instructed to stay with the armoured vehicles as their presence is a liability to the force.

Wilén and Heinecken (2018b) support the argument of Van Breda's (2016) report that not much has changed and that gender integration in the SANDF met the targets to a certain extent, but that actual gender transformation has not been met, although policies and processes were in place.

2.5.2 Leadership

According to Cawkill et al. (2010), leadership played a major role in the effectiveness of a unit, whether women were present or not. The research done by Cawkill et al. (2010) also concluded that if the leadership does not embrace gender transformation, the rest of the unit will reject it as well.

When I received my Deed of Commission signed by the State President of South Africa, I was appointed in a leadership position, and it clearly stated, *“to fulfil your duties and responsibilities with diligence and zeal and to set a good example to those who serve under your command”*, without referring to gender. Female officers in the SANDF are assigned the same posts and responsibilities as their male colleagues; however, in all the posts I have served since my appointment as an officer, I have been challenged by male subordinates and peers, questioning my ability to lead. The only way I dealt with it, was to do my work in a professional manner, not become emotional, and treat everyone fairly.

Cawkill et al. (2010) refer to a study done in the USA on junior male combat officers in training who voiced their concern that women could not become effective leaders, as they did not have *“command presence”* and their opinion influenced the troops to such an extent that they had no confidence in women leaders and made it extremely difficult for the women leaders to execute command. Cawkill et al.'s (2010) opinion is that the women leaders experienced men's resistance to women in leadership positions as stereotypical: women were regarded as too emotional and appeared too feminine.

In her research report, Alchin (2015) quotes a female soldier who was asked if appointing more women in higher-ranking positions would make a difference. The following reaction from two troops showed cynicism: *“It's supposed to make a difference because they are supposed to be able to relate to us”* and *“When they get there on top, they just behave like men now; they behave worse than men – Ya, they act like men”*.

Therefore, it is concluded that leadership is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects preventing gender transformation. As leaders do not embrace gender transformation, it will filter down the ranks, and they may act similarly.

2.5.3 Career management

Van Breda (2016) believed the SANDF was still far away from ensuring women were representative in senior positions and the combat environment. However, he acknowledged that the SANDF had made some progress in making the SANDF, especially the combat environment, attractive for younger women to join. According to Van Breda (2016), women can make a career of the military only if opportunities are made available for career progression. Van Breda (2016) uses the Russian Armed Forces as an example, where women are not promoted beyond the rank of major, which may dampen her enthusiasm to pursue a military career. Another example used by Van Breda (2016) that makes the military unattractive as a career is the IDF, where women are conscripted but restricted to certain combat roles. Du Toit's (2013) report strengthens van Breda's argument that women joined the SANDF for monetary reasons, which Du Toit (2013) calls "*occupationalism*" and secondly, members who have joined to be professional soldiers fall in the category of professionalism. In Du Toit's (2013) opinion, the SANDF cannot afford to send members who have joined for the wrong reasons to deployment areas, as these members will not fight and lay down their lives when necessary.

2.6 Women in the Mission Area – Physical and Psychological Capabilities

According to Du Toit (2013), the aim of the report was to provide insight into challenges members experienced during operations and to recommend future interventions during pre-deployments to serve the soldiers in the mission areas better. Du Toit (2013) argues that several concerns were raised about women deployed in the mission areas, and those concerns came from both men and women. The concerns mainly related to the physical abilities of women to participate in operations, handle heavy equipment, and the question of whether they could deal with the stress in an operational situation.

During the interviews by Du Toit (2013), the following aspects were raised as concerns by men and women in the mission area:

The women indicated that the weapons such as the light machine gun (LMG) was too heavy for them to handle, and the men complained that they had to assist and carry the weapon in addition to their own equipment.

The men raised concerns about having women deployed in operations and stated that women freeze during contact and are not willing to fight, as they are scared.

The men in the support environment supported these claims, saying that the female combat soldiers were there to protect them [the supporters], but they felt unsafe, as these women (combat female soldiers) cried easily, and if the platoon commander were crying, who would be taking command of the situation?

These were not only the opinions of men in the mission area. Some of the female combat soldiers said they did not know if they would be able to handle the situation if there was a contact.

The men questioned the physical and psychological ability of the female combat soldiers and claimed that the men would be left alone in a combat situation, as the women would run away, and that would compromise the safety of the unit.

The men stated that because of their upbringing, their focus would be divided, as they would try to protect the women, keeping them from harm, and that would affect the success of the unit in operations.

According to Du Toit (2013), the men had no objection against women in the mission area; they just wanted them out of the combat environment, as they feared that the women might suffer sexual assault at the hands of the enemy. Heinecken (n.d.) interviewed a female peacekeeper who said, *“If those rebels see you... you must walk like a man, you talk like a man... behave like a*

soldier, not a woman and must always be aggressive” to protect herself against the rebels.

In Visagie's report (2017), she indicates that the topic of females continued to come up as one of the aspects that affected the functioning and morale of the soldiers. According to Visagie (2017, p. 19), the men claimed that “*women are the laughing stock of this mission*” and “*women are untouchable, they know how to get what they want, we [the men] just have to allow it*”.

An integrated literature review was done by Braun et al. (2016) on health care delivery, specific for female soldiers in the US military. Braun et al. (2016) concluded, although the US military has implemented several health screening initiatives, gender-specific health care and female hygiene requirements, are insufficient in the operational areas and may be contributing factors that women don't want to deploy. Heinecken (2016) supports this argument that women cannot function as equals in the operational arena mainly due to the shortage of organisational capacity to cater for women specific needs (privacy and hygiene).

Heinecken (2016) states that women in the SANDF faced numerous challenges, although policies were in place to prevent aspects such as sexual harassment. According to Heinecken (2016), sexual harassment was rarely reported, because it might influence the progression in rank and isolation of such women. Burrelli (2013) and Donnelly (2016) argue that one of the reasons for not allowing women in the combat environment is the concern that they will be harassed sexually.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study embraces a policy and social theory. The themes that emerged were policy positions related to gender equity and gender transformation as well as women's leadership challenges. The intent of this research is to provide an understanding of the integration of women into the combat environment, the challenges they face and the impact on the SANDF gender transformation mandate.

These policies originated internationally at the UN and were integrated in the policies of the African Union (AU), bringing it closer to home to the SADC and ultimately found its place in the Constitution of South Africa, with specific expression regarding the place of women in the community. South Africa is a constitutional democracy and therefore any policy will eventually have to meet the requirements of the Constitution. The Constitution of South Africa (1996), Chapter 2, The Bill of Rights, Section 9, guarantees women protection against any form of discrimination and therefore compelled government to put processes in place to guarantee the achievement of this right. One of the initiatives of government, was the establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality with the specific purpose to raise respect for gender equality and to enforce the protection, development, and achievement of gender equality. For the first time ever in South Africa's history, the Cabinet consists of 50% female ministers.

The SANDF took its cue from the Constitution and other governmental policies related to gender equality and amended its policies to achieve its mandate concerning gender transformation. The SANDF also amended other policies that are not focussing specifically on gender transformation but may affect adherence to the gender mandate of the SANDF. These policies are related to basic physical fitness training, functional (corps) training, the combat profile of soldiers, and recruitment processes. Although the SANDF amended its policies to address gender transformation, 26 years since its inception there is yet a female three-star general to be appointed.

Women experience leadership challenges in the broader community, and similarly there are aspects that may prevent women from taking up a leadership role in the military. One aspect that have a serious impact on gender transformation in the SANDF is patriarchy. Women don't have to behave like men to achieve military objectives however, the military remains a "*man's world*" and as Heineken (2016) claims, "*..the only way to 'regender' the military is to stop privileging masculinity over femininity*". Women are not contributing to transforming the military either, as they do not embrace their own femininity but rather adapt to the masculine values, norms, and practices of the military to be declared competent soldiers. The gender transformation

mandate of the SANDF is hindered by this mindset of soldiers (men and women alike) where the gender difference is not recognised.

2.8 Conclusions

During this century women have gradually been integrated into the armed forces globally and the main reasons are that the nature of war has changed, technology has rapidly developed and a change in attitude towards gender roles. Indicated in the literature review are the arguments for and against the inclusion of women in the military however, the traditional masculinity within the military and patriarchy, as indicated by Wilén and Heineken (2018b), stands out to be the biggest obstacles women face within the military.

Allowing female soldiers in general and combat roles, have always created discomfort and resistance in society and this is a global phenomenon, even in militaries that have allowed women to serve in these roles. All the countries researched in this report have challenges integrating women into the combat environment. Israel and Norway are the only two countries in the world conscripting its citizens to serve in the military. Israel's argument is that all citizens are responsible for the security of their country (Cawkill et al., 2010) whilst Norway could not achieve their equity targets and compelled women to military service (Ponniah, 2017).

The resistance is based on various arguments, with the most common one, that women do not measure up to the physical requirements of the military. The UK used the Berkshire Consultancy (2009) report to defend their decisions not to allow women in the combat environment. Other arguments claims that women are naturally more nonviolent than men and therefore not suitable to operate in the military (DeGroot, 2007), while others blame female soldiers influencing male bonding and cohesion of troops (MacKenzie, 2015; UK Ministry of Defence, 2014). Recent arguments for women's participation in the military have increased, matching with the increase in peacekeeping deployments. I believe the establishment of the 'Jegertroppen' in Norway is a step in the right direction. Norway acknowledged the fact that the nature of war has changed, and women can be employed in the combat corps in different roles such as gathering intelligence in the theatre of operations.

The Constitution of South Africa emphasise the eradication of all kinds of gender discrimination and this have led to removing all kinds of barriers in the workplace that prevented women from serving in all kinds of jobs. The SANDF had to review its policies to ensure women are included in combat roles. It is my opinion that the SANDF acknowledged the need for gender transformation and support of women's rights for the sake of equality as "*It is the right thing to do*". The SANDF should recognise the fact that men and women are different and by implementing a gender-neutral environment may not necessarily contribute to the achievement of its gender transformation mandate. By treating men and women the same (using the male standards of the SANDF), affording them the same opportunities and increasing the female numbers in the SANDF does not mean you have achieved gender equality.

It is also not clear in the literature whether sexual harassment, incomplete recruitment information, different training standards, and balancing social life with the military responsibilities were factors that may contribute to the low female representation in the combat environment. These aspects will be dealt with later during the research indicating the impact it may or may not have on gender transformation in the SANDF.

There is no academic literature on why the SANDF could not achieve 50 percent representation in the combat corps however, the academic literature available on the SANDF addresses challenges women experience being in the military and operating as a soldier. Van Breda and Heinecken contributes to the literature on women in the SANDF and Heinecken supports the increased utilisation of women in peace support operations to achieve a similar outcome as Norway with its "Jegertroppen".

I believe Heinecken has identified the real problem; "*the SANDF is to 'regender' its military by redesigning its systems and structures to stop favouring masculinity over femininity*" (Heinecken, 2016, p 101). The research available on gender transformation in the workplace (overall) identified specific areas where women are challenged not to perform at the same level as men such as promotion and salary. From the literature it is evident that companies

and the military achieve its gender targets at the lowest levels but higher up in the hierarchy the absence of women becomes observable.

Throughout the literature the challenges women experience to be recognised and afforded equal opportunities are identified. What is not available is how to “*regender*” the military systems and structures.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

According to Anderson and Poole (2009) the selection of a design, requires of the researcher to select the most suitable method or technique that will provide answers to the research questions and the research problem. This is a critical step in the research. If the wrong method or technique is selected it may compromise the whole research. Therefore, the research methodology that was selected for this study intended to explore how the gender representation mandate had been attended to in the SANDF and to propose recommendations for consideration to address the situation.

3.1 Research Design

The methodological approach followed in this research was a qualitative approach. Bryman, Bell, and Teevan (2012) argue that in a qualitative research, the researcher emphasises words when data are collected, processed, and analysed.

An inductive approach was used, as suggested by Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2010). The inductive approach means that detailed information will be collected and arranged into themes. These themes are then developed into broad patterns or theories that can be compared with personal experiences or with existing literature.

The basis for selection and interpretation of the data collected from individual interviews, research questionnaires and policy documents and HR data of the SANDF (primary data) was guided by a grounded approach. Secondary data in the form of internet search, journals, published articles, and newspapers (secondary data) were collected and analysed. Data from primary and secondary sources were compared to ensure that the research questions were answered in a balanced and informed way to refine the theory.

3.2 Data Collection

According to Creswell (2014), there are four basic types of data-collection procedures in qualitative research, namely observation, interviews, documents, and audio and video material. Terre Blanche et al. (2010) and

Creswell (2014) emphasise that the researcher plays a prominent role in the data-collection process of a qualitative research project, as the researcher will be on site, do the interviews personally, and analyse the data.

The following methods of data collection methods were used during this research:

3.2.1 Literature study

As the current research continued, I have continued to collect relevant information to the topic and the literature review was continuously updated. Following Mouton's (2015) arguments, the literature review involved secondary sources, and did not report new or original experimental work.

To refine the research problem, a theoretical framework, as indicated in the previous chapter, was identified on which to base the research (Terre Blanche et al., 2010) that ultimately led to the research methodology that was used in this research project as well as to answer the research questions.

3.2.2 Individual interviews

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was used to identify the sample. This implies that the researcher did not select participants at random but following Bryman et al.'s (2012) advice. I selected the sample because of their relevance to the research questions and because I relied on my own experience in the SANDF as well as subject specialists to identify the participants that could contribute the most value to the research. Bryman et al. (2012) state that a researcher would have a challenge using purposive sampling as it would not allow the researcher to generalise the results to other samples.

Data collection in qualitative research takes time and is expensive; therefore, nine of the 13 interviews took place in Pretoria, as majority of the participants were situated in or around Pretoria, and only those that were out of town (four) were interviewed telephonically. The telephone conversations were recorded with the consent of the participants, consent forms were mailed to them for completion, and participants were encouraged to speak more freely knowing

that confidentiality would be maintained, and their real identity would not be revealed.

Interviews were conducted with personnel in the Directorate HR Acquisition (D HR Acq) regarding their recruitment processes and with the SA Army Recruitment Office in the role it plays and its responsibility to achieve the SANDF equity targets in terms of gender during the annual MSDS intakes. Interviews were conducted with senior officers of the infantry, armour, and artillery formations, as well as the General Officer Commander Special Forces Brigade, in terms of the career management, training policies, and combat profiles for recruits and enlisted personnel. Interviews were conducted with personnel at Chief Directorate Transformation Management (CDTM) dealing with policies and determining the transformation targets of the SANDF. Directorate HR Separation (D HR Sep) was approached to provide the reasons why women in the combat environment left the SANDF as indicated on their exit questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with military industrial psychologists that had dealt with surveys before, during and after deployments to determine the general attitude of men towards the deployment of females in operations and how women experienced being deployed in the combat environment. Interviews were conducted with men and women who had deployed in the combat environment internal and external to South Africa, sharing their experiences and opinions of women in the combat environment.

Wagner et al. (2012) suggest that the researcher designs an interview guide containing guidelines how to conduct the research (see Appendix B). The participants were informed about the reason for the research, and the research questions were used as a guideline to draw up the interview questions for each of the environments.

Semi-structured interviews were held, and the interview guide formed the basis for the interview. The advantage of the semi-structured interviews was that they were more of a two-way conversation, and although an interview guide was used, some questions that seemed unnecessary were left out, while new questions that were relevant to the interview were formulated (Wagner et al., 2012). To obtain as much information as possible during the interviews, open-ended questions were used, to which the participants responded in their own

words (Wagner et al., 2012). The use of the research questions allowed follow-up questions to clarify certain aspects, and it also led to additional names for possible interviewees. During the interviews with the subject specialists, answers to the research questions were provided, and it was not necessary to return for clarifying questions. All the interviews were scheduled for an hour and a half according to the interviewee's diaries and the time allocation seemed to be enough as they were provided with the questions before the time.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to reflect exactly what was recorded during the interview. The interviews were analysed against the themes that I have identified, as explained under data analysis. The interview questions were formulated in such a manner that they were not biased and did not lead the respondents to specific answers.

3.3.3 Questionnaires

According to Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2010), questionnaires are one of the most common research methods used by researchers to find answers on issues for which the researcher needs answers in the research. Group-administered questionnaires were provided to the MSDS while they were busy with basic military training (BMT) in Oudtshoorn, as it was convenient and saved courier costs. During the completion of the research questionnaire, I could not be present due to financial constraints in the department; therefore, the recruitment officer of the SA Army was briefed on the completion of the questionnaire. The SA Army recruitment office made the necessary copies for the MSDS but omitted one page, and I had to re-do the questionnaire. The challenge was that the MSDS members were no longer at one training facility but all over the country, and I had to identify those combat training units closest to Pretoria (Bloemfontein and Potchefstroom) with the least financial implications and provide all the copies to ensure all the pages were included. One questionnaire was administered and 226 MSDS participated, anonymous. Except for the first round of incorrect questionnaires, the correct data-collection procedures were followed, and accurate data collection took place throughout the research to maintain the integrity of the research to achieve the objective of the research namely, to answer the research questions.

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine if the respondents were given the option to join a specific corps voluntarily, or if they merely had been told they were in a specific corps to achieve set targets. For this purpose, the questionnaire was designed with 7 closed-ended questions where the respondent had to tick a specific box (Wagner, 2012) that was easy to answer (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was also aimed at determining the reasons why the respondents had joined the SANDF, and for this purpose, the respondents were allowed to write their answers to open-ended questions (4 questions) (Wagner et al., 2012). However, some of the answers were confusing and could not be categorised. The questionnaires were not gender specific, which posed a challenge in the analysis of the questionnaire, specifically to determine if the members allocated to a specific corps not of their own choice were men and women or only women.

3.4 Sampling (Unit of Analysis)

The time limitation of this research and little funding available for this study did not allow for an interview with every female soldier in the SANDF on the research question of how the gender representation mandate had been attended to in the SANDF. Therefore, as Wagner (2012) suggests, subject specialists and myself selected a few individuals that constituted the sample of this research. This sampling method is also known as purposive, non-probability sampling (Terre Blanche et al., 2010).

These individuals were personnel in D HR Acq, D HR Sep, training officials at the Infantry, Armour and Artillery combat formations of the SA Army, military industrial psychologists, and personnel at CDTM. Since the interviewees agreed to be interviewed on the condition, they were given false names; I only listed the environments where they are working.

3.5 Data Analysis

Owing to the time limitation and because I was working alone on the research, while I was conducting the interviews, I started analysing the information of the interviews and started writing it up while the questionnaires were in the process of completion. Therefore, the analysis and recording of data collected were done simultaneously.

During the data analysis of this research, I searched for common themes and words to categorise the themes. Creswell (2014) suggests that a small number of themes, five to seven, be generated, as these themes are used in the major findings of the research. The themes identified were policies related to gender transformation (international, continental, regional, and internal to the SANDF), combat profile, training, recruitment, and women's leadership challenges such as patriarchy, career management, to name a few, that may affect the gender transformation mandate of the SANDF.

3.6 Limitations of the study

The scope of this study was limited to the gender representation mandate of the SANDF and how it had been attended to, and focussed only on the infantry, armour, and artillery corps in the SA Army. The research was confined to literature and interviews with military personnel in Pretoria, as time available for the research did not allow in-depth interviews outside the city. Some of the participants were out of town, I have obtained their consent to conduct telephone conversations. The financial constraints placed on the SANDF at the time limited travelling outside Pretoria, and I paid for all telephone calls made to the interviewees as well as travel expenses to the MSDS to have the questionnaire completed. I did not make use of any assistants, as this was an individual evaluation process.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2014, p . 92) argues that it is crucial to promote the integrity of the research by contemplating and addressing all ethical matters throughout the research. Material regarding the research topic and the research questions was readily available in and outside the DOD (published in annual reports and electronically). The data that were used were unclassified in the DOD and were available in the public domain.

The data collected were treated with the necessary sensitivity, although the data were freely available in the DOD annual reports, available for public view. In the capacity of my appointment, I had access to the data presented in this research. Before the interviews started, I provided a consent form to each interviewee explaining the purpose of the study, what is expected from them,

how the data will be used, consent was requested to record the conversation and use the information provided with the necessary acknowledgements and that their participation is voluntary. Some interviews were done telephonically due to the physical availability of interviewees. All recordings were stored according to the DOD policy on handling sensitive information. Consent forms were mailed to the interviewees I had telephone interviews with.

The MSDS were informed that the questionnaire is anonymous and voluntary.

The necessary acknowledgements were given to authors and interviewees by appropriate referencing; however, owing to the sensitive nature of the SANDF, the interviewees were allocated false names and were referred to accordingly in the research. No references were made to ranks or units that could identify the participants.

The code of ethics of the University of the Witwatersrand was adhered to in terms of bias, privacy, and confidentiality. Approval was obtained from the Wits Ethics Committee to continue with the research.

3.8 Significance of the Research

Since the SANDF allowed women in the different combat environments in 1998, the female ratio in the combat environment is 18%, whilst in the support environment the ratio is 38% on average. This study will attempt to determine how the SANDF attended to its gender transformation mandate. It will further illustrate that policies and processes are in place to advance gender mainstreaming in the military however other factors may impact on the achievement of the SANDF's transformation mandate. During the research it became evident that there is not sufficient research done on women in the South African military whilst literature on women in other militaries, such as the USA and UK, report on the training, deployments, utilisation, and the challenges experienced by these women as well as their militaries, are available. Most of the literature obtained were primary resources, policies and reports, internal to the SANDF. In her book, Heineken (n.d) claims that interest in the South African military has decreased over the years and that could be the reason for insufficient research material available on the South

African military. Heinecken is one of the few researchers that frequently report on women in the South African military.

This study will add to scholarly research and literature in the field of security by addressing the gender transformation mandate of the SANDF, specifically in the combat environment of the SA Army (Infantry, Armour and Artillery). This research seeks to address the challenges women faces in the SANDF and to acknowledge the role of women in the military, and her presence does not mean she is weakening the military.

Recommendations were made for possible consideration by the SANDF for implementation to embrace gender transformation in the combat environment.

Chapter 4

Policies Impacting on Gender Representivity in the South African Military

This chapter focuses on policies, laws, and guidelines, internationally, continentally, regionally, nationally, and internally, that may have influenced and guided the gender composition of the SANDF since 1994. These policies formed a small part of the data collection of this research, see Appendix C. Those policies not addressing gender specifics but have an impact on gender transformation were addressed in this chapter. Molekane (2014) quoted the late President Nelson Mandela during his first state of the nation address in Parliament, Cape Town, South Africa, on 24 May 1994, “...*that the conditions of women in our country has [sic] radically changed for the better, and that women at every level have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society. My government is committed to a reallocation of resources to ensure the achievement of this objective.*” In this case, government included the changes of policies to include women to achieve its objective of gender equality. Therefore, it was crucial in this research to determine if such policies were implemented and how these policies contributed to the gender transformation of the SANDF, if at all. This study also includes international trends regarding gender equality and the contribution and effect they have on the South African government to formulate policies in support of gender equality.

The combat profile requirement of the South African Infantry, Armour and Artillery corps guides the recruitment process to ensure the “*right person for the right post*” is recruited and trained to achieve the objectives and mandate of the SANDF. Although the SANDF gender equality policies may differ from those in other state departments in the sense that the SANDF is excluded from the Employment Equity Act (1998), the SANDF has implemented its own measures to adhere to policies, laws and guidelines to achieve its equity targets without compromising its objectives and mandate. However, the challenge remains that there are still perceptions that the military is a “*man’s world*” and women do not belong there.

4.1 Recruitment

This section addresses the process and challenges experienced at SANDF level and then focus on the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps in detail. Research was done down to formation level because these formations determine their own gender targets, as indicated earlier in the research, and if these targets are not met, the SANDF targets are skewed, as it rolls up from formation level to corporate level.

The SANDF recruitment process for MSDS is monitored and controlled from the offices of D HR Acq on behalf of Chief Human Resources (CHR). D HR Acq personnel accompany services during their recruitment and selection processes to monitor the execution of the process and compliance with policy. Carol, a senior officer in the SANDF, observed that the services did not utilise the combat profiles during the selection process to ensure that they select the right candidate for a specific corps.

On the SA Army (2017) web page, Figure 3, the advertisement for recruitment of MSDS, indicated the different musterings, and the detail in terms of what each mustering presents was spelt out clearly. However, nowhere on the advertisement was an indication that they needed more female applicants for the combat environments. Applicants could access the SA Army website and select any of the musterings blocked in red to the left of the advertisement.

military skills development system | overview

- ↳ msds overview
- ↳ msds application form
- ↳ msds selection schedule
- ↳ msds contact us
- ↳ msds basic military training
- ↳ infantry corps
- ↳ support corps
- ↳ artillery corps
- ↳ air defence artillery corps
- ↳ armour corps
- ↳ engineer corps
- ↳ intelligence corps
- ↳ signal corps

SA Army Military Skills Development System (MSDS)

Overview



The South African Army's mandate centres on the provisioning of combat-ready forces and the leading role it has to play in the development of the Army component of the landward defence capability. The South African Army, its members one in spirit, has the commanding presence and the power of a pride of lions, forever professional and ready, making a difference in serving South Africa, no matter where and under what circumstances.

Training Opportunities in the South African Army

The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) programme is a two-year voluntary service system with the long-term goal of enhancing the South African National Defence Force's deployment capability. Recruits are required to sign up for a period of two years, during which they will receive military training and further functional training in their first year of service. During the second year of service, depending on the duration of their functional orientation, they will be deployed where needed and given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and develop their skills.

Requirements

- South African citizen
- Age between 18 and 22 years (Graduates up to the age of 26 years)

- Currently busy with the National Senior Certificate (GR12) or completed
- Not area bound
- No record of a criminal offence
- Preferably single
- Comply with medical fitness requirements for appointment in the South African National Defence Force
- Be prepared to Basic Military Training, Functional Training and to serve in uniform

Additional Requirements

Applicants will be divided into three groups

- **Applicants in possession of a recognised University Degree/3-year Diploma (MSDS Graduates)**
The nature of the degree will be evaluated against the need of the Army for such skills at the given time. Applicants will be informed as to whether they will be invited for further selection. These applicants will be earmarked for leadership development and or non-leadergroup training. Leadership potential will be assessed as part of the selection process.
- **Applicants with above average school grades and leadership potential A (MSDS Applicants)**
These applicants will be earmarked for training that will focus primarily on developing their leadership potential during the second year of utilisation. After successful completion of these training courses, members can be selected for further service in the Core Service System (CSS) studies at the Military Academy, or receive further training and fill leadership positions in one of the many functional fields in the Army. Only candidates with Grade 12 exemption can be considered for studies at the Military Academy.
- **Applicants with Grade 12 (MSDS Applicants)**
Applicants will be screened according to a CV, focussing on educational performance, participation in sport and community involvement. Further selection will mainly focus on cognitive ability, motivation and determination to join the SA Army and to be appointed in a corps specific field. MSDS candidates will be appointed in a specific corps and will be called-up to an operational unit where members will complete their Basic Military Training and Corps Functional Training in the first year and be utilised and deployed in the second year in the MSDS.

Figure 3: SA Army MSDS Recruitment Page (DOD, 2020).

The only entry requirements highlighted in all the mustering pages are educational entry requirements. Furthermore, the page was an information brief about the role and functions of the mustering, as depicted in Figure 4, but it did not indicate physical requirements such as weight and height or that you must be able to carry 45 kg.

SA Army Armour Corps



Armour Corps



Main Function

Dedicated well-trained crews in tanks and armoured cars form the Iron Fist of South Africa. Members are trained in a variety of areas such as Mobile Long Range Anti-Tank weapons, Olifant Tank, Rooikat armoured car crew members, as well as truck drivers and administrative personnel.

The main equipment of the armoured corps is the tank. The armoured car is usually used for reconnaissance. Crew members must be technically inclined, display innovative thinking and action as well as fast, yet aggressive reaction. The armoured corps offers various opportunities and challenges to persons with an interest in heavy weaponry and technologically advanced equipment.

Characteristics

Operating as an armoured crew member within the following capabilities or scenarios:

- High mobility combat
- High intensity combat
- Operations other than war
- Counter-Armour operations
- Strategic landward lift capability

Values Component

- Military professionalism
- Integrity
- Respect
- Accountability
- Reliability
- Transparency
- Loyalty
- Leadership
- Excellence
- Discipline

Tactical Role

Execution of engagements aimed at creating specific tactical, technical or psychological effects, ie:

- Screening own forces by means of smoke
- Anti tank engagements
- Battlefield illumination
- Incendiary engagements
- Target indication
- Radar jamming
- Propaganda leaflets
- Harassing fire
- Mine laying

Educational Entry Requirements

Requirement	Description
Grade 12 / NQF 4	Entry level requirement for Military Skills Development System Recruits
English	Essential
Geography	Preferable
Mathematics	Advantageous
Mechanics	Preferable
Technical Trade Theory	Advantageous
Computer Skills and Typing	Advantageous

Figure 4: SA Army Armour Corps information for MSDS candidates (DOD, 2020).

The Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the Financial Year 2019/20 to services required the entry-level targets for MSDS to be a male to female ratio of 60:40 (DOD, 2018a). The average recruitment target achieved for female recruits (MSDS) in the SANDF from 2007 to 2019 was 36% (all musterings), and the average strength of female soldiers in the system (in a permanent capacity) over the same period was 27%. Heinecken (n.d.) claims that the physical requirements and the dominant male culture of the infantry are some of the reasons why women shy away from serving in the combat environment, and recruitment officers do not use proper selection criteria for the combat environments, which resulted in not meeting the “*right person for the right post*”. Heinecken (n.d.) also states that recruitment officers appointed females

who had passed the medical and psychological tests but not necessarily had the required physical strength for the combat environment. According to Heinecken (n.d.), during an interview with female soldiers from 9 South African Infantry Battalion (9 SAI Bn), they indicated that the Infantry Corps was not their choice and were allocated by the recruitment officers to the Infantry to achieve the recruitment targets.

Table 2: MSDS Questionnaire Results in Selecting a Mustering

Corps	Number of Participants	Selected Corps – Own Choice	Corps was decided on behalf of the member	Do not want to continue their careers in the Combat Corps
Armour	65	61	4	11
Artillery	64	63	1	8
Personnel	97	96	1	NA
Total	226	220	6	19

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine whether the recruits decided for themselves to join a specific corps or whether the recruitment or career management officers allocated them to a specific mustering.

The participants that indicated they did not select the corps out of their own doing, quoted the following reasons for being in the corps:

“It was my father’s choice”.

“I was taken out from another corps because it was full and placed in Artillery, it was that or I go home.”

“I was placed into Armour service by the recruiter who was looking for available space.”

“The HR people during the administration week.”

Although only six members indicated that they were in a corps not out of their own choice, it raises a concern that members were placed in an environment they had not chosen, and they indicated that they would rather stay in a corps not out of own choice than go home and be unemployed. This confirmed the arguments made in Du Toit's (2013) report and strengthened by van Breda's argument that soldiers joined the SANDF for monetary reasons. One of the

participants who was placed in the Armour Corps voiced frustration against being placed in a mustering not of own choice, *“It was forced on me and truly to say I hate it here, I think prison is a better place than here”*.

Although majority of the participants indicated that they had chosen the corps in which they wanted to be, 19 members indicated that if they were to be given a permanent contract, they would apply to re-muster to a different corps than the one in which they were at the time. Some of the reasons provided by the participants were the following:

“I want to work in SAMHS (health); my tertiary qualifications are related to SAMHS.”

“Because there are some certain things, I do not like about the corps I chose in which I wish I knew before.”

“I really wanted to choose support corps but due to the advice that was given to us we had no choice but to choose combat as we needed a job.”

“I want to change to logistics; I want to work normal hours and work a normal job.”

In this case, it can be argued that recruits are not properly briefed regarding the combat environment during the recruitment process. Also, the recruits do not do enough research on what the combat environment entails as it is more important to just have a job. When recruits re-muster to the support environment, it affects the gender transformation targets of the combat environments.

To determine what the SANDF is doing to achieve its gender transformation mandate, it is important to look at the male to female ratio of 60:40 at entry level, as prescribed in the transformation guidelines, and whether these targets are achieved. The gender transformation targets of the SANDF rely on the achievement of the targets at formation level, and if these targets are not met, it impacts the SANDF target.

Table 3: Entry-level MSDS Male to Female Ratio from 2011 to 2018

MSDS Intake	Corps	Male	Female
2011	Infantry*	63%	37%
	Armour*	62%	38%
	Artillery*	53%	47%
2011 Total		62%	38%
2012	Infantry	80%	20%
	Armour	73%	27%
	Artillery	66%	34%
2012 Total		78%	22%
2013	Infantry*	65%	35%
	Armour	74%	26%
	Artillery*	61%	39%
2013 Total		66%	34%
2014	Infantry	80%	20%
	Armour*	61%	39%
	Artillery*	58%	42%
2014 Total		76%	24%
2015	Infantry	74%	26%
	Armour*	59%	41%
	Artillery	68%	32%
2015 Total		71%	29%
2016	Infantry	79%	21%
	Armour	72%	28%
	Artillery	68%	32%
2016 Total		78%	22%
2017	Infantry	67%	33%
	Armour	69%	31%
	Artillery*	61%	39%
2017 Total		67%	33%
2018	Infantry	73%	27%
	Armour*	59%	41%
	Artillery	66%	34%
2018 Total		71%	29%
2019	Infantry	73%	27%
	Armour*	59%	41%
	Artillery	66%	34%
2019 Total		71%	29%

The achieved targets for the Infantry, Armour, and Artillery Corps since 2011 is depicted in

Table 3. The corps indicated with an * were the only ones that came close to the set target of 60:40 male to female during a specific intake. However, the average achieved for the three corps mentioned in Table 3 since the implementation of the MSDS system in 2003 is 73% male and 27% female, a 13% deviation from the required male to female ratio of 60:40 at entry level; thus, the SANDF target of 60:40 was not achieved. The absence of targets at service level and the non-achievement of the corporate targets at lower levels means that the SANDF gender transformation mandate is compromised at corporate level.

Van Breda (2016) believes some women joined the military just to have a job and not to form part of the high unemployment rate in South Africa. However, this was not applicable only to women and South Africans. According to van Breda (2016), this phenomenon was consistent with the international de-professionalisation of the military – where the military was no longer a calling but rather a job with an income that paid the rent and put food on the table. From the research questionnaires I received, the MSDS gave the following reasons why they had joined the SANDF, and these reasons correspond with the reasons provided in van Breda's (2016) research, as well as the report of Colman and Heinecken (n.d.):

The most common answer given why they wanted to join the military was *“to serve and to defend our country”*.

One MSDS indicated she was *“not afraid to take risks”*.

Another MSDS in the Artillery Corps said, *“It is said it [Artillery] is intended for males but I just feel that I want to push myself physically and mentally.”*

“I have always been fascinated by weapons, especially guns; now I can operate them legally” was the input from another MSDS.

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) indicated that she joined the SANDF and Infantry because her father and uncles were in the Infantry and she wanted to continue with the tradition. She was one of the first females to be recruited for the 12-week preparation training for parachute selection.

From an interview with a senior Army officer, Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020), one of the challenges experienced in the Armour Corps was the geographical location of their training and operational units, namely Bloemfontein. She indicated that the female recruits preferred to be closer to home, because they might have small children or were looking after their parents, and therefore the SA Armour Corps was the last option on the recruit's preference list. In many instances, females were merely allocated to the SA Armour Corps to achieve the set recruitment targets. This same reply was provided by several candidates interviewed by Heinecken (n.d.), namely that they would rather be closer to home and also preferred not to deploy.

4.1.1 Infantry

A concern of Sam (interview, 26 March 2020), a senior officer in the SA Army, was that during the pre-selection phase, before the recruits' report for duty, the candidates were not evaluated against the combat profile of the specific corps or against an average profile for the SA Army; in other words, members were selected without prescribed criteria. Once these candidates reported for duty, they were again screened, not against the infantry combat profile, and if they were found too short or under- or overweight, they were returned home. However, Carol indicated that this was a once-off incident in 2018 and was rectified immediately. According to Carol, a debrief session was held, and it was determined that SAMHS did not apply the physical requirements during the initial selection phase; however, it was rectified during the 2019 recruitment drive.

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) believed the recruitment profiles of the Infantry were not in place. She claimed that the SANDF wanted to show its support for government's National Development Plan 2030 by *“just recruiting young people to comply with job creation and the reduction of unemployment, which in my opinion is wrong”*. Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) further argued

that *“this outlook of the SANDF brought the wrong candidates into the organisation and eventually they turned out to be disgruntled and aggrieved for not having been treated fairly”*.

Special Forces. During the interview with the General Officer Commanding Special Forces, it was confirmed that the criteria set for the recruitment for Special Forces was maybe easier to achieve than for the rest of the combat environment. A minimum standard for entry into Special Force selection was set and, on the condition that candidates pass this entry requirement, they continued with the rest of the selection process. ERGOTECH designed the standards to be not in favour of men or relaxed for women. The General Officer Commanding Special Forces reiterated the fact that there were men who did not make the standards. Therefore, the conditions were equal and not biased towards anyone. It was the opinion of the General Officer Commanding Special Forces that both men and women would fail, not because of gender but because they did not fit the required standards.

4.1.2 Armour

The SA Army Order: SA Army Armour Formation 13/12 was distributed to the SA Army HR Recruitment Section, and they were tasked to adhere to the order and apply the selection criteria of the SA Armour Corps on the potential candidates during the selection board proceedings (SA Armour Formation, 2012a).

Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020) expressed her concern with regards to the recruitment process followed within the SA Army. In the advertisement published by the SA Army (Figure 3), no specific requirements were detailed for the combat environments in terms of physical requirements such as weight, height, and weight-lifting restrictions or the fitness requirements to be tested during the selection board proceedings. It was also mentioned that the interviews conducted with candidates were about five minutes long, and it made it difficult for the interviewers to make sound decisions on a candidate's ability to perform extreme physical activities if they were not subjected to a specific fitness evaluation.

Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020) also acknowledged the fact that the candidates were not informed by the recruitment advertisement to prepare for physical tests, and it posed a risk to the SANDF to evaluate unprepared candidates that could end up in claims against the SANDF. However, Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020) believed after BMT, the recruits were much better prepared for physical selection, and they did perform well during the selection, but adherence to the combat profile still posed a challenge. This officer's opinion was that members (male and female) were recruited merely to adhere to the recruitment targets instead of specific selection criteria according to job profiles that existed in the SA Armour Corps.

4.1.3 Artillery

According to Stephen, a senior officer in the SA Army, the Artillery Formation accompanied the recruitment personnel during their recruitment drives. The Artillery Corps do have a combat profile and the representatives of the Artillery Formation ensured that the recruits for the Artillery Corps met the combat profile of the artillery soldier however, no physical evaluations were done during the recruitment process.

4.2 Conclusion

To provide answers to the research questions, international, continental, and national policies that might have influenced the SANDF directly or indirectly in drafting and implementing gender policies were analysed (see Appendix C). The UNSCR 1325 remains the most important international policy that have laid the foundation for all other policies on the equal participation of women in the peace and security process and at the UN World Summit Outcome of September 2005, 191 world leaders once again committed to the UNSCR 1325. By committing to the UNSCR 1325, 19 years since its inception, it demonstrates that gender equality remains a sensitive issue that has still not been resolved. If the UNSCR 1325 is such an important policy, why are women in the peace and security sector, or any other sector, still struggling for equal recognition? This question is then extended to the SANDF. With the Constitution and Laws clear on gender equality and government's commitment, why are women still not fully represented in the military?

The SANDF policy that guides the department to gender transformation is the DOD Policy on Transformation Management on Gender Mainstreaming, (2018b). The aim of this policy is to guide the SANDF to achieve its gender transformation mandate. This policy should be used when drafting any other policy in the SANDF to ensure adherence to the DOD Transformation Guidelines. This policy should therefore be clear on the intent of the SANDF towards gender transformation, implementation, and the reporting on these strategies. It is my opinion that the DOD Policy on Transformation Management on Gender Mainstreaming, (2018b) is vague in terms of implementation and reporting on these strategies and will challenge the SANDF in achieving its gender transformation mandate.

Other policies that could contribute to the non-achievement of the SANDF's gender transformation mandate were identified and analysed. These policies are:

The combat profile policies for each of the three combat corps, namely the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps will contribute to the achievement of the SANDF gender transformation mandate. However, as mentioned in the research, the Infantry Corps stopped the development of its combat profile, giving rise to the question: Against which profile are they then recruiting their candidates? In the case of the Armour and the Artillery Corps, their combat profiles exist and are used only after BMT. Not using the combat profile from the first selection board could result in candidates not meeting the profile of the required combat corps after BMT and further reduce the female numbers in the respective corps.

The recruitment process and policy of the SA Army was analysed to determine what efforts were made to increase female representation in the combat environment. Due to the absence and unclear guidance on how to increase the female representation in the combat environment, I distributed a questionnaire to the SA Army MSDS Intake to determine if the recruits had joined a specific corps out of own choice or if the recruitment or career management officers had allocated the recruit to a specific mustering, just to meet their targets.

The PTSR and functional training policies were analysed to determine if there was indeed different approaches to training between men and women, as claimed by authors such as Browne (2012) and Epstein et al. (2013), the research confirmed that this is indeed the case in South Africa.

Chapter 5

Women's Leadership Challenges in the South African Military

If policies are in place, supporting and guide female representation in the military what other factors, if any, could then prevent the SANDF to achieve its gender representation mandate? In this section, other factors that emerged during the research that may restrict women's leadership in the South African military will be addressed, such as patriarchy, sexual harassment, career management, separation from the organisation, leadership, female hygiene, and women in the mission areas. The information obtained to describe these challenges, came mainly from reports internally to the SANDF and interviews with participants in the combat environments.

5.1 Patriarchy⁸

Van Breda (2016, p. 21) quotes Cynthia Enloe, who said, "*Men are the military; women are in the military.*" Both authors believe men claims the military as "*theirs*", a masculine world shaped by masculine beliefs and that women are "*intruders*" that must remain home and need to be protected by men.

In 1999, four years after integration of statutory and non-statutory forces and one year after women were allowed in the combat environment, a report on attitudes and opinions of 2,192 of the personnel (1,110 females and 1,082 males) who participated in a survey (DOD, 1999) indicated that:

48,4% of the participants felt positive about the integration of women in the combat environment;

52,5% believed that the combat environment was a male domain and that women would have a negative effect on unit cohesion, morale, male bonding, and operational effectiveness;

⁸According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2020), patriarchy is a "social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line".

40% of the participants believed there was no need for women in the combat environment and they would serve better in the support environment;

two thirds of the respondents believed that women have the right to participate in all aspects of society, and the SANDF could no longer ignore the importance of women in the military;

34,6% believed that women have the physical, emotional, and mental stress capacity to deal with the requirements of the combat environment;

49,5% were concerned about the effect that allowing women in the combat environment would have on mothers with small children at home by deploying for extended periods, pregnancy, and sexual harassment; and

45,5% of the respondents believed that women should be allowed into the combat environment, excluding the direct combat roles, regardless of their ability to perform well.

The overall feedback from participants indicated that they agreed women had the right to participate in all aspects of society, but the military was still a “*man’s world*”, and the presence of women would affect the combat readiness of the unit.

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) stated, “*I was appointed Second in Command at the training wing, and I had this one male soldier that did not accept any instructions from a woman and definitely not one 20 years younger. I had to deal with the situation, and I had a one-on-one session with him, explaining the situation to him that I could not afford to have members disobeying my commands as it will result in the unit not achieving its objectives and it could have a negative impact on the outcome of operations. I never had to address him again for disobeying my orders.*”

5.2 Sexual Harassment

According to Heinecken (2009), sexual harassment⁹ and abuse remains the biggest problems women serving in the SANDF are facing. Heinecken (2009) expressed her concern regarding the low reporting rate of sexual harassment and abuse cases and states that in her opinion, women are concerned it may affect future career prospects. In an article of defenceWeb (2019b), the MOD & MV said that she was comfortable with the achievements regarding eradication of and dealing with sexual exploitations during external deployments. However, she believed the same measures applied during external deployments needed to be activated during internal operations, as too many allegations and complaints of sexual exploitation were still forthcoming.

The MOD & MV established a Ministerial Task Team to investigate sexual offences in the SANDF, as the sexual offences currently reported in the SANDF are not consistent with the levels of sexual offences reported in the rest of the country. To enable the task team to gather as much information as possible, it established a hotline and e-mail address in January 2020, to report complaints of sexual offences, including sexual harassment. The hotline and e-mail address will be managed by the task team, and any information obtained will be deemed confidential. The actions that will be taken will depend on the type of the information and complaints. Where relevant, complainants will be referred to the suitable organisations inside or outside the DOD. The hotline is available to all members of the DOD, and any member of the public who is aware of incidences committed by members of the DOD. This initiative was established in January 2020 and the results were not available to be included in the report.

⁹ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the UN (United Nations, 2018b) defines sexual harassment in its guidelines as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) stated, “During deployments some women would identify a male soldier to be her ‘partner’ for the duration of the deployment to protect her against the sexual advancements of other men and in return she would compensate him with sexual favours”.

Wilén and Heinecken (2018a) argue that in instances such as those mentioned by Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), the men were seen to be more masculine, while the women were stigmatised. According to Wilén and Heinecken (2018a), women’s sexuality could be used positively during operations when they were able to gather information their male colleagues could not.

5.3 Career management

The DOD Overarching HR Strategy (DOD, 2009) addresses career management from a strategic level and is clear in its guidance with regard to the implementation of an SANDF career management policy. The SANDF does not have a corporate career management policy that directs the services in terms of career planning of their human resources. The SA Army also does not have a career management policy. Promotion and transformation policies are modules within a career management policy and cannot on its own guide career management in an environment.

Table 4: Male vs Female Ratio in the Combat Corps, Infantry, Armoured and Artillery, from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019

Corps	FY2014/15		FY2015/16		FY2016/17		FY2017/18		FY2018/19	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
South African Infantry Corps	13	87	14	86	14	86	15	85	15	85
South African Armoured Corps	19	81	20	80	21	79	21	79	22	78
South African Artillery Corps	25	75	25	75	26	74	27	73	28	72

Note: F indicates female and M males. Numbers indicated in percentages

Table 4 indicates a growth in female representation in the three combat corps, namely the Infantry, Armoured and Artillery Corps, from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019. The Infantry and Artillery Corps grew with three percent from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019, and the Armoured Corps with two percent.

Table 5: Male vs Female Average Years in Rank in the Combat Corps, Infantry, Armoured and Artillery, FY2008/09 vs FY2018/19

Corps	SOUTH AFRICAN INFANTRY CORPS				SOUTH AFRICAN ARMoured CORPS				SOUTH AFRICAN ARTILLERY (FIELD)			
	FY2008/09		FY2018/19		FY2008/09		FY2018/19		FY2008/09		FY2018/19	
Rank	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Col/Capt (SAN)	0	5.10	1.41	1.89	0	1.87	0	1.08	0	0	0	1.52
Lt Col/Cdr	0.44	6.15	3.69	8.10	0	6.45	4.25	8.36	0	3.97	4.50	7.22
Maj/Lt Cdr	2.07	4.69	2.74	6.40	2.72	3.49	4.81	6.71	3.25	4.04	2.22	3.29
Capt/Lt (SAN)	1.57	4.42	4.17	5.54	1.88	2.60	4.75	5.37	1.72	3.19	4.12	4.49
Lt/S Lt	1.75	2.35	5.25	5.93	1.66	1.65	4.39	3.76	2.48	1.80	3.43	3.68
10:2 Lt/Esn	1.50	1.27	0	4.20	1.26	1.25	0	1.79	1.25	1.70	0	0
WO1	0	8.24	4.80	10.58	0	12.47	1.41	11.25	8.92	7.17	7.79	10.83
WO2	1.19	5.28	3.67	6.87	2.39	3.59	3.48	8.11	0	2.47	2.85	7.39
S Sgt/F Sgt/CPO	1.19	4.42	5.05	7.50	3.68	2.42	6.27	6.73	0.87	3.70	4.28	8.58
Sgt/PO	1.97	6.76	5.08	7.38	1.50	2.36	3.76	6.45	1.43	3.88	4.56	8.47
Cpl/LS	2.70	7.87	4.83	9.25	2.21	3.38	3.37	7.27	1.80	2.78	3.64	7.44
L Cpl/AB	3.91	7.02	4.68	7.98	0.77	1.93	2.77	3.71	1.21	2.04	3.02	5.07
Pte/Amn/Sea	2.89	10.84	7.05	13.74	1.63	3.94	4.55	5.95	1.34	1.93	5.27	5.20

Note: F indicates female and M males.

The data in Table 5 indicates that on 31 March 2019, there were no female colonels in the SA Armour and Artillery Corps, 21 years after the combat environment had been opened to females. The trend in Table 5 revealed that in FY2008/09, females spent short periods in their ranks, while in FY2018/19, they spent longer periods in their ranks. In all three the corps, the females spent relatively less time in their ranks than their male colleagues did, except the lieutenants in the SA Armour Corps who spent longer time in their ranks than the men did. According to Willy (interview, 20 March 2020), the reasons were the long waiting periods before the members were confirmed in their ranks, and then they had to do their promotional courses before they could be considered for promotion to the next higher rank.

Table 6: Female Re-mustering¹⁰ to and from Combat Corps for the Period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018

Re-mustering to or from the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps	Number of Years in Specific Corps before Re-mustering	Grand Total
Re-mustered to Inf Art Arm	1	1
	2	30
	3	2
	4	5
	5	3
	6	1
	7	1
	8	1
Re-mustered To Inf Art Arm Total		44
Re-mustered From Inf Art Arm	0	809
	1	116
	2	11
	3	8
	4	18
	5	6
	6	21
	7	7
	8	6
	9	6
	10	6
	11	16
Re-mustered From Inf Art Arm Total		1 030

The data in Table 6 depicts the number of years the female soldiers spent in their specific corps before they requested to re-muster to a different mustering. The data in Table 6 depicts only females that joined the SANDF from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018 who were in the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps that requested to re-muster to other corps (1 030), of which the majority (968) re-mustered within the first two years of joining the SANDF. Females over the same period that had requested to re-muster to the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps were in the minority (44).

¹⁰ Re-Mustering means the transfer from one corps to another, in other words, from Infantry to Logistics.

Table 7: Female Re-mustering from Support Corps to Combat Corps for the Period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018

	Intelligence	Medical Support Service	Ordnance/ Stores/ Equipment	South African Air Defence Artillery	South African Engineer Corps	Technical Services Corps
Re-mustered to Inf, Art, and Arm Corps	2	21	1	2	2	16

Table 7 depicts the support corps from where female soldiers (44 as depicted in Table 6) re-mustered to the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018. The majority of these re-musterings took place within the second year of the female soldier joining the SANDF.

Table 8: Female Re-mustering to Support Corps from Combat Corps for the Period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018

Corps	Caterer	Intelligence	Military Police	Ordnance/Stores/ Equipment	HR	Signal/ Communications	Air Defence Artillery	Engineer	Technical Services
Re-mustered from Inf Art & Arm Corps	117	102	42	227	127	150	81	90	62

Most of the female soldiers (97%) that had re-mustered from the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2018 had chosen the support corps as reflected in Table 8, suggesting that they wanted to move to an environment that was less demanding in terms of physical work and deployments away from home.

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) stated, *“It was my dream to be appointed as a battalion commander, and in an interview with one of my superiors I was informed that according to him, I did not have the profile to be a battalion commander. I asked him what the profile requirements of a battalion commander is, as I was not aware that there was such a profile, and I was of the opinion that I have the necessary experience, knowledge and skills to be a battalion commander. I also informed him that I believe a good leader can be kind and gentle and firm and don’t have to be rude to get the job done.”*

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) agreed, *“My career took a setback when I fell pregnant, as I could not attend my next promotional course and therefore lost seniority. However, I don’t feel guilty over it as it was my choice to put my career on hold to start a family.”* Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) was also studying towards her degree and wanted to focus on finishing her qualifications, and if it meant she would not attend a course because of her decision, she would accept it like that. In Nellie’s (interview, 25 March 2020) opinion, the Infantry Formation was not looking after the careers of both men and women. Career interviews were done annually, and it stopped there on paper; execution of what had been discussed rarely materialised.

According to Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), female infantry officers eventually ended up in Pretoria in a staff post, as the command posts elsewhere in the country were limited and were occupied mainly by men. She expressed the hope that with the implementation of the Defence Review 2015, the force design and structure might change this situation and increase the number of command posts.

Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020) expressed a concern that men were still advantaged by preferential acceptance on promotional courses and promotions while there were qualified females who were not considered for promotion. According to Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020), not many promotion posts were available in the SA Armour Corps, and it is difficult to compete for a post when you were not course qualified. She indicated that in the SA Armour Formation, females were leaving the corps because of social problems such as having small children at home and not being able to deploy for long periods or attend long courses away from home due to insufficient support systems.

When women were admitted to the combat environment, the SANDF promotion policy changed, whereby all female soldiers had to attend certain combined combat courses (in the SANDF referred to as developmental courses) before they could be considered for promotion. I was nominated for two such courses five times before I was accepted on the course, and out of the 52 attendees, only three women were accepted to attend these courses.

This resulted in females spending longer periods in their ranks because of the then “backlog” on these courses.

5.4 HR separation

To determine the reasons why female combat soldiers left the SANDF, D HR Sep was approached to obtain information from the exit questionnaires completed by members separating from the DOD.

According to the DOD Separation Policy (DOD, 2010), it is compulsory for members leaving the DOD to complete the exit questionnaire. The exceptions were members who left because of compulsory retirement and members who had passed on.

I analysed the exit questionnaires of female soldiers, in the combat corps, from November 2016 to 31 December 2018, and it was found that 297 female soldiers in the combat environment left the SANDF from November 2016 until 31 December 2018. However, only 25 questionnaires were received for analysis by D HR Sep, as reflected in Table 9.

Table 9: Female Combat Soldiers Who Left the SANDF and Completed the Exit Questionnaire (Excluding MSDS) from November 2016 to December 2018

	Number of Female Combat who Left according to PERSOL	Number of Female Combat Soldiers' Exited Questionnaires Received
Total	297	25

Benny (interview, 24 March 2020), a civilian officer in the SANDF, confirmed that they started collecting the questionnaires only from November 2016; therefore, data prior to this date were not available.

The exit questionnaire was an eight-page document that needed to be completed by all members leaving the DOD, except members who left because of compulsory retirement and members who had passed on. The aim of this questionnaire was to enable the DOD to analyse the reasons why members left the organisation and to determine trends. It also identified affected areas that could be improved for employment practices and maintenance of careers in the DOD. It also enabled a professional support team to assist, guide, and support members with re-entry into civil society when required.

During the interview with Benny (interview, 24 March 2020), he indicated that *“the questionnaire is not user friendly. Most of the members exiting are of a lower rank and don’t understand the termination language used in the questionnaire ... Personnel officers at unit level are not involved in assisting in completing the questionnaire and they don’t submit it to D HR Sep in time for analysis.”* An area of concern was members who did not want to state their reasons for leaving, as they believed that they might be victimised until they eventually leave the DOD. It was also indicated that D HR Sep did not have the capacity to analyse the questionnaires and to follow up with members leaving for possible interventions, especially with members who were leaving the organisation aggrieved with no jobs outside the DOD. In an interview with Sam (interview, 26 March 2020), he indicated that *“on formation level, we were trying to get the exiting members to complete the forms by involving the personnel officers at unit level, and I’m of the opinion that the questionnaire is not user friendly and therefore I struggled to get the members to complete the forms”*.

The following were found as part of the research at D HR Sep:

Duplicate questionnaires were submitted with conflicting reasons for exit.

Questionnaires were incomplete, especially regarding the reasons for leaving the SANDF.

Most of the reasons for leaving the SANDF were generic. Female soldiers who completed the questionnaire quoted the following reasons for leaving the SANDF:

“Further studies”.

“Getting married”.

“Better job opportunities”.

“Not promoted”.

Most of the forms were not signed by the officer commanding, the career manager or the service or divisional chief, although the questionnaire makes provision for their signatures and remarks.

5.5 Leadership

According to Van Breda's (2016) report, females reported that they had challenges exercising command and control over male subordinates. These females stated that some men were disrespectful and challenged their leadership authority; however, some men rejected female authority simply because of their gender. In Van Breda's (2016) opinion, it is not only a South African or African phenomenon because of culture; even in South Korea, male soldiers view female leaders as inferior. Van Breda (2016) applauds the SANDF for recognising the leadership ability of women publicly but in his opinion, there are still men who are not able and will never accept women in leadership positions and will challenge them all the way.

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) explained that she was embarrassed failing the selection for the parachute course: *"The men that did pass the selection did not have any respect for me; they booed me, and it was unbearable, and I just wanted to be transferred to a unit away from these men."* Her supervisor ignored her request and said she would stand her ground because the men would have even less respect for her if she left; therefore, she stayed. According to Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), the unit had a tradition where the whole unit ran a 2,4 km once a month, and the arrangement was that the officers and NCOs had a head start before the troops started running. *"The first time I ran the 2,4 km the troops caught up with me and booed me as I came second last that day"*. She was so embarrassed because everyone was waiting at the parade ground: *"I said to myself I cannot be seen as a weak officer and a leader. The next month I started with the troops and not the officers and I finished with the troops and I believe that I gained their respect and from there on, I was never disrespected by any of the troops again."* Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) stated, *"I am of the opinion that men will trust a woman when they see you can do your work and that you're not taking any liberties such as sick reporting when you are to do guard duties."*

Nellie (25 March 2020) believed that *“women are good leaders because they have a different, a softer [feminine] approach to any situation than a man.”*

During the MOD & MV speech at the Women’s Day Parade on 29 August 2018, attended by me, the Minister expressed her disappointment for not having female three-star officers (lieutenant generals) in the SANDF and made the commitment to rectify the situation within the next year. In the promulgation of Lieutenant Generals in the SANDF in November 2019, not one of the 34 female major generals (DOD, 2019b) was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General, which raised the following questions:

Could it be that no females made the grade? If so, what grade?
Is it a matter of absence of proper career management and succession planning?

According to Heinecken (n.d.), men do not want to see more women in leadership positions, as they are concerned that it may affect the combat readiness of the SANDF and eventually affect the effectiveness of operations. Heinecken (n.d.) quotes a sergeant major who said he hated to deploy with women because when more females were deployed, men were overused as the women could not do the same job.

5.6 Women in the mission area – Physical and psychological capabilities

In the literature review men and women raised the following issues, as captured in Du Toit’s (2013) report on the deployment of females in the mission areas:

Females do not have the strength to carry the equipment to do their jobs; therefore, their commanding officers are not able to protect them.

Out of fear, women do not have the psychological strength to stand their ground in a combat situation and will leave those under command unprotected.

Men believe that their attention is divided between their work and protecting the female soldiers, which prevents them from doing their jobs and compromises operations.

During an interview with Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), he stated that the challenges of having women in the combat environment in the SA Army had been identified and investigated in depth (I made several attempts to locate this report and determine the title, but without any success). According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), based on this report, the SA Army concluded that they could not adhere to a 50:50 male vs female ratio in the combat environment, as it would affect the combat readiness of the force and the successful execution of operations. However, no official document exists within the SA Army indicating their gender targets they only refer to the DOD Policy on Transformation.

A further determination was that it would be difficult for women to serve in the combat environment due to their lack of continuous physical strength in combat situations. Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) gave an example of an engineer team (consisting of six people) that had to build a bridge, when each member of the team was required to carry a segment of the bridge on their shoulders to where it had to be erected and assembled. Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) stated, *“I observed a female-only team carried one segment, very slowly, to the required set-up place, then had to rest before they could carry another segment. I also observed that in a female-only team each one in the group did their part to achieve the end result because there were no men to assist them. The team was then mixed with four men and two women and due to the fact that the women were shorter than the men they could not carry the segment; they walked alongside the men and the four men had to carry the weight that was supposed to be distributed between six members. In both instances, a female-only team and a mixed team, the assembling period of the bridge was much slower and impacted on the execution of the operation.”* The Heinecken (n.d.) report quotes a female officer that made the same observation as Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) that in the event of a female-only team, the output was much more successful than in the case of a mixed team, and in her

opinion, it was because each one of the women was required to do her part and there was no man to assist, who was the *“head of the household”*.

Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) gave another example where an infantry battalion was supposed to build defensive positions with sandbags. The sandbags had to be filled with sand and carried to the place where the wall was supposed to be built. He found the females sitting around guarding the weapons, and the men did all the work. According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), he addressed it with the commanders, and they instructed the women to do their part just to find them a few minutes later sitting around guarding the weapons. When he asked why they were not doing what they were instructed to do, their answer was, that they were *“not as strong as the men and tired easily”*. Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) stated, *“I’m of the opinion it was this kind of behaviour that questioned the integrity and credibility of those women that were serious about their careers in the combat environment.”* Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) explained that during his deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) he was constantly aware of the danger of having women deployed, as they easily could fall victim to the rebels, and the risks of torture and rape were some of the reasons why he did not send out a woman-only patrol but rather had mixed teams. According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), these decisions had their own consequences, as *“the men patrolling in mixed teams reported back to me that they felt they could not focus on the mission at hand as they felt they first had to protect the women in their team and their concern was it will impact on the success of their mission. They also claimed the women tired easily and the men had to carry their weapons and back packs.”*

Wilén and Heinecken (2018b) quoted a male lieutenant: *“It is always in your mind that you are more at risk, because you try to keep them [women] out of danger. You actually have two jobs now: seeing to the females and what is happening up front.”* This was but one argument used to stereotype women as weak and fragile and in need of protection.

Rina’s (interview, 26 March 2020) experience during the 1994 integration of the then Venda Defence Force (VDF) into the new SANDF was that *“the men*

had total disregard for my rank (Captain at the time) and challenged the position I held. The VDF (military personnel) consisted of only men as women were not deemed fit to serve as soldiers.” Rina (interview, 26 March 2020) observed the challenges these VDF soldiers had *“adapting to an environment where women held the same or even higher ranks. Over the years, these soldiers adapted and learnt to accept the presence of women in their midst; for example, a female joined their ranks in 2004 and was utilised and deployed with them and promoted until 2015, where after she was appointed as the Second in Command (2IC) at 15 South African Infantry Battalion (15 SAI Bn).”* Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) observed, *“These soldiers displayed the necessary respect to this lady and accepted her appointment, as she worked with the men and progressed in the ranks with them, and when she was appointed as the 2IC, they knew she had the knowledge, experience and skills to execute the job.”*

According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), he saw women in the combat environment that were better and stronger than the men, but he agreed they were in the minority.

5.7 Equipment and clothing

According to Heinecken (n.d.), the female soldiers she interviewed were of the opinion that masculinity was embedded in every aspect of the SANDF. She quoted female soldiers claiming that protective equipment such as flap-jackets did not fit them. The clothes and boots were too big, which resulted in injuries when clothing was too big or too small. A female corporal indicated that she had to improvise and wore more than one pair of socks because her boots were too big, which resulted in blue toenails preventing her from doing patrols.

According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), a senior officer in the SA Army, little progress has been made in the design to provide equipment and clothing for women due to additional costs experienced by military organisations, and in many instances, it is regarded as additional costs that cannot be afforded. In my personal experience as a female soldier in the SANDF, protective clothing does not fit the female body. It is heavy, uncomfortable, restrict movement, is outdated, and where it is supposed to provide peace of mind that

one will be protected, it makes one nervous knowing that one might be hurt or even killed. The latest technology on the market is available, as displayed during the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) 2019 exhibitions, and has been designed to fit anybody, irrespective of gender. However, the current financial situation in the SANDF does not allow for the purchasing of the latest equipment; therefore, soldiers must make good with what is available in the stores, irrespective of the risk attached to it.

There is no maternity uniform for women in the SANDF. When a female soldier falls pregnant, she must wear civilian clothes which means her rank becomes invisible and she loses her position in the military structure as her rank becomes invisible.

From experience, Rina (interview, 26 March 2020) confirmed Heinecken's (n.d.) claims by stating, *“Combat uniform and equipment was not designed to fit the female body. The clothing stores did not carry small size shoes, shirts and trousers and you must wear what is available. The boot socks are too big and had to be folded under my foot, or it was pulled up over my knee and caused blisters to such an extent that participating in exercises was not an option and I was frowned upon by instructors and peers. The steel frames of the backpacks were too long and caused hip and back injuries, as it could not be adjusted for the shorter female body. In the operational area you must wear protective clothing, and the hard hats and flap jackets are too big, and in the event of an incident, you would not have the necessary protection as it was intended.”*

5.8 Cohesion

Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) explained that unit cohesion is extremely important to keep the unit together, especially during operations. From his experience, he believed the lack of cohesion could affect the success or failure of an operation. According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), where small groups work together for long periods of time, they form a closed-knit bond, and when you have mixed gender crews and the female is a little more affectionate to one of the crew, it could tear that cohesion apart, and commanders cannot afford that kind of internal in-fighting during an operation.

Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) was also of the opinion that sexual dynamics may be manageable in other environments, and according to him, it has no place in close combat and despite best efforts by strong and good leaders to control this issue, they failed as perceptions of favouritism and sexual harassment continued in a mixed-gender environment.

5.9 Female hygiene

The men complained about the additional tasks to be executed by them when women had their periods, and according to Du Toit (2013), the men did not complain about the women having period pains but that the women used this as an excuse to be booked off sick, which earned them the term “*Sickbay*” ladies.

According to Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), she also experienced women that used their periods as an excuse for not doing their duties. She had a discussion with her warrant officers and informed them that they allowed these women to get away with these excuses because of their fatherly instincts. Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) stated, *“I never used my periods as an excuse to not attend to my work, and I am of the opinion that war doesn’t wait for you or your period; so, you must take some pain tablets and do your work.”*

Larry (interview, 20 March 2020) explained that since the first deployment of women outside South Africa, logistic support in terms of ablution facilities had enhanced; however, when soldiers were outside their permanent bases, there was no such luxury. According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), this created a challenge. He said that when a woman wants to relieve herself, she must take off all the kit she carries, she must be accompanied by another female for protection, and the men must go in a different direction to allow her some privacy. This situation made the team vulnerable in a hostile environment such as the DRC.

According to Van Breda's (2016) report, some women reported that they did not have sufficient ablution facilities, and they had to share those that were available with the men. There were insufficient sanitary bins to throw away the soiled sanitary pads, and no proper disposal of sanitary waste. All the interviewees concurred with Van Breda's (2016) report that during operations,

especially when soldiers were outside their permanent base, women did not have access to additional water for personal hygiene, and when deployed in the deep rural areas, there were no shops to purchase sanitary pads. The women who participated in Van Breda's (2016) survey were of the opinion that aspects to maintain personal hygiene were not luxuries but a necessity; however, according to these women, the military was treating these aspects as *"nice to have"* and they were not receiving priority attention. During an interview with Lettie (interview, 24 March 2020) of the Military Psychological Institute (MPI), she claimed that the situation had not changed since Van Breda's (2016) survey, and the female soldiers had *"accepted"* the lack of facilities; therefore, female hygiene was no longer at the top of their list of challenges.

Van Breda's (2016) survey claimed that this attitude of the SANDF towards female hygiene contributed to the failure of gender mainstreaming and quoted Wardell and Czerwinski who call this a process of *"othering"* women. In other words, men's needs were set as the norm, and by comparing women's needs to the norm, these needs became nonessential. By applying menstruation against this process of *"othering"*, it basically means because menstruation is not discussed generally in public, it will be treated similarly in the military; it is a discussion between women only, and men do not want to deal with issues related to the topic. Van Breda (2016) believes women would rather stay quiet about the topic; otherwise, they will be branded by the men that they cannot cope in the field. In this case, it is evident that the mission areas are not structured properly to accommodate women, which makes them feel vulnerable and inferior to their male colleagues.

5.10 Social challenges

According to Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), many females in the Infantry Corps were married and were mothers, and their support systems were not close to their units. They missed the development milestones of their children, and in many instances, being away from their partners resulted in affairs and eventually divorce. She was also of the opinion that many women neglected their marriages and children because *"the work comes first"* and only realised what they had done, too late, when they had missed their child's first step or

their first wedding anniversary. She believed at this stage of her life, her family comes first, and then the SANDF; therefore, she accepted that she would not progress as she had anticipated when joining the military.

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) stated, *“There was no female mentor that guided me. I had to get to where I am on my own. Therefore, I am not unwilling to help other women. I will not go out of my way to help them; however, I will give them advice”*. She felt that she had to get where she was on her own, and all other women should do the same, with progression based on merit and not because of who you know.

According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), the traditional female role was to be a caretaker, a mother and wife, and most of the women in the combat environment were fitting into one of these roles. This was unfortunate, as he called it *“baggage”* from which they could not separate themselves, while it was much easier for men to walk away and follow their career. Recent research done by Wilén and Heinecken (2018b) supports this argument that both male and female members in the military, as well as civilians outside the military, see women first as women, mothers and wives, and secondly as soldiers.

Several females were the first in a specific corps, or the first to complete a course successfully, and then they were taken into the limelight by the SANDF. According to Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), there is nothing wrong with it; however, his concern was that after these achievements, when these women were injured or the next female *“first”*, or left the organisation, they were just forgotten and the SANDF would be looking for the next *“first”*.

5.11 Conclusions

Patriarchy is the most prominent challenge I have identified in the research that prevents women their rightful place in the military. Patriarchy is embedded in society with the beliefs that masculinity is associated with strength, aggression, undemonstrative and domination, whilst femininity is associated with inactivity, passionate and weak. These beliefs have been accepted as the norm by society (men and women alike) and is still applied today. In the military, these gender roles are even further exaggerated. Soldiers are taught

not show their emotions as it demonstrates weakness. Soldiers are taught to take care of one another however, that is not seen as compassion but rather camaraderie. From the research it is evident that the male soldiers see their female colleagues as a liability that put them all at risk and impact on the success of a mission. Men still have the advantage when it comes to career progression in the SANDF and where women do progress to leadership positions they are being challenged. Women who succeed had to work so much harder than their male peers as indicated by Nellie and still there are men that hint that these women benefited from shortcuts. It is unfortunate that the MOD & MV's promise in 2018 to promote more female Lieutenant Generals in 2019 has not materialised to date (2020).

It is my opinion that sexual harassment is a symptom of patriarchy where society believes that women are less than men. The SANDF still has a long way to go in eliminating sexual harassment and it is seen as one of the biggest challenges women face in the military. From the research it is evident that the current education and training on sexual harassment is not effective as the MOD & MV intervened by establishing a Ministerial Task Team to investigate sexual offences in the SANDF. As Larry has indicated there are women that offer sexual favours for protection against sexual advances. That should not be necessary if the leader group of the SANDF set the example by not turning a blind eye when sexual harassment is reported and should not use their positions of authority for sexual advances. It is my opinion that this is the reason why the MOD & MV intervened.

I believe the other challenges women experience as indicated in this chapter are symptoms of patriarchy. Men are of the opinion that the military is a "*man's*" world and therefore accommodating women in the military is not high on their agenda. It is clearly visible in the clothing and equipment that are designed with the male frame in mind, comments by men in the reports quoted in this research and the process of "*othering*" women.

Chapter 6

Reasons for Women Underrepresentation in the Combat Environment

This chapter contains the results of the data that were collected and analysed to answer the research questions:

How the SANDF attended to its gender representation mandate?

To provide an answer to the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were also addressed:

What role does the recruitment processes play in increasing gender representation in the combat environment?

What are the contributing factors to the current gender representation in the SANDF?

What is the relationship between the combat environment and career pathing?

From the research it is evident that in the SANDF and international armed forces, there are various positions and arguments for and against the inclusion of women in the combat environment. These arguments differ from the impact on unit cohesion, combat readiness, operational effectiveness and that women do not have the physical and psychological strength to function effectively in the combat environment. A central piece of research done by the Berkshire Consultancy (2009) revealed that, in general men in the military did not have a problem with women being appointed and utilised in the combat environment but have a concern on how to protect these women in operations.

The SANDF commissioned studies by Van Breda (2010), Van Breda (2016) and Colman and Heinecken (n.d) to determine the progress of the SANDF towards achieving its gender transformation mandate. These studies identified numerous challenges and gaps women experienced being in the military, in the combat environment, during operations. These studies aimed to suggested strategies to be considered by the SANDF to achieve its gender transformation mandate.

This chapter will highlight the fact that, despite all the gender equality policies and initiatives, women are still underrepresented in the combat environment of the SANDF. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide explanations for this underrepresentation.

6.1 Gender Transformation in the South African Workforce

For the first time ever in 2019 women represented 50 percent of the Ministers in the South African Cabinet. This means that government is setting the example and is serious to achieve its constitutional mandate on gender transformation. It is sad that the same example is not replicated in the general workplace in South Africa. The current research found that gender imbalances are still present today, globally. The Constitution and legislation such as the Employment Equity Act (1998) is clear on government's commitment to promote equality in the workplace and society. This research found that although these high-level policies are in place, women are marginalised in the workplace that is still dominated by men. Women must put in extra effort to be taken seriously and work so much harder than men to be regarded worth a specific position. The deduction made from the research is that these policies are approved, and feedback is provided on the progress of gender transformation (tick boxes) however, there are no enforcement of the legislative requirements to establish accountability in the workplace. If there are no strong enforcement agencies that will hold the private and public sector accountable, the gender gap will remain.

6.2 International Trends

The SANDF is not the only country struggling to achieve its gender transformation mandate. First world countries such as the USA and the UK are struggling to achieve gender transformation in the combat environment as there are still conflicting arguments for and against women in the military, especially the combat environment. Although the countries quoted in this research opened the combat environment to women, they are still underrepresented. A country such as the USA did not have a choice to open the combat environment to women as they no longer attract enough men to join the military. A similar situation occurred in Norway and therefore compulsory

military service was instituted. The Norwegian military recognised the changing battlefield and established the “Jegertroppen”. This research found that this initiative is a success as in an all women environment they had to compete against one another and become skilled soldiers on their own account, not relying on male soldiers to help them. During this research, no evidence could be found that they have been deployed outside the Norwegian borders to test this idea and leaves the question “*why have they not been deployed as yet*”? The countries quoted in this research recognised the value of women in the military and that the battlefield has changed. They have made efforts to change policies, including women in the combat environment but women are still not equally represented in the military and the combat corps. The question then remains, “*why are women not equally represented in the military worldwide*”? The evidence collected in this research keeps on pointing to patriarchy as the main obstacle women encounter and that the military remains “*a man’s world*”.

6.3 Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation is not a new concept and has been part of society for centuries. According to society some jobs can only be done by men, such as hunting and fighting, and the caregiver jobs are the responsibility of women. Society’s perception has not changed much as indicated by this research. Governments acknowledge the fact that women play a prominent role in society and should be afforded equal representation in the workplace. Stats SA (2017) indicated that women in South Africa makes up 51 percent of the total population however, they are still underrepresented in most leadership positions and occupations regarded “*men only*”. Heinecken’s quote (2016, p. 101) that “*The SANDF has a warrior-like military culture, where masculinity is embedded in each and every layer of the military: in the training, the culture, the uniform and the technology*” is a typical example of occupational segregation. Previous research by Van Breda (2010), Van Breda (2016) and Colman and Heinecken (n.d) describes the challenges women in the military experience but none of them could provide a strategy on how to uncouple masculinity from the military.

6.4 Physical Differences

Over the last few decades, the battlefield has changed drastically and, in most operations, no longer requires hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. This research has found that in some instances physical strength is still a requirement to fight the enemy. However, these kinds of operations will most likely be executed by specialist environments such as Special Forces. The Artillery Formation, another specialist environment, had a scientifically test battery constructed on the physical demands of the posts profiles that requires high physical demands. These tests suggested that it was non-discriminatory to gender, age, and skill. The tests revealed that women did not have sufficient body strength to lift and carry a 44 kg ammunition box. The test battery was found to be effective, and individuals are selected against these criteria for the Artillery Corps. The implementation of the battery test on functional courses and as selection criteria since 2010 could have contributed to the increase of female representation in the Artillery Corps as indicated in Table 4.

None of the sources quoted in this research contest the fact that a women's physical capability differs from that of a man. Unfortunately, this argument came up too many a time in the research by authors and interviewees to ignore it. I support the arguments of Browne (2012), Donnelly (2016) and Heinecken (2017) that by training women in the same conditions as men, they will not perform on the same level as men and by trying to do so put women under immense pressure to prove they are competent and in the end, it results in injuries. Are there females who will not pass the physical requirements during training? Yes. Are there also males who will not pass the physical requirements during training? Yes, and herein lies the problem that if a man fails it is not seen in the same light as a woman.

The SANDF is not in favour of gender-segregated training, arguing that men and women serve side by side in operations and will not consider separate training.

There is no argument against the military requiring a certain standard of physical strength and fitness to successfully execute its operations. The question is, *"is the current physical standards and requirements still applicable*

in the new theatre of operations”? Why should any soldier lift and carry a 44kg ammunition box if technology has developed to such an extent that it can be done by other means? Is it not maybe time that the physical requirements be re-evaluated for everyone in the military?

6.6 Psychological Differences

As in the case of physical differences between men and women, there are psychological differences as well. Men are aggressive and risk takers whilst women are care givers and it is this behaviour that concern many of the interviewees that women are afraid and cannot handle combat situations. From the research it is evident that women would prefer not to take risks as they are thinking about their families and loved ones should any harm come to her in the operation. It is a perception from men in the reports that women do not have the psychological strength to stand their ground and fight the enemy.

The other side is also argued by authors such as Culler, Crawford, and Eitelberg (2000) and Sheppard (2007) that women are mentally stronger than men and in an operation a person who is mentally stable and emotionally disciplined is preferred to someone that is violent, compromising the operation and violating human rights. Women have different skills; they approach problems from a different angle and bring different perspectives to the table. The fact that women are seen as “softer” than men does not mean they do not have excellent leadership qualities and approach problems differently. The skills women bring to the military can be used in peace support operations where a softer approach is required in dealing with the population and negotiations.

6.6 Equipment and Clothing

Equipment and clothing, especially combat equipment and clothing, have been a contentious issue in the SANDF for many years. The intention of combat equipment is to protect soldiers from injuries or to minimise injuries. However, the SANDF equipment and clothing are outdated, and the SANDF could not keep up with international developments due to budget restrictions. Clothing has been designed for the South African climate and terrain, not for deployment to forests and torrential rains of the DRC. The protective

equipment was designed for men and has not been updated since the early 1990s.

The fact that the SANDF does not have maternity wear for its female soldiers is a concern as these women continue to command a position and when she is in civilian clothes it affects the legitimacy of her position.

In the research it was found that the physical abilities of women were questioned by men because they cannot handle heavy equipment and they must be assisted in carrying their backpacks as it is too heavy. In some of the reports women also indicated that the equipment is too heavy for them to handle. This raised a red flag as these women were supposed to be trained and familiarised with such equipment. If they cannot handle such equipment, they should not be deployed and not be operating such equipment as it will compromise the operation and put the rest of the crew's lives in danger.

6.7 Policy Position

6.7.1 International, Continental and Regional Transformation Policies

The UN policies on gender equality were adopted 19 years ago and remained the focus of the UN to eliminate gender-based violence, protect the rights of women against discrimination, and promote the employment of women in the peace process. During the Security Council meeting on 11 April 2019, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, emphasised that the number of women in peacekeeping operations had to increase in the future hence, the implementation of the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy earlier in 2019 (UNSC, 2019). The initial UNSCR 1325 remains the foundation policy in dealing with issues concerning women's equal and full participation in the peace and security process. All additional policies and strategies that subsequently followed just strengthen the validity of the UNSCR 1325 and are an indication of the commitment of the UN in achieving its objectives. The Secretary-General also pleaded with troop contributing countries to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations. The current deployment of women in peacekeeping operations is 13 percent, and the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy aims for a 35 percent in 2028. Although the UN policies are sound and their request to increase the number of women is supported by

actual achievements in these conflict areas, it is still the prerogative of the troop-contributing nations to increase their numbers, and if for whatever reason they cannot support the request of the UN, the targets set in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy will not be met. In the SANDF, the main reasons for not increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations is the low number of deployable women in the combat corps, the current economic climate of South Africa and the reduced budget of the SANDF.

The AU adopted the policies and resolutions of the UN and tailor made them for the African continent. The words of Romi Sigsworth (2015, p. 1) that there is *“recognition of how far we have come; but frustration at how little, really, has been achieved”* reflects what is happening not only in the UN but also in Africa. If troop-contributing countries do not support the Gender Parity Strategy adopted by the AU or do not have the resources to implement the strategy, it will not succeed, and gender inequality will continue. According to Sigsworth (2015), more women are deployed in peacekeeping operations and more women are protected by these resolutions than at any other time in history; however, women still earn less than men do, are still being discriminated against, and are still suffering physical abuse. The AU faces the same challenges as the UN in that they do not have any power to enforce gender equality policies on any of the member states, and with the Gender Parity Strategy requiring an increase of women representation in peacekeeping operations, it is unlikely that AU member states will achieve that target by 2028. It is also true that in some member states, these policies were in place, but the actual implementation of these policies are not visible, and no amount of money put into such efforts would achieve long-term sustainable effects.

It is Sigsworth's (2015) opinion that, as in the case of the UN and the AU, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has made little progress on gender equality objectives. Out of the 16 SADC member states, 11 undertook to change their constitutions to address gender equality (Sigsworth, 2015). According to Sigsworth (2015), 11 of the SADC member states have laws on domestic violence; however, gender-based violence remains the biggest threat against women's rights in Southern Africa and nullifies any successes made towards women's rights. SADC has made positive strides in

ensuring the design and approval of gender equality policies, but the biggest challenge the SADC has is that it has no authority to hold any member state accountable for not executing what they have published as policy. Discrimination against women in Southern Africa continues to be a harsh reality, and much still needs to be done to improve the situation of discrimination and violence against women. The SADC Gender Policy does not specifically address the participation and utilisation of women in peacekeeping operations.

6.7.2 South African policies

Section 9 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) confirms that all are equal before the law, and the protection of people against unfair discrimination based on sex and gender is enshrined. The Constitution (1996) still makes provision for the establishment of state institutions to strengthen and protect the rights of its people. The Constitution (1996) is clear on the promotion of gender equality and that it will protect and defend it at any cost. The Constitution (1996) does not provide any targets in terms of transformation for the SANDF.

6.7.3 The absence of SANDF policies

The White Paper on Defence (1996) acknowledges the right of women to form part of the military forces and to serve in all ranks, positions, and the combat environment; however, no targets or percentages are quoted. On the other hand, the Defence Act 42 (2002) does not address gender equality or the representation of women in the SANDF at all. The only reference made is towards the Chief of the SANDF who must ensure the development of a non-racial, non-sexist, and non-discriminatory culture in the SANDF. The Defence Review, 2015 (DOD, 2015b, pp. 0-7) states that *“the Defence Force will strive to be seen as a representative, equitable and gender-aligned national asset”*. The three main documents that should guide the development of strategy and policy in the SANDF are silent on gender equality and the representation of women on all the levels of the SANDF.

Positive strides have been made in terms of transformation in the SANDF since 1994. However, challenges remain in certain occupational groups, ranks and

on defence civilian levels, as well as in gender and disability mainstreaming. Reforms are required in career management processes and practices to ensure that the principles of equity, equality of opportunity, and non-discrimination are cherished and adhered to in all HR policies. This argument is emphasised in the reports of Wilén and Heinecken (2018a and 2018b) and Van Breda (2016), namely that although the numbers of female representation in the SANDF have increased significantly since 1994, they were merely tick boxes and not actually represented in all environments, including the combat musterings.

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the DOD of 2008 is not prescriptive in setting any targets to be achieved. However, the Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the Financial Year 2019/20 are prescriptive in the attainment of the national target of 50% in the work environment. The revised Transformation Management Policy of 2018 was updated, it is no longer prescriptive in setting targets for the combat environments and requires the services to determine their own targets in terms of females serving in the combat environment. This may impact on the SANDF's gender transformation mandate as the services gender achievements will roll up in the corporate achievement of the SANDF. However, from the research, it became evident that the SA Army does not have an approved policy on transformation, and the draft policy does not address the specific targets for women in the combat environment and how to turn the gender deficit around.

The higher-order departmental policies are not specific about the achievement of set targets regarding gender equality, but the annual planning and budgeting guidelines issued to services and divisions are clear. An aspect that may become a challenge in the future is the target of 40 percent in the NAP. The SANDF could not achieve the current gender targets expected by government; how will it deal with new targets in the future?

6.7.4 Combat Profile Policies

The rapid development of technology, even in the military, requires that standardised combat profiles be developed to ensure not only the safety of the human operator of such technology but also to protect the humans around

such an operator against misuse of such technology. The kind of technology operated in the SANDF is not standard equipment found in other state departments; therefore, extreme care should be taken in identifying persons who will operate such equipment, as military equipment is designed to kill.

6.7.4.1 Infantry

Owing to the absence of a combat profile for infantry soldiers, the combat profile for infantry soldiers could not be analysed. This is a matter of concern as there is no formal criteria against which the Infantry can identify suitable candidates for the Infantry Corps.

6.7.4.2 Armour

The combat profile designed for the SA Armour Corps is used during BMT in the final selection of candidates to the SA Armour Corps. According to Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020), the success rate of selecting recruits only at the end of BMT was much higher, since the recruits were physically stronger and fitter than on the day, they attended the Selection Board proceedings. It is also important to note that should a recruit be injured during the selection process, the SANDF could face civil claims that could harm the image the SANDF wants to portray as “*an employer of choice*”. The SA Armour Corps has incorporated combat training in its functional training curriculum to ensure that at the end of functional training, the recruits will be able to operate the armour equipment according to military safety standards. It is unfortunate that the body composition required for the SA Armour Corps will exclude members that are too short or not able to lift 45 kg; however, the SA Armour Corps makes provision for such cases, and these members are redeployed in a supporting role within the SA Armour Corps where the specific physical attributes are not required.

6.7.4.3 Artillery

Based on the evidence provided by the Artillery Corps, proper research went into determining of the combat profile required by the Artillery Corps to operate specific equipment. The data gathered during the evaluations with ERGOTECH were analysed to identify the critical requirements and limitations

for a gunner. The test battery was drafted based on the typical physical demands for the artillery post profiles. The limits were set based upon specific requirements for the crew. The tests developed for the Artillery Corps were non-discriminatory for gender, and the test results were incorporated into the functional training of the Artillery to ensure that all recruits were receiving the same training and to build their strength to operate the artillery equipment after successful completion of their training. The biggest challenge for the females was the inability to lift and carry the 44 kg ammunition box.

6.8 Training Requirements

It is required of members of the SANDF to receive appropriate training before they are considered for any force employment operations. The SANDF is extremely specific in the training requirements of all its members, from BMT to functional and developmental courses. The SANDF participates internationally with other militaries to benchmark training trends and to ensure the SANDF stays abreast of international developments, as the successful execution of missions is the result of excellent training.

From the research there is a concern that women do not have the same physical attributes than men and by reducing training standards to accommodate women is not accepted as it could create the perception that women are less prepared. The general feeling gathered from the research is that soldiers need to trust one another and will do so if they know everyone is trained and can be depended on in live threatening situations.

6.8.1 Physical training, sport, and recreation (PTSR)

The physical training standards set for SANDF soldiers are to ensure that, after entering the military, soldiers are gradually brought to the required fitness level of the SANDF to be able to execute the mandate of the SANDF namely, to protect the sovereignty of SA. Therefore, the physical training presented during training does not prepare soldiers to execute their core business, but only to enhance fitness levels. The reasons behind the different sets of rules for males and females during fitness tests could not be determined; however, the only explanation that could be found was that the SADF was a male-only environment and when they started to include females in the military, they had

to accommodate them. Therefore, a different set of rules was designed, as these women did not participate in the combat corps at the time and their training was also done at a different unit (a female-only unit, South African Army Women College in George, Western Cape).

According to Harry (interview, 26 March 2020), the different sets of rules in physical training were applied internationally, as fitness tests must ensure that soldiers achieve a basic standard of fitness. The SANDF DODI SG NO 00006/2000, Edition No 1, has not been amended since 2000 and irrespective of age and gender, were evaluated on different targets. A concern is that during an operation everyone is expected to execute their duties and then there is no differentiation between age or gender, why then have different sets of rules in training.

6.8.2 Functional (Corps) Training Policies

Functional training is designed specifically for each corps to ensure that military members are trained specifically for the job for which they have been recruited. This training is military specific and consists of practical and theoretical aspects that will enable the member on completion of functional training to do the specific job at a specific level. Functional training is coupled to promotion, and in most instances, these courses qualify the member to progress to the next higher rank.

Based on the interview with Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), it was confirmed that the Infantry Corps functional training did not differentiate between men and women, and Eugene (interview, 25 March 2020) supported her statement. Similarly, Willy (interview, 20 March 2020) confirmed that the Armour Corps training did not differentiate between men and women, and they were trained on the same standards.

Inputs indicated that the training programme followed by the Artillery Formation at the stage offered inadequate functional conditioning and therefore limited the optimisation of performance of Artillery Formation personnel and further contributed to the turnover rate of women in the Artillery Corps. Additionally, the current SANDF fitness test lacks specific tests associated with the task requirements facing the Artillery Formation personnel. Therefore, an Artillery

Formation functional conditioning programme and fitness test was developed based on inputs from Artillery Formation personnel and principles, and consideration of functional conditioning programmes (Lombard, 2011). The functional conditioning programme was included in the Artillery functional training programme and has contributed to the increase of women in the Artillery Corps as depicted in Table 4.

6.9 Women's Leadership Challenges

Women must face other challenges as well when they join the military. They must not only compete against men for a job, but they must also overcome challenges such as patriarchy and sexual harassment, to name only a few. In most instances, these challenges become the enemy of women trying to build a career in the military. These other challenges were some of the reasons why some women left the military and could be the reason why they remustered from the combat to the support environment.

6.9.1 Patriarchy

It should again be emphasised that the military was formed by men, for men. The composition of the military has become progressively diversified; however, the macho culture is still prominent. The results from the report compiled in 1999 (DOD, 1999) and the report by Van Breda (2010), 11 years apart, show that male participants could not distinguish between private beliefs and public perceptions, and this had serious implications for transformation in the DOD, especially regarding women serving in the combat environment. Even with the numerous interventions in the SANDF to educate all its members in the military, the reality was that not much has changed since women integrated with the SANDF. The necessary tick boxes were marked by the leader group that transformation targets had been met, but the actual transformation of the SANDF did not materialise, and the mindset of specifically men, and some women, had not changed much since integration. The belief was still that a woman must stay at home and look after the children, and the man was the head of the house.

The SANDF propagate to be "*Gender Blind*" but that does not mean it practice gender equality. The SANDF and its men accepts women in the combat

environment on the condition that they become like *“them”*, men, and if they do not accept their terms, women are directed to the typical female jobs. Women’s differences are not accommodated, and it is expected of them to achieve the same physical standards as men. There are women that persevered by accepting the military (masculine) culture and systems and being made role models. However, there is a young generation of women out there that are educated and empowered that have different views and ideas and will not accept the current patriarchal system of the SANDF. Unless the SANDF is *“regendered”*, changing the masculine systems and culture of the SANDF, the number of women in the combat environment will remain low, women will not feel welcome, and it will impact the SANDF’s gender representation mandate.

6.9.2 Leadership

According to Kapp (2002) the military is known to resist change, and the SANDF was no different when transformation management was implemented, and gender equality was to be adhered to. Kapp (2002) is also of the opinion that militaries can change and adapt when required to; therefore, leaders play an extremely important role in the success of implementing changes such as gender transformation. The challenge females face with patriarchy are the same with executing command over men. The fact that so many men have not yet made the mind shift that women could be effective in command positions makes it difficult for these females to perform their duties. However, Van Breda (2016) is of the opinion that it is not only a South African phenomenon; female soldiers experience it worldwide.

From the research female interviewees are of the opinion that when women are promoted into leadership positions they are not relating to other women and become one of the *“men”* and forget that there are women soldiers enduring hardships because they are women.

6.9.3 Career management

The latest promulgation of the lieutenant generals was a good example of the lack of career progression available to women in the SANDF. There were 34 female major generals in the SANDF, and not one was considered for a

lieutenant general post. The questions then were why they had not been promoted; if they did not qualify for the post, and if not, what the requirements of the post were. In the SANDF, once an officer reaches the rank of colonel, the officer can be appointed in any post, as the training at that level is no longer corps specific. Men were still advantaged not only in terms of promotion, but also regarding acceptance on promotion courses, which resulted in women not being considered for promotion because they were not course qualified at the time, but their male colleagues were.

The data collected, as depicted in Table 4, show that the female representation in the Infantry, Armour, and Artillery Corps has grown since 2014; not according to the rate expected by headquarters, but it was increasing. There might be several reasons for this increase, but the main reason was that more females were joining the military merely to have a job, to be able to secure a steady income and provide for their families.

Placing women in the combat environment without their voluntary request resulted in them changing their mustering within two years after joining the SANDF. This is a concern to the SANDF, as the focus is to retain as many females as possible in the combat environment. By re-mustering to the support environment, these females lose their seniority; in other words, they must start at the bottom again. The costs incurred by the SANDF to train a member for two years in the combat environment and to re-train a member in the new corps is enormous, and in the current economic climate of the country and the budget cuts the SANDF had over the last four years, it is not cost effective to train these members in a new functional environment.

6.9.4 Women in the mission area – Physical and psychological capabilities

The SANDF deploys externally as well as internally to execute the mandate of the SANDF namely, to protect the sovereignty of South Africa. Therefore, it is crucial that the soldiers identified for these deployments are trained and physically capable to perform the task. If soldiers that did not meet the criteria are deployed, it can affect the success of operations and eventually contribute to the SANDF not achieving its mandate.

6.9.4.1 Female hygiene

It is to be accepted that the female body functions different to that of a man, and one of the differences is menstruation. Initially, menstruation was a factor to be considered when deploying women to the operational area, but in the course of time women have figured out how to adapt in the operational area, and menstruation is no longer a major issue, according to the SANDF. There are still some concerns that there are not enough facilities for females to maintain personal hygiene, and in some instances, women do not make provision for the possibility of menstruating during operations. The fact that the women “*accepted*” the challenges with regards to female hygiene does not make the situation acceptable. One aspect that came out in the research was that women used menstruation as an excuse to be booked off not to participate in operations.

6.9.5 Social challenges

Most women in the SANDF have families to look after, and it is difficult to separate the role of the soldier and the role the women play in the family; therefore, women find it extremely difficult to balance these two roles. One may argue that men have the same roles as women, but in most instances, women look after the children or parents, and when she deploys, these responsibilities are not transferred automatically to the husband or partner. The situation is exacerbated when the woman is single and support systems are not readily available or far away from where she is working. Therefore, women can be affected negatively when she returns after long periods of absence to re-integrate with her family and must deal with the combat-related stress that she incurred during deployment.

6.9.6 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is still a reality, and it is a pity that some women in the SANDF hide their mistakes behind accusing men of sexual harassment. Instances such as this prevented women who had been sexually harassed to step forward, and on the other hand, it might create a situation where men would refuse to work with woman, afraid of being accused of sexual harassment. Reporting of sexual harassment remains a challenge in the

SANDF, as females believe that they will be ending their careers by reporting such incidents. The system used during external operations to report sexual harassment seemed to be a success; however, the larger deployments are along the South African borders, internally, and currently there is no system in place where women can go to report incidents of sexual harassment. The MOD&MV did appoint a Task Team to investigate sexual harassment in the SANDF however, the results of this Task Team will be made available at a later stage and was not available for consideration by this research. The establishment of a hotline by the MOD & MV to report sexual harassment cases in January 2020 is a step in the right direction. I am looking forward to a report from the Task Team that this system is contributing to a reduction of sexual harassment cases.

6.10 Recruitment Challenges

From the interviews conducted with the personnel at D HR Acq, SA Army Force Prep, and the Infantry, Armour and Artillery formations, requirements existed to institute a selection process for the different corps to ensure that the selected candidates met not only the overall requirements of the SANDF in terms of qualifications and medical profiles but also the combat profile of the different corps. The current recruitment process merely confirms that a member is G1K1 and does not match the candidate against the combat profile, the actual job he/she must do. Post-specific requirements were absent in the advertisements for the recruitment of MSDS; it was not applied during the initial recruitment process and final appointments.

Although job requirements do exist in the SANDF, it became evident during the research that the current members executing the recruitment process were not aware of these requirements and were merely chasing the race and gender targets.

From the reports by Du Toit (n.d.), Du Toit (2013), Van Breda (2010), Van Breda (n.d.), Visagie (2017), and Wilén and Heinecken (2018a), combat profiles were ignored, and women were ridiculed by male counterparts when they were physically and emotionally unable to do their work. The statistics in Table 6 show that females re-muster from the combat environment within the

first two years after joining the SANDF. The reasons varied from members not being properly informed what the Infantry, Armour or Artillery Corps entails and finding themselves in the wrong environment to members being injured and could no longer do the work of a combat soldier.

The number of recruits (six) that indicated they had joined a specific corps not out of own choice was not significant; however, the evidence is there that there are incidents where recruits are merely allocated to a specific corps because the targets of one corps already had been reached and another corps needed more recruits. Nineteen of the recruits indicated that they had chosen a specific corps, but after BMT and busy with functional training, they realised they had made a mistake and would change to the support corps once they were granted a contract. The six members that indicated they had been allocated to a specific corps also indicated that they had not been briefed on the functions of their new corps.

Although a presentation was made before members decided on the specific corps they would like to join, the recruits did not understand the military language and therefore decided based on a lack of information, hearsay, or for the thrill of "*handling big guns*" as one MSDS member indicated in the questionnaire.

It was also determined that the young ones join the military because there is no work outside, and it is no longer a calling; it is merely a job that pays the bills and puts food on the table.

6.11 HR separation

HR Separation is not one of the reasons why women are underrepresented in the combat environment. It is addressed here as I could not obtain sufficient information to argue reasons why women in the combat environment are exiting the SANDF. The availability of the questionnaires will enable the SANDF to act when the questionnaires reveal a challenge in a specific unit if for instance, several people (not only women) resign quoting discrimination. I believe the exit questionnaire is not a user-friendly document and therefore a reason for the non-adherence of policy by the members and the unit personnel officers. With the few exit questionnaires of female soldiers in the combat

environment that could be assessed, only one indicated that she had left because of no promotion and being too long in her rank. The rest of the reasons in the questionnaires were generic, and I concur with Sandberg (2018) that the exit questionnaires could not determine a trend if females were leaving because of poor career management, sexual harassment, or gender discrimination, it is inconclusive.

6.12 Conclusions

This study explored the reasons why the SANDF could not achieve a 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment and therefore did not achieve its gender representation mandate. During the analysis of the data collected patriarchy stood out to be the biggest challenge women face in the military. Some of the symptoms of patriarchy visible in the SANDF is that the leadership of the SANDF is predominantly male, policies are not gender neutral and the continuous sexual harassment of women.

Although the military has become more accessible to women it remains a male dominated environment and they feel threatened should a woman enter that space and exhibit the same skills and qualities as a man. This masculine environment with its masculine systems and culture creates a dilemma for women that try to make the military a career. Growing up in a society where specific roles are allocated to men and women, makes it difficult to try and change such a masculine environment. It is expected of women to *“fit in”* or leave and do feminine kind of jobs. This have led to women adapting to the masculine system and culture instead of exhibiting unique leadership skills to try and change the military. Women find it difficult to show appropriate leadership in the military and finding strategies that will work to change the stereotyping of women. Women placed in leadership positions often forget that they were subordinates at one stage and suffered gender discrimination. The SANDF has not *“regendered”*

itself as it is still associated as a *“man’s world”* and women must adapt to these masculine standards, systems, and cultures.

The chances of the SANDF changing its masculine image overnight is highly unlikely. For the SANDF to change, the behaviour of its leader group must

change, and they must make a commitment and demonstrate that the organisation is serious on achieving its gender transformation mandate.

The policies on gender transformation and protecting women from discrimination are in place and are well articulated; however, the UN, AU and SADC policies cannot be forced on any country and serve merely as a guideline to the respective countries. The South African policies are very explicit on what government expects in the execution of achieving gender equality and government sets the example by having 50 percent females ministers in its cabinet. The concern of all the role players is that there is no governing body in place to enforce these requirements and to make an example of those not achieving the set policies. The challenge on gender equality is a global phenomenon and not only in the military but in all workplaces.

The SANDF claims to be "*Gender Blind*" and have large numbers of women in the military however, it does not mean the SANDF has achieved its gender representation mandate.

Being deployed thousands of kilometres away from one's loved ones is not an easy task and added to this difficulty is the fact that women have dual responsibilities being a soldier executing the mission, required to protect the sovereignty of the country, but also as the caretaker whether she is a mother or looking after her parents. In balancing these responsibilities, women may reach a point and succumb to the pressure and either re-muster or leave the organisation especially when the recruitment process was not managed properly to afford the women the opportunity to join a corps of their own choice.

As women are busy building a career in the combat environment, they must deal not only with the physical and psychological requirements in the combat environment, but also with aspects such as men not respecting their positions in the military and trying to undermine them, sexual harassment, ill-fitting equipment and clothes not protecting them in life-threatening situations, and stigmatisation that she is only in the military for a job and will exchange sexual favours to be promoted, accepted on course, and even to be protected from other men.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The central research question was how the SANDF attended to its gender representation mandate? This study has shown that the SANDF has failed in implementing measures that are critical to change the organisational culture and create an environment where gender transformation could take place.

Gender transformation is not a priority within the SANDF, and this is clear from the study that women are not equally represented; the absence of top senior female officers, women in leadership positions are challenged by male subordinates, continuous sexual harassment of women, insufficient provision for female hygiene in deployment areas and equipment and clothing not accommodating the female posture.

Progress has been made in terms of gender equality internationally, continentally, regionally, nationally, and in the SANDF; however, the progress is slow, and the agreements, policies, and resolutions published are not enough to empower women and ensure that they are treated equally. The challenge remains that although there are policies and prescripts guiding the equal treatment of women, their actual implementation is not visible. These policies are silent on gender targets. These targets are left to formations to decide on the ratio's resulting in a skew picture at the top once all the targets and achievements are rolled up for evaluation.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the integration of women continues to be the official policy of the SANDF. Within the SANDF, the groundwork was laid in 1998 when women could join the combat environment, and some progress has been made to accommodate women in the combat environment. In many instances, the progress is not satisfactory; however, the SANDF holds on to these small victories.

The SANDF is labelled to be a masculine organisation with deep-rooted patriarchal values, and it requires strong leadership to "*regender*" itself however, the current leadership grew up in this masculine organisation and it

will be difficult to change their mindset to bring about gender transformational change. The top leaders of the SANDF sets the example on how gender transformation should be embraced and included into the military and it is this example and commitment that filters through to the lowest levels of command as it is these lower-level commanders that can influence the attitudes towards women.

The SANDF claiming to be “*Gender Blind*” does not bring about gender equality as women still have to accept and conform to masculine systems and culture resulting in women being “*othered*”. Too many women in the SANDF suffer sexual assaults from their male counterparts which is unacceptable and is one of the aspects that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency if it wants to bring about gender equality. Women in the combat environment must become like a man, act according to these masculine rules, and become less feminine to be excepted by male colleagues and the SANDF policies are silent on the attributes of a good female combatant.

In most instances the military no longer execute operations the way it did by fighting hand to hand combat as the face of the battlefield has changed, the way in which wars are fought and rapid technology developments. As we can see this creates an opportunity for the SANDF to reassess its mandate, policies and training and appreciate qualities women can bring to the military to make it more effective with the aim to achieve its gender representation mandate.

The physical and psychological strength of women continues to be questioned. It is clear in the research that there are no arguments against the fact that the bodies of men and women are different and that men have more strength and can endure more physical hardship than women. However, there are women that do have the physical capabilities to compete with men and then there are men that also fail as they lack the required physical strength, but the spotlight is on the women that fail and not the men. In a “*regendered*” SANDF there should be one set of physical standards for all soldiers irrespective of gender or age, let the best person get the job.

The Artillery Corps and Special Forces adjusted their training policies, not lowering their standards, to focus on functional training that prepares all soldiers to execute the job they have been trained to do and to execute successful operations. In the Artillery Corps this adjustment realised in a steady growth of female soldiers however, in Special Forces not one female soldier has qualified as an operator since the adjustments. The question therefore remains if the criteria set by Special Forces is too high or should they investigate other alternatives such as Norway with their 'Jegertroppen' if the SANDF indeed needs female Special Forces Operators?

Of the three combat environments in the SA Army, there is only one female that has progressed to a Major General's rank. There are senior female officers that can be considered for promotion to Colonels and then to Brigadier Generals. The exclusion of women in senior ranks in these corps could be contributed to the deep-rooted patriarchy culture of the SANDF and a lack of trust in their abilities. Women at the lower command levels are reasonably represented within the SANDF but when moving up in the command hierarchy their representation becomes significantly lesser.

We can see that there are several issues that contributes to the underrepresentation of women in the SANDF:

The careers of women are put on hold through their childbearing years whilst their male colleagues continue doing courses, become qualified and is ready when promotion opportunities arise.

The combat uniform of the SANDF has been designed for men and did not take into consideration the changes in the demographics. The current budgetary restrictions force the SANDF to issue women with ill-fitting uniform and equipment that can be life threatening and resulting in injuries. The correct uniform and equipment are designed to allow soldiers greater mobility and protection when executing operations.

When troops are healthy, they are positive and motivated. Staying healthy is an individual's responsibility however, the SANDF is responsible to provide the necessary support for soldiers to remain healthy. The SANDF deploys SAMHS and its support structures to the

mission areas. Deploying women in the mission area brings its own challenges and can have a strong impact on her well-being. Women struggle to maintain personal hygiene habits in the mission area and can lead to negative health outcomes.

Sexual harassment remains one of the biggest enemies for women in the combat environment. It is evident from the research that the impression remains that the military is no place for a woman and if she progresses, she “*slept her way to the top*”. Should she want to make the combat environment her career, she must know that along the line she will be confronted with this kind of allegations and unwanted attentions and must learn how to deal with it, not ignoring it. The SANDF do have mechanisms in place where sexual harassment can be reported however, to date it deemed not to be efficient and to protect the victims of sexual harassment.

The recruitment processes and policies play an important role in ensuring the increase of female representation in the combat environment. From the research it is evident that not enough attention has been paid to recruiting women against the combat profiles of the respective musterings which meant that the right person for the right post is not met. Recruitment policies are in place, but the application of these policies is questionable. The recruitment target at entry levels for females were adhered to when one considers the overall picture of the SANDF and the SA Army. The challenge remains in the combat environment where the achievement of a 60:40 male to female ratio at entry level could be met only by the Armour and Artillery Corps (Table 3), whereas the Infantry Corps, the biggest in the SA Army, could achieve only a 70:30 ratio.

Although the number of recruits that were allocated to a corps other than their own choice was not significant, it is a concern that the recruitment office of the SANDF even considered allocating a member to a different corps. This means that proper planning in terms of targets for the specific corps was absent or not executed properly. To place a member in a corps other than the chosen corps

could lead to catastrophic situations, especially in combat environments where members are trained with live ammunition.

Gender biases among male members regarding the ability of women to serve in the combat environment will not disappear overnight, and preferential treatment of women in terms of promotion and acceptance on courses will affect the credibility of women who are serious about making the SANDF their career. It further affects the mission readiness and constitutional mandate of the SANDF when women are recruited merely to provide them with jobs, and they do not fit the combat profile of a specific post.

Evidently, some female soldiers have the physical and mental capability to execute and lead in combat operations; however, the main concern voiced by most of the interviewees was the sustainability of having women in the combat corps. Can the SANDF afford to continue pushing and chasing targets at the cost of a soldiers' career, and are these women willing to live with the consequences of their decisions, such as physical and psychological disorders?

7.2 Recommendations

The outcome of the research suggests that the SANDF "*regender*" the organisation in terms of its mandate, policies, structures, systems and standards. This research did not address how the SANDF can "*regender*" itself and it is suggested that this becomes a research on its own.

To "*regender*" the SANDF is not going to happen overnight but in the meantime small changes to the current situation can be made to lighten the burden of women in the combat environment. The recommendations made are for possible consideration to be implemented by the SA Army and the specialist environments within the SANDF, as these are the environments that were identified that could be enhanced to assist the SANDF to support government's drive on gender equality and could make the implementation of the NAP much easier once it is approved.

7.2.1 Policies

The call to increase the number of female soldiers in the combat environment remains a high priority on the politicians' check list and puts additional stress on the SANDF to adhere to a 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment. Any target should be considered carefully in terms of the consequences it may have. The research has revealed that not one country mentioned in this report could achieve their gender representation targets.

It should also be considered to determine a corporate target and ensure the services adhere to this target. By allowing the services to determine their gender target will result in the SANDF not achieving its gender transformation mandate, as the targets will roll up to corporate level.

The SANDF should rather exclude the combat environment from adhering to gender targets and focus on the gaps in the recruitment, training, and career management processes to achieve a policy of best practices for equal opportunities.

The SA Army should consider a Transformation Management policy that speaks to the SA Army requirements specifically.

Services and CDTM to monitor gender targets more closely, as the current focus is mainly on race, which the SANDF has achieved, but the gender targets were forgotten and ticked off as a matter of fact.

7.2.1.1 Combat Profile

The SANDF has policies on the design and management of combat profiles in place. These policies have been designed with the assistance of specialists and members in the SANDF. It is my opinion that the problem does not lie with the policies but rather the lack of implementation and execution of these policies. During the research, it was determined that the combat profiles had not been used during the recruitment process of the SANDF. The SA Armour and Artillery formations confirmed that they use these profiles only after BMT when they select members for their functional training. The SA Infantry Formation does not have an approved combat profile, which raises the concern as to which criteria were used to select recruits for the Infantry Corps. The

following recommendations are made for consideration in terms of the combat profile:

The Infantry Formation should follow the route the Armour and Artillery formations took with a professional institution, and as ERGOTECH has been contracted by the SANDF, the formation is advised to use ERGOTECH's services to design the combat profile of the infantry soldier.

The SA Army should issue a standardised guideline as to when the combat profile must be used for selecting recruits. As indicated in the research by Dolly (interview, 24 March 2020), the preferred option would be to apply the combat profile tests at the end of BMT, because all recruits would be at the same fitness level, injuries would be minimised, and female soldiers would be better prepared to participate in the selection for the combat environment, as her strength and fitness would have increased.

In terms of weight, height, hip-leg and hip-neck length, these requirements from the combat profiles should be included in the annual MSDS recruitment advertisement. This will ensure that recruits are fully aware of the requirements when applying for selection and that all recruits will be measured against these requirements, irrespective of their gender and corps to which they will be allocated eventually. This will also ensure that the SANDF conforms to transparency.

7.2.1.2 Training

It is expected of a soldier to execute a specific mandate, which is coupled to the successful completion of operations. Therefore, by differentiating between male and female soldiers during training may compromise operations. It should also be noted that even if the same training standards are applied during BMT, there will be men and women who will not pass the combat profile evaluation of the combat environment because, for instance, they may not have the strength to carry the required 45 kg as required. The following

recommendations are made for consideration by DPTSR as the corporate owner of the PTSR policy and to the SA Army in preparing soldiers for employment by Chief Joint Operations (CJ Ops):

The current PTSR policy needs to be revised to ensure that current international trends with regards to physical training is considered.

Physical training must be specific to include strength and endurance training for manual handling. BMT should be used to build the recruits' physical strength over the training period to ensure that they will be able to pass the corps-specific selection; a similar process as followed for selecting Special Force operators.

The current practice in the SANDF to apply different fitness targets during BMT should be reconsidered. It is recommended that during BMT, there should be one training standard, and no differentiation should be made between men and women. This will ensure that the female soldier is at the same fitness level as her male colleague, and she will be on the same fitness level to compete to be selected for the combat environment.

BMT and corps-specific training are the most important training periods in a soldier's life. These training periods in the combat environment are physically and psychologically very demanding, as the output of these training periods results in operational deployment. Therefore, a proper combat profile linked to training is critical, and as already alluded to regarding the Infantry Formation, it should be ensured that a combat profile is designed to ensure the right candidates are selected and they are trained effectively and efficiently for operations.

The possibility of separate BMT from men and women might be a "*wild card*", but it could bear positive results when women must learn to stand on their own feet and not have men around to do things for them. India has such a unit and needs to be followed in the future for feedback on their successes or failures.

7.2.1.3 Recruitment

The SANDF is dependent on the recruitment of the *“right person, for the right post at the right place and at the right time”*. The SANDF requires the right profiled soldier to enable the SANDF to achieve its Constitutional mandate. From the research, it is evident that the military is no longer a profession or a calling; the modern-day soldier just wants a job. It is therefore imperative that the recruitment process of the SANDF is professional and transparent regarding the *“type”* of soldier required. The following recommendations are made to DHR Acq on corporate level and to the SA Army and SAMHS for consideration:

The annual advertisement on the MSDS should be re-assessed critically to include the following:

The required weight, height, hip-leg, and hip-neck length should be mentioned. A generic profile that will suit the combat and the support environment can be generated.

These requirements must be applied as from the initial selection, the year prior to reporting, as well as to the actual intake in January annually. Should a recruit not adhere to anyone of these requirements, he/she should not be considered for further processing into the SANDF. This will prevent recruits reporting in January to be told they no longer fit the required physical profile and returned home. This will also prevent possible claims against the SANDF and grievances.

A psychometric re-evaluation at the end of BMT could be considered to determine the recruit’s mental fitness after the first six months of physical training and hardship. At the end of BMT, the recruit’s physical and academic performance will be known to consider if the member should continue with functional training; currently there is no re-evaluation of the

recruits' mental health at the end of BMT to determine if they can continue to work under harsh and strenuous conditions.

The profiles per mustering on the DOD website as illustrated in Figure 4 for the SA Armour Corps can be expanded for all the corps to include the combat profile.

Serious consideration must be given to designing and implementing a personnel selection tool that is based upon the physical demands of the job.

The recruitment officers should acknowledge the interest of the recruit in a specific mustering. The re-mustering of female soldiers from the combat environment in the first two years of their careers, as depicted in Table 6, is a direct result of being "*dumped*" to a corps in which they have no interest. This practice of chasing numbers should stop, as it reflects poorly on the SANDF when reports are made on the transformation of females in the combat environment.

The Chief of the SA Army may consider a specific male/female entry level target for each formation, and these targets could be based on history. It is evident that the Armour and Artillery Corps have a saturation rate of 60:40, while the Infantry Corps is at 70:30. The overall target per corps also needs to be determined, and the current realities should be considered. Females have been allowed to the combat environment since 1998, and the male to female ratio in the higher ranks and longer serving soldiers includes mainly men. Eventually, continuing with the current recruitment ratio will bring the male to female ratio in the combat environment to at least 70:30, as older and high-ranking soldiers are in the process of retirement.

The SA Army may consider focusing on establishing a larger female leader group by recruiting and training officers and NCOs for combat units, as these female soldiers may encourage more women to join not only the military but also the combat environment. These women are reported on in the media and can be seen as role

models for future female recruits. Female role models and mentors are required to achieve that.

The SA Army in conjunction with Corporate Communication may consider short advertisements of each combat environment that can be advertised on television and other social media platforms.

7.2.2 Women's Leadership Challenges

Although the SANDF has made great progress in transforming the military, it is evident from the research that the progress that was made was mainly in increasing the female representation of soldiers. The latest promotions of lieutenant generals did not include one female. The current opinion of male soldiers is still that the military is a "*man's world*", and the women are "*intruders*".

It is time that men join the battle for gender equality and take the lead, which may change the attitude of men against women in the military.

I agree with Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) regarding educating male warrant officers, as they deal with military discipline and ceremonial aspects at unit level in the SANDF. Some awareness training on how these male warrant officers must treat a woman who accuses them of sexual harassment where they were merely doing their job by rectifying displays of ill-discipline or incorrect dress code must be instituted.

The SANDF should implement stricter controls and consequences for women, irrespective of rank and position, who use their femininity to gain favouritism from men, as well as for men who manipulate or undermine the woman's position.

7.2.3 Contribution to knowledge

Extensive research has been done on women in the military internationally, such as the USA, UK, and other countries in this research. The research focused on the integration of women into the military and the challenges women experienced being utilised in a predominantly masculine environment.

The drive for gender transformation started with the political changes in 1994 and was realised with the integration of statutory and non-statutory forces to

create the SANDF. It is unfortunate that gender transformation in the SANDF has lost its momentum since 1994 and is a mere adherence to policy whilst the environment within the SANDF has not changed much. The number of women in the SANDF has increased to 30 percent, one of the best gender representations globally, and from a distance it looks like the SANDF is achieving its gender transformation mandate and the military is accommodative of female soldiers. Unfortunately, much more needs to be done to create an environment where women feel safe and that they have earned their rightful place in the SANDF. The biggest challenge women face is the patriarchal culture of the SANDF and the expectations to adopt to its masculine culture. The SANDF needs to address its culture, standards, and systems to create a “*gendered*” environment where women feel they can compete on the same level as men, where they feel safe and appreciated for the different skills they bring to the military. Now is the time for the SANDF to stop chasing targets and to get its house in order to provide a “*regendered*” organization to all its members.

The research has indicated that the necessary policies are available and has been updated as recent as 2018 however, policies are only effective when it is implemented, enforced, and monitored and the SANDF lacks the implementation phase. The SANDF requires strong leaders to lead by example; that embraces diversity in the workplace; that will treat subordinates with respect and will not participate or allow sexual misconduct. These kinds of leaders are “*grown*” in the SANDF when they receive the necessary gender transformation education and training during their career to allow for the acknowledgement that women are different from men and brings a different set of skills to the SANDF that can make it more effective. It is the responsibility of the leader group of the SANDF to create that “*gendered*” environment. By allowing women to be “*othered*” opens the opportunities for sexual misconduct, it impacts on discipline and eventually impacts the outcomes of operations.

It is important for the SANDF to train and educate all soldiers on gender transformation throughout their military career however, the SANDF receive recruits that are already grown-ups, coming from different backgrounds. To change these recruits’ attitude and mindset towards women will be challenging

and might not bring about the changes required. The training and education on gender equality should be done from a young age and continued into school so that when the recruits join the SANDF they already know what gender equality means. To address gender equality in the schools will also contribute to the wider society where women will feel they belong.

“When you are in an aeroplane, it does not know whether a man or a woman is sitting in the cockpit. It simply does what it is told to do.” Major Mandisa Mfeka

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Appendix A – MSDS Questionnaire

Participant Information Sheet

I am Rentia Prins and I am a master's student in Management, in the field of Security at Wits University in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I must undertake a research project, and I am investigating representation of women in the South African Military. The aim of this research project is to find out the reasons why the SANDF has not been able to achieve a 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment and to consider the implications for the SANDF's gender transformation target. The title of my research is "Representation of women in the South African Military".

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in answering a questionnaire. This activity will involve answering questions that aims to find out the reason/s why YOU have decided to join a specific corps/mustering and will take around 15 minutes.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The questionnaire will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. The anonymity of all participants is assured and only the combined results will be published.

If you have any questions afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request (optional). If you have any queries, concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone + 27(0)11 717 1408, email [hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za/](mailto:hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za) Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Rentia Prins

Researcher: A.P. Prins, ren3tia@yahoo.com, 082 505 3254

Supervisor: Dr Caryn Abrahams, Caryn.Abrahams@wits.ac.za, 072 148 4851

SECTION 1

Please select the option by drawing a **X** in the empty box which best describes you (do not write in the grey shaded areas and select only one):

Age in Years

18 - 22	
23 -27	

Qualifications

Grade 12	
Tertiary Qualification	

Corps/Mustering

Combat

Infantry		Artillery	
Armour		Air Defence Artillery	

Support

Engineer		Personnel	
Signal		Logistics	
Intelligence		Catering	
Technical			

Did **YOU** select the corps/mustering as indicated above?

Yes	
No	

If **NO** who select it on your behalf?

SECTION 2

Please write your answers in the blocks provided.

Why do you want to join the corps/mustering you have indicated above?

Do you know the functions the corps/mustering you have selected entail?
(Please explain what the main functions are of the corps/mustering you have selected)

Have you been briefed by the Recruitment Office on the different corps/musterings available in the SA Army? YES/NO

Did you do your own research on the corps/mustering you have selected?
YES/NO

SECTION 3

If you have selected the Combat Corps/Mustering, please complete Section 3.

Do you intent to continue your military career in the combat corps/mustering after completion of your MSDS contract? YES/NO

If NO explain.

Thank you very much for your time and participation. I sincerely appreciate it.

Appendix B – Interview Schedule

The following environments have been identified where interviews will be conducted to answer the research questions and possible questions to the interviewees:

Environment to be interviewed	Reason for the interview
Chief Director Transformation Management	To determine where the guideline of 50:50 male female ration in the combat environment emanates from.
	Possible questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you explain where the guideline to achieve a 50:50 male to female ratio in the combat environment comes from? ○ Is there a policy in the DOD that directs the gender ratio within the SANDF?
Director HR Acquisition (DOD and SA Army)	Reason for the interview
	To determine the recruitment process followed in the DOD and the SA Army. How they determine the recruitment targets (gender)
	Possible questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please explain the recruitment process that is followed in the Department of Defence? ○ Do you receive recruitment targets from the SA Army clearly stating the gender targets for each MSDS intake? ○ Do you include these targets in the advertisements for the MSDS Intake? ○ Do you consult with the medical examiners to ensure they are informed and considering the profile required for a specific mustering?
Director HR Separation	Reason for the interview
	To determine the reasons female combat soldiers exits the DOD
	Possible questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You receive the exit questionnaires of all personnel exiting the DOD. What are the reasons provided by specifically the female combat soldiers?

<p>General Officer's Commanding Infantry, Armour and Artillery Formations</p>	<p>Reason for the interview</p> <p>Do they have combat profiles, do they use these profiles during their recruitment process, do they determine the gender recruitment targets, do they have separate training standards for men and women, what are the challenges women experience in the combat environment</p> <p>Possible questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is the profile of combat personnel? o What role does the recruitment process play during the recruitment of MSDS in increasing the female presence in the combat environment? o What are the challenges women faces in the combat environment? o To what extent do these challenges encourage or inhibit career pathing in combat? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a combat profile for your corps? • Do you apply this profile during the recruitment process of the MSDS Intakes? • Do you provide gender targets for the MSDS Intakes? • Do you have separate training standards for men and women? • What are the challenges women facing in the combat environment? o Please explain how you execute your career management in the formation and how you apply the DOD policy on Transformation during this process, specifically gender transformation?
<p>Military Psychological Institute</p>	<p>Reason for the interview</p> <p>They do the surveys and research before, during and after deployments and compile reports to Chief of the Defence Force and they will be able to discuss the challenges women experience during their deployments and being in the combat environment</p> <p>Possible questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In your surveys and interviews with soldiers returning from the operational areas what are the challenges women experience during and after deployments?
<p>Female Combat Soldiers</p>	<p>Reason for the interview</p> <p>These are women whose names were provided to the researcher by the General Officer Commanders be contacted to interview if they are willing to. These women were deployed externally in the last two years.</p>

	Possible questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why have you chosen to join the combat environment? ○ What are the challenges you as a woman experience in the combat environment?
Military Heal Services	Reason for the interview
	To determine the combat profile of soldiers in the Infantry, Armour and Artillery
	Possible questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you please provide the profile a soldier in the Infantry, Armour and Artillery must adhere to in order to execute their duties? ○ What are the physical training standards of the SANDF in training soldiers?

Appendix C – Policies

1 Policies

The policies addressed in Appendix C focus specifically on gender transformation.

1.1 United Nations policies

The United Nations drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949) as a generic policy on human rights, and the other mentioned treaties are aimed specifically at eliminating gender-based violence and the protection of the rights of women against discrimination, and not as such at the employment and utilisation of women in the peace process (employment in a military capacity). However, these treaties laid a platform for the inclusion of women in military organisations worldwide.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights forms the cornerstone of the rights and freedoms to which everyone is entitled. Although the declaration is not specific on gender issues, it is stated in Article 2, *“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”* (United Nations, 2015).

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979). Once adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, it is often referred to as an international *“bill of rights for women”*, clearly defining the meaning of discrimination against women and what is expected to end such discrimination (United Nations, 2018a).

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). Governments participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, where the requirement to accelerate the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women was identified (United Nations, 1995).

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000a) identified gender equality and the empowerment of all women as some of the goals that needed to be achieved to ensure a more equitable world. The MDGs of 2000 came to an end in 2016, where after the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Goals, 2030, in 2017. Once again, one of the goals identified as priority was the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women. On 13 September 2017, the United Nations launched a renewed effort, a system-wide strategy on gender parity (United Nations, 2017). To promote and co-ordinate efforts to advance gender parity by 2028, this strategy aims to achieve a target of 15 percent women in peace-keeping operations in 2019 to 35 percent in 2028. The United Nations regard the achievement of gender parity as very urgent as it is not only a basic human right, but it will also enhance the efficiency, effect, and credibility of the United Nations where it is operating.

Alongside the MDGs, the United Nations adapted one of the most important resolutions in its efforts to empower women.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). This resolution was adopted unanimously on 31 October 2000, and until today, it is one of the most important international directives that deal with all issues concerning women's equal and full participation in peace and security, also in the military. South Africa again serves as a non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the period 2019 to 2020 and has expressed its commitment in a media statement by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) (2018) to ensure that a gender perspective is maintained with continuous participation of women in peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peace building, and governance in support of the UNSCR 1325 (United Nations, 2000b).

During the United Nations World Summit Outcome of September 2005 (United Nations, 2005), 191 world leaders once again committed to the UNSC Resolution 1325 (United Nations, 2000b):

“We stress the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building. We also underline the importance of integrating a gender perspective and of women having the opportunity for equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, as well as the need to increase their role in decision-making at all levels.”

The UNSCR 1325 (United Nations, 2000b) mandate was associated with one of the four basic pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. For this research, the focus was on participation.

Participation: The resolution begged for greater involvement of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional, and international institutions; in instruments for the deterrence, management, and resolution of conflict; in peace dialogs; in all aspects of peace operations, as soldiers, police, and civilians; and as special representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General.

South Africa’s National Action Plan (NAP) also addressed the four pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery.

Therefore, the United Nations require all international, regional and national military forces as well as armed forces to support the peace and security agenda of the United Nations, as these forces play a major role in their respective environments (United Nations, 2000b). The question about the role of women in the military was raised by the United Nations and signatories to these treaties. As alluded to by Heinecken (2016), militaries become less aggressive and look for other alternatives to the traditional aggression displayed in the theatre of operations. Heinecken (2016) argues that while there were conflicting arguments around women in the combat role, they have been deployed to conflict areas with much success in their interactions with the local communities and the reduction in sexual and gender-based violence, to name a few.

Coomaraswamy (2015) is of the opinion that some progress has been made in military organisations to change the mindsets to allow women in the military and to experiment with other measures to resolve conflict other than traditional military operations. However, the progress was slow and not up to the expectations of the United Nations.

1.2 African Union Policies

In support of the policies and protocols of the United Nations, the AU adopted several policies and protocols that specifically aim at protecting women and promoting gender equality on the African continent.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Also known as the Maputo Protocol, this is the most significant legislation in the AU that pledges wide-ranging rights to women, including the right to participate in political processes, be socially and politically equal with men, improve independence in their reproductive health choices, and put an end to female genital disfigurement (Assefa, 2012). The aim of the Women's Protocol is to challenge the traditional approach of viewing women as obedient and as servants to men, whether to their fathers, brothers, uncles or husbands (Assefa, 2012). The Women's Protocol further intend to promote the human rights of women to be equal to those of men so that they can play an equal role in the family (Assefa, 2012). South Africa expressed its support of the Women's Protocol and has used it in formulating its policies on women in South Africa (Assefa, 2012). The AU published the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan on gender equality, which brought about a system whereby all legislation passed through Parliament and provincial legislatures is scrutinised from a gender equality viewpoint, and South Africa is party to this Strategic Plan (Assefa, 2012).

1.3 Southern African Development Community (SADC) policies

The vision of the SADC was to achieve long-lasting peace, freedom and social justice, reasonable development, and continuous economic wealth in the

region and to ensure the implementation of policies in support of the AU and United Nations in eradicating gender discrimination (SADC, 2008).

SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008). In August 2008, SADC member states, except Botswana and Mauritius, undertook not to discriminate against any person on the grounds of sex or gender. In 2016, Botswana also entered to the agreement. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) supports the UNSCR 1325, as stipulated in Article 28 on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution. The SADC member states are committed to ensuring that women will be represented and participate equally in key decision-making positions during conflict resolution, peace building and peace-keeping operations (SADC, 2008).

The protocol further requires SADC member states to eliminate gender inequalities by providing policies, projects, legislation, and programmes that are aimed at women being treated equal to their male counterparts and that they are empowered and recognised to strengthen communities (SADC, 2008).

1.4 South African policies

From the inception of democracy in South Africa, it was the intent of the South African Government to establish a culture of equality in all aspects, including gender. Many of the requirements of the African Charter and the Women's Protocol correspond with the requirements of the Bill of Rights included in the Constitution of South Africa (1996).

1.4.1 Constitution of South Africa

The Constitution of South Africa (1996), especially Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights, requires of the state to "*respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights*". For this research, only the gender aspects within the Constitution was addressed. Women were discriminated against until the introduction of the Bill of Rights, and the rights of women received protection, especially section 9 of the Constitution, under "Equality". In summary, this section was intended to protect women against any form of discrimination and supports the AU's Maputo Protocol. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) makes

provision for the establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality with the specific purpose to promote respect for gender equality and to enforce the protection, development, and achievement of gender equality. The Commission for Gender Equality established an Office of the Status of Women, and the purpose of this office was to monitor the achievement of gender equality in state departments, including the DOD (Heinecken, 2016). According to Heinecken (2016) this compelled the SANDF to develop a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory institutional culture.

1.5 SANDF policies

Military members of the SANDF were exempted from the requirements of the Employment Equity Act No 75, 1998. However, as a public service entity and a military force, the SANDF is fully committed to the transformation principles as clearly expressed in the White Paper on Defence, 1996, the Defence Act, 2002, and the South African Defence Review, 2015. Other policies that support higher-order policies such as the White Paper on Defence, 1996, the Defence Act, 2002 and the South African Defence Review, 2015, were identified. However, these policies may contribute to the lack of gender transformation in the SANDF. These policies deal with the combat profile of the Infantry, Armour and Artillery musterings in the SA Army, training policies focussing on the functional training of the Infantry, Armour and Artillery musterings in the SA Army, and physical training on SANDF level.

The SANDF will continue to contribute to commitment of the South African Government to enhance the representation and utilisation of women in the SANDF (Musyoka, 2015). South Africa's NAP: Implementing the women's peace and security agenda to comply with the UNSCR 1325 as a troop-contributing country, in which the role of women in the peace and security sector is discussed in detail, was in draft format at the time of the research (DOD, 2019b). In the NAP, the target of women representation for entry-level recruits, representation on courses, appointment of defence attachés, and commanders on all levels was set at 40%. According to Emma (interview, 20 March 2020) (a senior officer in the SANDF), the NAP outcomes will be implemented in the SANDF once the policy has been approved by Cabinet; currently it is in a draft format.

1.5.1 White Paper on Defence, 1996

The White Paper on Defence (South Africa, 1996, p 4) was instituted as the first defence policy of the new democratic South Africa and supports the Constitution of South Africa, which “*outlaws discrimination, enshrines fundamental rights and emphasises openness and accountability in the affairs of government*”. The process of transformation in the SANDF was derived from the Constitution of South Africa, and the principles of *Defence in a Democracy* (South Africa, 1996, p 5) were created. For the purpose of this research the focus was only on those principles addressing gender aspects. Principles 11.14 and 11.15 stipulate that the SANDF will develop a non-racial, non-sexist, and non-discriminatory culture as required in the Constitution of South Africa and that the configuration of the SANDF will broadly reflect the demographics of South Africa through affirmative action and equal-opportunity programmes and projects. Paragraph 29 of the White Paper on Defence (South Africa, 1996) emphasises adherence to military professionalism¹² in the SANDF, which is consistent with a democracy, the Constitution of South Africa, and international standards. Therefore, the SANDF was instructed to implement education and training programmes to build and maintain a high level of professionalism. These programmes include aspects such as equal opportunities and the upgrading of skills of women soldiers (South Africa, 1996, p 13).

The White Paper on Defence (South Africa, 1996, p. 28) acknowledges “*the right of women to serve in all ranks and positions, including combat roles*”, and the requirement is to design strategies that include education and training courses, career development plans, and revising the recruitment and promotion systems of the SANDF. According to Heinecken (n.d.), in order for the SANDF to adhere to the requirements of the White Paper on Defence (South Africa, 1996), it had to review all policies and procedures to eliminate any aspect that could possibly discriminate against women, which the SANDF has done since 1996. It should be noted that the White Paper on Defence, which has been in use for 24 years already, has been overtaken by events and

¹² Military professionalism: Military professionalism is a totality that forms the basis for how individuals, groups, and the military act to perform their jobs. There can be no skill without the discipline to train. There can be no adherence to discipline without commitment to endure. There can be no commitment without disciplined skill to complete the mission. Thus, one cannot neglect one without losing all of what it means to be a military professional. Careertrend.com

needs to be reviewed, as the situation in the DOD and SANDF has changed since 1996.

1.5.2 Defence Act No. 42 of 2002

According to the Defence Act No. 42 of 2002 (South Africa, 2002), one of the functions of the Chief of the SANDF was to be responsible to ensure that a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory culture was developed in the SANDF in support of the Constitution, and departmental policies on equal opportunities and affirmative action were aligned accordingly. Although there was no specific reference other than the above-mentioned in the Defence Act regarding gender in the SANDF, reference was made throughout the act to his/her rank, role and appointment or to a member of the Defence Force. The Defence Act has not been updated since inception and the role and functions of the SANDF have changed.

1.5.3 Defence Review, 2015

The SANDF promoted the image of “*a representative and trusted non-biased national asset*”; therefore, one of the principles applied to the “*education, training and development of its members*” was to ensure the SANDF was broadly representative of the people of South Africa, with specific focus on equity including gender and people with disabilities (DOD, 2015b, pp. 11-2).

According to the Defence Review, (DOD, 2015b) the recruitment process in the SANDF should be designed to recruit young and healthy men and women throughout society to assist the SANDF to grow its own timber, that would become future military leaders. The Defence Review (DOD, 2015b) also highlights the fact that military recruitment takes place in a competitive labour market and that throughout the recruitment process, the matter of equity should be considered (DOD, 2015b).

In support of the above, the South African Defence Review (DOD, 2015b, p0-7) pursues eight principles, of which Principle 5 states that “*the Defence Force will strive to be seen as a representative, equitable and gender aligned national asset*”. Therefore, the SANDF is serious in achieving government’s objective

to ensure that women are empowered and afforded the same opportunities as men by adopting policies that support gender transformation.

1.5.4 Policy on Transformation Management in the Department of Defence

Failure by the DOD to align its policies accordingly will affect the fulfilment of its constitutional mandate of being a disciplined military force negatively, and mission readiness will be compromised. Thus, there was a need for continuing transformation management initiatives through clear policy, inter alia in the quest for broad representation, equity and equality of opportunity, and non-discrimination.

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the DOD (2008) guides the enhancement of gender equality in the DOD. Gender mainstreaming is an internationally accepted approach for encouraging gender equity and equality. Heinecken (n.d.) claims that gender mainstreaming is not an end, but a policy, a method and means to realise the goals of gender equality. The DOD Policy on Transformation Management on Gender Mainstreaming (2018b) aims at ensuring that gender viewpoints and dedication to achieve the goal of gender equality in the SANDF are crucial to all organisational activities, programmes, research advocacy and dialogues, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

The integration of gender considerations with the transformation of the DOD according to the DOD Policy on Transformation Management (2018b) aims at ensuring that women are empowered by adapting policies and practices that have prevented women access to basic needs and decision-making levels. The policy further encourages proper training to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes in gender analysis.

1.5.5 Transformation Management Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the DOD

1.5.5.1 Financial Year 2019/20

The Planning and Budgeting Guidelines (DOD, 2018a) for the financial year 2019/20 to services and divisions sets the national target of 50% females in the work environment to be attained. It recognises that certain areas, for

instance the support environments, may find it much easier than the combat corps to achieve this target. The following guidelines in terms of gender representation are also included in the Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the Financial Year 2020/21:

Services and divisions must provide the opportunity for participation to at least 30% women in military development (common) courses, foreign learning opportunities, the study at state expense scheme, and bursaries, including their appointment as instructors at training institutions of the SANDF.

Female members in peace missions should be increased to 30% at all levels, not only in supporting elements.

Promote the recruitment of the gender representation targets at entry level (male to female ratio of 60:40).

During marketing, recruiting and selections, inform the potential recruits of the core musterings in the SANDF.

Succession planning must focus on developing and retaining scarce skills and women in the combat (sharp end) environment.

1.5.5.2 Financial Year 2020/21

The Planning and Budgeting Guidelines for the Financial Year 2020/21 (DOD, 2019a) to services no longer quote the national target of 50% females in the work environment directly but still expect services to institute plans to achieve equity in critical musterings/corps, and they must ensure the achievement of gender equity during external and internal deployments and report on the positions held by females during such deployments. It is stated further in the guidelines that services must set their own targets for the combat environment and forward those targets to CDTM to be incorporated with the DOD Equity Plan submitted to the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). Services must report to CDTM on these targets quarterly and annually. The implications of allowing services to set their own gender targets are that the gender target of the SANDF is centralised and the determination

of achieving such target is decentralised, which may affect the gender transformation mandate of the SANDF at corporate level.

1.5.6 SA Army Policy on Transformation

The focus of this research was on the SA Army with specific reference to the Infantry, Armour and Artillery Corps. Therefore, it was important to study the SA Army Policy on Transformation to obtain the transformation guidelines provided by the Chief of the SA Army (C SA Army) to its formations and recruitment office to ensure the required gender targets were met however, during the research it was determined that the SA Army does not have an approved policy on transformation management and always refers to the DOD Transformation Policy. It was also determined that no written guidelines in terms of transformation were captured in a policy or instruction that were issued to the HR Department in the SA Army in terms of race and gender to guide them during the MSDS recruitment processes; therefore, each formation determined its own transformation requirements, and members were recruited accordingly. Without the SA Army's policy on transformation management, I could not measure the gender representation against a set target or policy.

2 Combat Profile Policies

According to a senior officer in the SA Military Health Services, Harry (interview, 26 March 2020), the Surgeon General (SG) was responsible to ensure that all jobs in the SANDF had a combat profile that specified the physical and psychological requirements of the job. The DOD approved the Department of Defence Instruction (DODI)/00092, Policy, Process and Procedures for the Management of Ergonomics¹³ (Surgeon General, 2013). The aim of DODI/00092 was to guide the SANDF to integrate ergonomics within defence systems. According to the DODI, the integration meant that performance of systems would be enhanced, and systems would not be misused, which would result in greater efficiency, effectiveness, and economy in the SANDF. The policy also intended to protect people at work against the

¹³ "Ergonomics (or human factors) is the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of the interactions among human and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design in order to optimise human well-being and overall system performance" (Surgeon General, 2013).

misuse of machinery, and in the SANDF, most machinery were weapons and equipment designed for war and to kill the enemy.

Harry (interview, 26 March 2020) indicated that most of the SANDF military jobs had been evaluated and provided to the SG by ERGOnomics TECHNOLOGIES (ERGOTECH). However, the psychological specifications of these job profiles were still outstanding, except for Special Forces. In consultation with the SANDF, ERGOTECH designed what is known as the RSA Military Standards 127 (volumes 1 to 6). The SANDF uses these military standards as input information for technical designs, specific requirements, analysis, and workspace evaluations. The RSA Mil Standards 127 (Shaba, 2015) also provide data on body sizes that can be used for designing clothes and protective equipment for military personnel. Harry (interview, 26 March 2020) emphasises that with the rapid advancement of technology in the military, the requirement for ergonomics in the workplace has become a reality to try and find solutions to enhance human performance, reduce work-related injuries and to improve productivity by ensuring the right person has been selected and trained for the right post. As we recall, earlier in the literature review, the importance of gender differences when designing combat profiles was emphasised, and Nolte and Bredenkamp (2008) are of the opinion that tasks must be designed to be gender independent or that a specific selection process must be implemented to ensure the candidate can master the physical demands of the job.

This research focused only on the infantry, armour, and artillery mustering in the SA Army. The sections below indicate the physical requirements of each of these environments. The Special Forces is not a separate mustering in the SANDF but a branch in the Infantry Corps. To date, no female operator has qualified, and South Africa is one of the few countries that have allowed women to join the Special Forces voluntarily.

2.1 Infantry

According to a senior officer in the SA Army, Darren (interview, 26 March 2020), "*Project Warrior*" intended to establish the ergonomics for infantry soldiers, as well as the upgrades and renewal of weapon systems, in the SA Army. However, the project has been placed on hold to be reviewed due to

rapid developments within the international combat environment as well as the changed requirements of the country and the SA Army. Darren (interview, 26 March 2020) could not indicate when the project would be activated again. Owing to the unavailability of information on the infantry combat profile, I could not determine the combat profile of the Infantry soldier.

Special Forces¹⁴. During the interview with Barry (interview, 23 March 2020) senior officer in Special Forces, he confirmed that Special Forces had a combat profile for future candidates, and during selections, the candidates were tested against the physical and psychological profile of a Special Forces Operator. Interestingly, Barry (interview, 23 March 2020) emphasised that these profiles do not distinguish between male and female and that the standards of these profiles have not been lowered to accommodate female soldiers. Owing to the sensitive nature of the Special Forces environment, this profile could not be published in this research; however, the requirement was higher than for the standard infantry soldier and they have de-gendered¹⁵ the selection criteria for Special Force candidates.

2.2 Armour

According to the SA Army Armour Formation (2012b), the nature of the work performed by the armoured vehicle crew demands heavy physical tasks and therefore requires a certain profile such candidates must meet. The absence of such profiles may lead to the risk of injury or task overloading of other crew members. In consultation with the SA Military Health Services (SAMHS) and ERGOTECH, the SA Armour Corps developed an objective selection test battery based on the physical demands of the post profile of the crew for the main battle tanks and armoured cars. A policy, SA Army Order: SA Army Armour Formation 13/12, was approved and implemented to assist the SA Armour Corps in recruiting the most suitable candidates to perform the strenuous tasks in the armour environment (SA Armour Formation, 2012a).

¹⁴ According to defenceWeb (2019a) “*Special Forces are troops who have been specially selected, trained and equipped for employment in extraordinary circumstances and undertakings – in comparison to the bulk of troops who have not so been selected, trained or equipped and cannot be so employed*”.

¹⁵ According to Dictionary.com (2020) to de-gender means no association with or dependence on gender in any policies of the SANDF

The criteria that were used to compile the test battery are non-discriminatory in terms of gender, age, or skill allow for training and improvement of physical conditioning. The criteria were not designed for comfort but rather functionality and safety. The SA Armour Formation reviewed its physical training programme in 2012 to provide the necessary conditioning programmes to its crew members to meet the physical demands of their jobs.

SA Army Order: SA Army Armour Formation 13/12 addresses the combat profiles of the crew commander, gunner, loader, and driver of armoured fighting vehicles. The combat profile addresses the outputs of the post, the knowledge, skills and qualifications (academic and military courses) required for the post, and the physical attributes required of the individual (SA Armour Formation, 2012a). The physical attributes of the combat profile addressed are aspects such as sitting eye height (whether the member will be able to see over the steering wheel of an armoured vehicle), the leg length (whether the member will be able to reach the pedals such as brakes and petrol of an armoured vehicle), mean leg push (whether the member is able to push at least 22.4 kg with his/her leg), lifting an ammunition box of at least 45 kg, and the member must not be colour blind. All crew members must meet the physical attributes, as they are rotated to different posts as part of career development and management (SA Armour Formation, 2012b). Should recruits not have these physical attributes, they do not meet the combat profile and therefore are not suitable for utilisation in the SA Armour Corps. What we can understand here is that the SA Armour Corps de-gendered its selection criteria, but the physical requirements continue to play a role in the lower number of females reporting in the SA Armour Corps, as they do not possess the same physical strength as their male counterparts.

2.3 Artillery

With the support of the General Officer Commanding and Senior Staff Officer Research and Development, ERGOTECH developed selection criteria for the Artillery Formation for key tactical post profiles based on designed job demands that require high physical demands (Shaba, 2010). The process of drafting the test battery included inputs from the subject experts, evaluations

of the physical demands for the identified post profiles (G5¹⁶, G6¹⁷, multiple rocket launcher¹⁸, mortar, and drivers of support vehicles). The data obtained during evaluations of the post profiles were analysed to determine acceptable limits for the selection criteria.

The test battery developed by ERGOTECH for the Artillery Formation includes aspects of applied anthropometry¹⁹, functional strength capacity and functional lifting and carrying a certain weight over a certain distance (Shaba, 2010). Anthropometry criteria are aimed at selecting individuals based on body dimensions that will allow accommodation in relevant workspaces or vehicle cabs for efficient operation of the equipment or system. This includes actions such as passage through hatches, functional view of the terrain, and functional reach of the controls. According to Shaba (2010), the functional strength criteria are aimed at selecting individuals who are strong enough to apply the force required for operating controls such as foot pedals, the crank wheel, the vehicle steering wheel, hand levers, and manual tasks that require application of force when operating hatches. The Artillery Formation agreed that when ERGOTECH developed selection criteria for the test battery, it had to be based on the physical demands of the post profiles, non-discriminatory of gender, age and skill and allow for training and improvement of physical conditioning (Shaba, 2010). As in the case of Special Forces and the SA Armour Corps, the SA Artillery Corps de-gendered its selection criteria but the physical demands of the job play a role in the reduced number of females in the SA Artillery Corps.

3 Training Policies

The Defence Act 42 (2002) is very specific that members of the Defence Force employed during operations, internally or externally, or in support of the SAPS and other state departments, should receive appropriate training before such

¹⁶ The G5 is a 155-mm, 45-calibre, towed Howitzer gun. Although designed for an eight-man section, the SANDF normally operates the G5 with a five-man section (GlobalSecurity.org, n.d.).

¹⁷ The G6 is a 155-mm long-range gun, self-propelled Howitzer. The G6 is operated by a crew of six – driver, commander, gun layer, breech operator, ammunition loader and ammunition handler (Army Technology, n.d.).

¹⁸ The Bateleur multiple launch rocket system has 40 launching tubes for 127 mm rockets. This artillery system is operated by a crew of five (Military-Today.com, n.d.).

¹⁹ Anthropometry is the science of obtaining systematic measurements of the human body (Biology Dictionary, n.d.).

employment and be equipped accordingly to perform such operation or service.

In support of the Defence Act 42 (2002), the DOD HR Development Strategy 2016 – 2025 explains that the battle space is a complex and highly fluid environment (DOD, 2016). It states further that soldiers are confronted with rapidly changing security situations that require timeous, effective, and decisive leadership and decision making (DOD, 2016). Therefore, the successful execution of missions depends on the excellent training, education, and development of the SANDF human capital. In the end, the intent of the SANDF is to train and educate professional soldiers who are qualified to execute the mandate of the SANDF.

3.1 Physical training, sport, and recreation training

Physical training, sport, and recreation (PTSR) forms an essential part of the physical and psychological preparation and acclimatising of military personnel in the SANDF. Acceptable physical state and physical skills are compulsory for soldiers to perform their main function namely, to defend and protect the RSA, its territorial integrity, and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulations for the use of force. Physical fitness²⁰ is accomplished through compulsory physical training programmes (Surgeon General, 2004a).

According to the DODI SG NO 00006/2000 Edition No 1, all SANDF members²¹ are responsible to maintain a healthy lifestyle that will ensure they are healthy and meet the required fitness levels prescribed by the SANDF. Military personnel will be subjected to physical evaluation tests to meet the fitness standards of the SANDF; therefore, it is required of them to participate regularly and consistently in exercise programmes in preparation for such tests (Surgeon General, 2004a).

²⁰ The ability of DOD members to meet the physical demands of their jobs for an extended period and to have the additional ability to meet physical emergencies, such as those imposed during combat or other stressful situations. Generally, the components of fitness are cardiorespiratory fitness (heart and lungs), muscular fitness (muscle strength and endurance), flexibility, body composition (fat versus muscles), and weight management (Surgeon General, 2004b).

²¹ In this document, SANDF members means members of the Regular Force and Reserve Force appointed in terms of the Defence Act (Act No. 42 of 2002).

Physical training is a command responsibility; therefore, every commander shall ensure that this policy is implemented at all levels and shall be responsible for the physical and psychological preparedness of his/her members, and compile and control physical training programmes to comply with their specific requirements, apply the prescribed standardised physical evaluation tests to ascertain whether members under his/her command comply with accepted prescribed physical fitness standards, and administrate it in accordance with procedures prescribed in JDP/SG/00001/2003 (Surgeon General, 2004b). Physical training complements the functional (corps) training constantly and contributes to the combat-readiness of SANDF members to ensure that members are physically prepared to perform their required jobs.

According to JDP/SG/00001/2003, Edition No 1, the components of physical evaluation tests are grouped per component, age group, and gender. For instance, males of the age group 18 to 34 years must complete the 2,4 km run within 12 minutes, and female soldiers of the same age group must complete it within 14 minutes and 30 seconds (Surgeon General, 2004b). All the components have different targets for men and women in all the age groups, meaning that gender-specific training is applied. Since the inclusion of women in the combat environment in the SANDF DODI SG NO 00006/2000, Edition No 1, has not been amended to ensure that males and females in the combat environment are evaluated on the same targets. Harry (interview, 26 March 2020) explained that this is an international trend, as fitness tests are designed to ensure a soldier achieves the basic standard of fitness, but to prepare a soldier for the actual execution of his/her job, adherence to the combat profile is the most important aspect, meaning that a soldier may be the fittest soldier in the Armour Corps, measured against the SANDF fitness test standards, but may not have the upper body strength to carry a 45 kg weapon case in performing his/her job. Therefore, it can be argued that even though the combat environments are de-gendered, the physical requirements of the post continue to exclude average women from the combat environment and basic fitness training does not prepare the females on the same level as their male colleagues because of different training standards.

3.2 Functional (corps) training

Once a member is employed permanently, functional military development is linked to the process of lifelong learning and is by and large the responsibility of the individual through opportunities created by the SANDF, such as attending functional military courses (these courses are coupled to promotion to the next higher rank or to execute a specific job). This development is also coupled to the immediate working environment and is normally of an immediate applied practical and functional nature. Thus, development relates to learning activities that occur outside the formal career-related education and training programmes of the Defence Force (DOD, 2015b).

Larry (interview, 20 March 2020), a senior officer in the SA Army, believed *“the SA Army does not need separate training standards if the recruitment process follows the principle of selecting a candidate against a combat profile”*. This implies that there would not be a need to have separate training standards if the right person for the right post is identified during the recruitment process.

3.2.1 Infantry

Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), a senior officer in the SA Army, explained that she struggled during the 12-week parachute preparation training because she did not have sufficient upper body strength and that was a barrier she had to overcome and *“it made the course very difficult, physically and mentally”*. During the preparation training programme, *“our (the women on the course) weak points were identified by the instructors and they assisted in giving us extra exercises to build our upper body strength to assist us in passing the selection to continue with the parachute training”*. Although she was psychologically prepared for the hardships lying ahead, she could not overcome the physical challenges of the course. Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) explained that *“it was embarrassing not to be able to pass the selection and I decided to do the PTI (Physical Training Instructor) course to prove to myself that I can do it”*. The PTI course is an extremely physical course and Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020) completed the course successfully. According to Nellie (interview, 25 March 2020), *“my confidence was boosted by completing the PTI course successfully as I still could not achieve the*

physical requirements to pass the selection for the parachute course and therefore did not feel I was a complete failure”.

According to Eugene (interview, 25 March 2020), a senior officer in the SA Army, the functional Infantry Corps training makes no distinction between men and women; therefore, the targets to achieve during functional training are the same. The only training where there is a differentiation is the fitness tests as the training institution adheres to the DODI SG NO 00006/2000, Edition No 1 (Surgeon General, 2004a).

Special Forces. Tommy (interview, 23 March 2020) (a senior officer in the SANDF) stated, *“In my opinion, standards for training is a benchmark and it is not necessary to tamper with these standards. Standards are the bare minimum to be achieved and you do not allow yourself to lower the standards just because you must accommodate females because then you compromise a unit’s combat readiness.”* In his opinion, if you belong in a specific environment such as the combat environment, *“you will rise to the occasion to be the best, irrespective of gender”*. He further stated, *“Even your good people will become average if they are not constantly challenged, and those women that belong in the combat environment will achieve the set standards without the SANDF reducing the standards”*. Tommy (interview, 23 March 2020) also stated that, as a man, he believed that men would respect you if *“you have done what I have done, irrespective of gender”*.

During the interview with Barry (interview, 23 March 2020), it was confirmed that during the preparation training for Special Force selection and the functional courses that follow, *“there are no distinctions made between male and female. All soldiers must carry the same equipment and weight for the same distance at the same time to be declared competent.”*

The General Officer Commanding of the Special Forces (interview, 24 March 2020) indicated that, to qualify female Special Forces operators, they have created a preparatory course for all candidates (male and female) before the actual selection takes place. To date, no female has

qualified in the SANDF as a Special Forces operator, even with these interventions. In this case, the additional efforts by Special Forces to prepare women are recognised but are not effective; therefore, it can be deduced that either the qualification levels in Special Forces are too high or that the arguments raised by the Berkshire Consultancy (2009) that women do not have the same physical strength as their male counterparts have, can be applied here.

3.2.2 Armour

According to Willy (interview, 20 March 2020), senior officer in the SA Army, the Armour Formation did not adjust its functional training programme after the test battery from ERGOTECH had been implemented. In Willy's (interview, 20 March 2020) opinion, the recruitment personnel of the SA Army were not comfortable to allow the test battery as a form of initial selection to recruit MSDS, before they officially join the military, due to possible injuries and claims against the SANDF. Therefore, it is an indication that the SA Armour Formation acknowledges the fact that all recruits need to be prepared physically to meet the requirements of the SANDF.

Heinecken (n.d.) confirms this statement by the recruitment officers, who further claimed that the youth of today do not have the physical strength for such a selection, and they believe they would be ready only after BMT. Therefore, the Armour Formation made the decision to apply the test battery criteria during the selection process after BMT, before they continue in the Armour Corps. The reason provided by Willy (interview, 20 March 2020) was that possible candidates were physically better prepared for the test battery than a person from the street for such a selection. According to Willy (interview, 20 March 2020), members (male and female) who continue within the Armour Corps and at a later stage no longer meet the criteria are re-deployed in a supporting role in the Armour Formation.

3.2.3 Artillery

According to Lombard (2011), personnel of the Artillery Formation indicated that there was a mismatch between the physical fitness of members after BMT and the functional strength requirements for members to do their jobs. The

physical training programme that was followed by the Artillery Formation at the time was the standard military physical fitness programmes used by all formations during BMT. According to Lombard (2011), the gap identified was in the functional fitness of its members to do their job, and ERGOTECH was contracted to develop a functional conditioning programme to be included in the artillery courses with the main focus to assist members in overcoming the physical challenges they experience in doing their jobs. Additionally, a physical fitness test, tailor made for the Artillery Formation, was requested to monitor if there were any changes in the functional fitness levels of their personnel (Lombard, 2011). These amendments have been implemented for all its members since 2012, and later in the research, it is evident that these improvements assisted in increasing the number of females in the Artillery Corps.