

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON MARGINALISATION AND
DISCRIMINATION IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS OF THE HEALTH
SERVICES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

(SANDF)

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A mini-thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

by

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Note

Although the use of names of people who actually took part in the action research projects in the SANDF as reported in this thesis is imaginary in keeping with ethical issues, special care has been given to ensuring that the actual situation in the SANDF (race, gender, force of origin, culture) is not distorted or lost.



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DECLARATION

I, KHAYALETHU SEBASTIAN HAMANA, do hereby declare that this work is my own original work and has not been submitted before now, in any form whatsoever, by myself or anyone else, to this university or to any other educational institution for assessment purposes.

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.....
Khayalethu Sebastian Hamana

ABSTRACT

An Educational Perspective on Marginalisation and Discrimination in the Integration Process of the Health Services of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF)

University of the Western Cape, 2000

The Constitution provides that the primary object of the SANDF is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people, in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force¹.

In this thesis I argue that an action research theory that finds its home in educational institutions like the schools of the industrialised countries of the North, cannot simplistically be applied to the set-up of the educational institutions of the developing countries of the Southern hemisphere, more so in a military context like that of the SANDF which is different from schools. Secondly, an action research theory that developed in the German²-speaking countries and in some post-World War American³ institutions, cannot simply be applied to post-apartheid South African institutions like the SANDF, without first evaluating the nature of the transformation process of South African institutions from the yoke of an apartheid ethos and orientation into the institutions that are suited for meeting the needs of all South Africans⁴. Thirdly, I argue for a need to share knowledge, skills, experience and expertise on the basis of equality between the institutions in the North and the South. On the one hand, this includes military and non-military institutions, and between and within the different sectors of the rapidly changing public service in South Africa, on the other.

The main question at stake is: How to help soldiers in the new dispensation in South Africa develop a critical awareness of why they do certain things and why they view themselves and the world around them the way they do? In other words, When will the ways of thinking and acting in the SANDF contribute not only to the improvement of soldiers' interaction with each other, but also to the betterment of a quality of service that the Defence Force is responsible for delivering to the rest of the Country's citizens and to South Africa's neighbouring countries?

The end of the 1980s decade marked the turning point in the history of South Africa. Global and internal pressures forced the white minority government to gradually introduce political reforms that paved the way to political and military negotiations. As a strategy to gain control of the new SANDF, the SADF negotiators insisted on the "retention of standards" during the military negotiations. This strategy proved successful when the Interim Constitution and eventually the White Paper on Defence (1996: 4) made a provision for maintaining standards.

¹See the South African Defence Review, 1998. p. 11.

²See Altrichter, H. and Gstettner, P. Action Research: a closed chapter in the history of German social science?, in Educational Action Research, Vol. 1, no. 3, 1993. pp. 329-360.

³See Adelman, C. Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research, in Educational Action Research, Vol. 1, no. 1, 1993. pp. 7-24.

⁴See the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995. p. 11.

Once it was clear that the parties had agreed on a number of issues, the Joint Military Coordinating Council (JMCC) was established to facilitate the integration process and to oversee operational and tactical planning for the integration and the creation of the new defence force. Despite the fact that the JMCC was made up of all the diverse integrating forces that were represented in the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) (Batchelor and Willet, 1998: 60), the integration process brought about serious problems and difficulties on the side of former NSF members. The main cause of the difficulties was attempts by some ex-SADF members (especially those in middle-management positions) to undermine the integration process (Mokalobe 1999: 12).

To be precise, the White Paper on Defence does not only provide for the retention of the old SADF's standards in the SANDF, it also states that, the Department of Defence has three governing principles for the integration of the statutory⁵ (old SADF and the forces of the former TBVC states) and the non-statutory⁶ (Umkhonto we Sizwe and APLA) forces (NSF) into the SANDF. Those principles are: "All members of the SANDF shall be treated with respect and dignity; integration shall proceed in a spirit of partnership, and, as required by the Constitution, there shall be no discrimination" (1996: 32).

Contrary to the above-mentioned principles of the White Paper on Defence, the reality on the ground points in a different direction. The non-statutory forces had to wear the very same symbols and uniforms which embodied the old force and which gave them at times a feeling of inferiority as they became invisible in the structure and culture of a former adversary. There was no adequate and coherent system to accredit the education and training traditions and the values of the non-statutory force soldiers in the curricula. The instructors remained predominantly white, male, Afrikaner and former SADF members. The language of teaching and learning remained mostly Afrikaans and in some cases, English and embedded in a tradition which is not familiar and not on equal terms with the tradition of most members of the merging non-statutory forces. Some instructors did not even master English.

During the first intakes of the former NSF members into the SANDF, some of the selection boards were solely comprised of the members of the former SADF, instead of being representative of all integrating forces. The civilian non-military consultants for the SANDF could also play an effective transformative role if their values were not alien to the experiences of many members in the non-statutory force.

For the SANDF to master the maintenance of order and its peace-keeping role and to be accepted as such in South Africa and in the African continent, the SANDF will have to be able to learn from its experiences and demonstrate that it is, first of all, at peace with itself.

This thesis is about my efforts at introducing emancipatory action research⁷ in the Military Health Service and in the broader environment of the SANDF. Emancipatory action research is about the members of the SANDF (irrespective of background), being equal agents of their history and destiny. Thus can we help rebuild sustainable peace in South Africa, the African continent and the rest of the world.

⁵Statutory forces-so called, because they were created through a parliamentary statute.

⁶Non-statutory forces-so called, because they were created out of extra-parliamentary party political decision.

⁷ See paragraphs 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 below.

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To my father, Mgiqwa and my mother, Tshawe and brothers and sisters, Maz'enethole ngo thando nenkuthazo, I love you.

To the leadership of our country, the leadership of the SANDF, officers, civilians and foot soldiers of this democratic society, whose work is recorded in this thesis: their preparedness to engage with their work in the manner they have, and their willingness to allow me to embark on these journeys with them have made my work both possible and wonderful.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| APLA | Azanian People's Liberation Army |
| AWOL | Absent Without Leave |
| B.Ed | Bachelor of Education |
| BICC | Bonn International Center for Conversion |
| BMATT | British Military Advisory and Training Team |
| CCR | Centre for Conflict Resolution |
| CNDF | Chief of the National Defence Force |
| COLET | College of Educational Technology |
| COSAS | Congress of South African Students |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions |
| CPR | Certified Personnel Register |
| ERIP | Education Resource and Information Project |
| ETDP | Education, Training and Development Practitioner |
| GEM | Group for Environmental Monitoring |
| HQ | Head Quarters |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| JCS | Junior Command and Staff Course |
| JMCC | Joint Military Co-ordinating Council |
| IRA | Irish Republican Army |
| MC | Master of Ceremonies |
| MC | Management Committee |



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| | |
|------|--|
| M.Ed | Master of Education |
| MK | Umkhonto we Sizwe |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NECC | National Education Crisis Committee (later became National Education Co-ordinating Committee) |
| NLM | National Liberation Movement |
| NP | National Party |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| NSF | Non-Statutory Forces (MK and APLA) |
| NYDF | National Youth Development Forum |
| NYSI | National Youth Service Initiative |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| OD | Organisation Development |
| OECD | Operational Emergency Care Orderly |
| OJT | On - The - Job - Training |
| PAC | Pan Africanist Congress |
| R&D | Research & Development |
| RD&D | Research, Development & Diffusion |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development Programme |
| REC | Regional Executive Committee |
| SACC | South African Coloured Corp (later became South African Cape Corp) |
| SACP | South African Communist Party |



| | |
|-------|--|
| SACTU | South African Congress of Trade Unions |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SADF | South African Defence Force (the army that stood in defence of apartheid) |
| SAIRR | South African Institute of Race Relations |
| SAMDC | South African Medical and Dental Council |
| SAMHS | South African Military Health Service |
| SANDF | South African National Defence Force (the new force defending democracy) |
| SAQA | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SF | Statutory Forces (SADF and the forces of TBVC) |
| SOP | Standing Operational Procedure |
| SPCC | Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee |
| SSO | Senior Staff Officer |
| TBVC | Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (bantustans, created by apartheid) |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| UMILL | University Mission Initiative on Life Long Learning |
| UN | United Nations Organisation |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| UWC | University of the Western Cape |



- UWO United Women's Organisation
- YLDC Youth Leadership and Development Course
- YLDP Youth Leadership and Development Programme



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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

1. Introduction

Since April 1994, South Africa has rejoined the international community of nations. Inside and outside the country, high expectations were raised concerning the people-driven nature of development under the new dispensation. The voices of the majority would now be heard. The Reconstruction and Development Programme¹(RDP) outlined the principles of development and laid a strong emphasis on democratic approaches and local ownership of the development process. The transformation process of old structures in many sectors of the South African society which is underway, is, however, underpinned by the mounting pressures of globalisation and the internal dynamics of nation-building. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the ending of apartheid in South Africa had dramatic consequences for the day to day developmental practices of the state, local government, the world of Non-Governmental Organisations² and the private sector³. Global developments have started to make a significant impact on the local development scene. The story of the multi-cultural integration process of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) exemplifies the growing pains any major institution in the “new” South Africa has to go through when pursuing the ideals of non-racialism, non-sexism and equity as enshrined in the Constitution of 1996.

Towards the end of the decade of the 1980's a number of things became increasingly clear to the African National Congress-led National Liberation Movement (NLM). First, that, as a consequence of its escalating crisis, the apartheid power bloc led by the National Party was no longer able to continue ruling in the old way and was genuinely seeking some break with the past towards a “new” political framework conducive to its dominance. Second, that the NLM was not dealing with a defeated enemy and an early revolutionary seizure of power by the liberation movement could not be realistically posed⁴. Third, that the recognition to move towards a negotiated settlement (on the side of the apartheid government) was never towards the same destination as the NLM had anticipated.

Once the political negotiations were underway, the future of defence in a new dispensation became a concern. In 1992 General Pierre Steyn made an appeal for negotiations between

¹See The African Communist, Journal of the South African Communist Party, no. 134, pp. 15-29, Third Quarter, 1993. Also see the African Communist, Journal of the South African Communist Party, no. 144, pp. 25-43, Second Quarter, 1996.

²Independent, Non-Profit, Development Promotion Organisations e.g. Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) etc.

³Profit-making world of business e.g. Deloitte and Touche Consulting Group.

⁴See Slovo, J. “Negotiations: What Room for Compromises?”, in The African Communist, Journal of the South African Communist Party, Third Quarter, 1992. p. 36.

Umkhonto we Sizwe and the old SADF. In April 1993, the SADF and MK delegations met at Simonstown naval base near Cape Town, to negotiate the future of a new inclusive defence force. Among the representatives of the old SADF were General George Meiring, Lieutenant-General Pierre Steyn and the former National Intelligence Director, Neil Barnard. The MK delegation was led by the MK Chief Commander, Joe Modise, the ANC's legal advisor, Matthews Phosa, and civil rights lawyer, Nicholas Haysom (Shaw, 1995: 17-19). After the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) Act became law on 9 November 1993, the negotiations over the defence provision for the Interim Constitution began. The SADF delegation made a strong argument for the "retention of standards" and the "apolitical nature and character of the defence force" (Batchelor and Willet, 1998: 59). The issue of the retention of standards goes far back to the 1990 defence parliamentary debate when the then Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, rejected the integration of MK on the grounds that it was not a professional army. Malan's argument became redundant when he was replaced by Roelf Meyer who had a willingness to negotiate with MK (Nathan, 1991: 1-17).

The integration process of the statutory and the non-statutory forces into the SANDF that followed the above-mentioned negotiations meant the absorption of former MK and APLA cadres by the former SADF. The absorption was mainly because of the Constitutional guarantee that the SANDF will ensure the "retention of standards" (Seegers, 1996: 32). Also, the former SADF's qualitative and quantitative capability extended beyond that of MK and APLA (Nathan, 1991: 13). In order to demoralise former NSF members to lose hope in the integration process, the SADF Afrikaner institutional culture was deliberately buttressed and horrendous acts were perpetuated against the former guerrillas under the pretext of "military professionalism" (Seegers, 1996: 36).

In a nutshell, what has become clear is that the end of the 1980s decade marked the turning point in the history of South Africa. Global and internal pressures forced the NP government to gradually introduce political reforms that opened the way to political and military negotiations. As a strategy to gain control of the new SANDF, the SADF negotiators insisted on the "retention of standards" during the military negotiations. This strategy proved successful when the Interim Constitution and eventually the White Paper on Defence (1996: 4) made a provision for maintaining standards. Once it was clear that the parties had agreed on a number of issues, the Joint Military Co-ordinating Council (JMCC) was established to facilitate the integration process of the new SANDF that was created soon after the first democratic elections were held and to oversee operational and tactical planning for the integration and the creation of the new defence force. Even though the JMCC was composed of all representatives of the armed forces that were represented in the TEC, which included the SADF, MK and armies of the former homelands (Batchelor and Willet, 1998: 60), the integration process brought about serious problems and difficulties on the side of former NSF members. The main cause of the difficulties was attempts by some ex-SADF members to undermine the integration process (Mokalobe 1999: 12). On board were also other bodies such as the Integration Committee that was formed in September 1994 to deal primarily with everyday problems and the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) that was invited to assess and validate standards for the new defence force, monitor training, and to adjudicate and advise on the integration process.

Despite the efforts to balance the top echelon of the SANDF and the role of the BMATT, Integration Committee and JMCC, a number of incidents occurred in the initial phases of the integration due to the frustration of the former NSF members. The living conditions in the assembly areas were poor, processing was slow, and mistrust and a lack of communication

existed among the diverse armed forces. Various smaller, but significant confrontations, hiccups and irritations have continued to take place between combatants that stood in constant opposition to each other during the apartheid era. For example, in September 1999, a former NSF black Lieutenant in the SANDF killed seven white officers and a white civilian in a large military base near Bloemfontein. Senior military officials hold the view that the black officer responsible for the massacre was one of many former liberation soldiers who are extremely dissatisfied with the pace of change in the newly formed South African military establishment (Field notes 05/10/99).

In practical terms, it could be said that the systems and structure of the old SADF formed the basis for the SANDF. But through recognition of prior learning, bridging courses, sensitivity to cultural diversity and rapid promotion, the newly formed SANDF should begin to reflect the demographic composition of South African society at all levels. Balancing the composition of the SANDF remains a major challenge for the new defence force. In 1998 the SANDF comprised 70 percent black and 30 percent white. Despite the appointment of no fewer than 15 black generals and a black general who has in 1998 been appointed to be the chief of the SANDF, less than ten percent of the former NSF members who had chosen to remain in the new SANDF are officers (SAPA, 26 May 1998).

1.1 What the Thesis is About

This thesis concentrates on my introduction of an emancipatory educational paradigm that can make people aware not just about marginalisation in the SANDF, but also of their roles in its perpetuation and thus contributing to bridging the gap between policy and practice in the transformation process of education and training in the South African National Defence Force. It focuses on the integration process of the statutory and non-statutory forces into the SANDF and its implications for education and training for the members of the defence force in the new dispensation in South Africa. The thesis highlights the challenges encountered in creating a defence force of national unity charged with the responsibility to uphold the Constitution of 1996 and promote nation-building within the ranks of the national defence force and in South Africa at large.

The argument of the thesis is that, first, the creation of national unity and a non-discriminatory environment within education and training in the SANDF and in the broader community of the defence force cannot be separated from the broader project of national unity, reconciliation, reconstruction and development in the South African society at large. Second, a spirit of tolerance, mutual acceptance and partnership in the SANDF and in the education and training of its members cannot be separated from the role the SANDF has to play in the Country and in the peace keeping-missions outside the borders of South Africa.

As this is an action research project, in this case involving a self-reflective enquiry undertaken by soldiers in a military situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own military practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out (Carr and Kemmis 1986:162), I will, as a starting point to the above-mentioned reflections revisit the history and experiences that have had a profound influence on me personally as an action researcher, as well as the role I played in response to the history and the experiences I encountered. I will also trace the circumstances that led me into my present role in the SANDF. Obviously, my past history, knowledge and experience will have an important role of influencing my perception of the integration process of the SANDF, my role within it, as well as the kinds of questions that will be of interest to me regarding the

education and training of soldiers in the new dispensation in South Africa. To Grundy and Kemmis, action research is grounded in present practice, and seeks to relate retrospective understandings reached through past action, observation and reflection to prospective action and plans for future action (1981:7).

I will also look at why an action research methodology is appropriate to bring about an awareness concerning issues of inequality, marginalisation, discrimination and the impact of transformation policies and programmes in the Defence Force's education and training programmes. In Chapter Two, I will look at what action research actually is and how it works. Chapter Three focuses on the nature of the military within which action research is used by soldiers as a methodology of studying the impact of transformation policies and programmes of the democratically elected government of South Africa. I also look at the role of duty sheets in the military and also provide my own duty sheet (as an appendix to this thesis) as an example of what duty sheets look like. In Chapters Four and Five I concentrate first, on my attempts to creating conducive conditions for action research and second, I concentrate on the actual action research projects in the SANDF which are followed by the reflections and the way forward in Chapter Six.

In the section below I attempt, as a starting point to the above-mentioned reflections to revisit the history and experiences that have had a profound influence on my personality as well as the role I played in response to the history and the experiences I encountered. I also trace the circumstances that led me into my present role in the SANDF.

The aim of the reflections is to establish how my understandings and practices are a product of my own past and present situations underpinning them.

1.2 My Involvement in the Project

I am a Major in the South African National Defence Force, I was born on 6 May 1966, in the Eastern Cape, and I am Xhosa speaking.

My English name is Sebastian. I got it from my Sub A teacher, Miss Kakaza, who was a good friend of my elder brother. I was much older when I got curious and asked why this name? I was told that people loved the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Miss Kakaza passed away before I was old enough to ask her who this was. But I later got to know about who this was, and in that way I got introduced to classical music.

The name that my parents bestowed on me is Khaya lethu, which means "our home". To explain how I got this name, I need to explain the names of the whole family; all the names are interconnected and there are always many expectations when people are given names.

Hamana was actually the first name of my grandparent, whose surname was Nquma. Hamana used to own a big piece of land which was ploughed and kept livestock, cattle, sheep and goats. Hamana died, not many years after the 1913 Land Act. The Land Act signalled the time when black people were being dispossessed of their land as it confined land ownership for the African majority to a tiny arid proportion of the country and in that way legally entrenched and intensified the results of centuries of colonial land dispossession⁵. After Hamana's death,

⁵See The Path to Power, Programme of the South African Communist Party adopted at its 7th Congress in Cuba, 1989. See p. 21 in particular.

my grandmother, MamCirha, changed the family's surname from Nquma to Hamana. Although Hamana does not have a meaning, she wanted her children to grow up with the name of their grandparent who had owned the land and had lost it. She wanted that name to live on, and in that way she was invoking the spirits of the past and attaching importance to the traditions of earlier generations. It was a brave and important thing that she did for our family then, and something that came to have great meaning to me, in relation to my own name.

But I think we also find this tradition in other cultures. In Marx's 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte⁶, Marx writes about how in times of stress the names and traditions of the past are invoked.

I was the sixth child, and there was a lot of meaning attached to my name, Khayaletu, because when people are uprooted from their land their home is taken away. I remember when I first started becoming conscious of my family's past history and making sense of the meaning of my name, we lived in a church mission. My father was a preacher and was looking after the church. But, soon, because of church politics, my father lost that place. It was then that my family started to split up, and my elder brothers and sisters started moving away. My parents came to Cape Town, and lived in the migrant workers' hostels in Langa.

My two younger sisters and I stayed with our grandmother (from my mother's side) in the rural area, and we had to walk a long distance to school (whilst the white pupils were always travelling in their school bus to their well resourced and very attractive school). Then we went to stay with relatives from my father's side of the family, from the Mgiqwa clan.

On this long road to our school, ~~Balfour Bantu School~~, as it was then known, we would suddenly form up and walk in a line when approaching the police station. No one of us questioned this behaviour. It was simply an acceptable way of doing things in Balfour. I never knew the name of the white children's school. The only thing I knew about it is that it was very beautiful, big, surrounded by lights and that it had a beautiful green rugby field. But I never knew what their classrooms looked like inside.

Our school's appearance was very different from the one of white pupils, the walls were made of mud, the floors were kept clean by the girls with cow dung, the dusty assembly area and the rough playing field had to be cleaned mostly by the boys. In Sub A, Sub B and Standard 1 we did not have desks, we had to wait for the cow dung to get dry before we could sit on the floor. In December 1979 we came to Cape Town and stayed in the migrant workers' hostels in Zone 5 in Langa⁷, sometimes stayed with my mother who had sleep-in jobs in places like Durbanville and later in Pinelands⁸. It was in the house of my mother's employer in Pinelands that my dreams of home were formed. We had happy times playing with the children here and swimming in their pool. When my parents gave me my name they hoped that I would be the person that would give us a home.

⁶See Marx, K. (1885) The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. p. 96.

⁷First black township in the Western Cape.

⁸Pinelands, as with Durbanville, was under apartheid South Africa a residential area exclusively for white privileged classes.

Clearly, the background of social, political, economical and educational deprivation and marginalisation, that one shared in as part and parcel of the overwhelming majority of South Africans who are the victims of more than three hundred years of colonialism and more than four decades of institutionalised racism, can be said to have been designed to imbue its victims with self-pity and a docile attitude towards life. Neither one's religion nor one's schooling encouraged one to be critical and capable of questioning the status quo in order to change it.

Some writers make the point that action research is based on a critical self-reflection and research undertaken by a person on his or her own actions with the aim of bringing about improvements in those actions, improvement in the understanding of the actions by the one embarking on them and on a specific social environment which provides the basis of the person's actions. Action research often presents a challenge to the status quo, and in the hostile environment which may result, collaboration may be a practical necessity, since it provides a means of collegial support (McNiff, 1988:70-72; Carr and Kemmis, 1986:206-207). Other writers from the North, (like Elliott, 1988 and Stenhouse, 1975: 142) went much further to assert that the culture of critical self-reflection and self-research is intrinsic to a teacher's work and is not something that developed from outside teacher ranks that can be brought to teachers from somewhere else. In my own background no such a commitment to critical self-reflection and improvement existed.

The kind of schooling the black youth had been through in the rural areas of South Africa took place in very appalling conditions. The school buildings were dilapidated, classrooms were overcrowded to the seams and the teachers as a result of their impoverished education and training backgrounds under apartheid, relied heavily on transmission methods of teaching; thus, rote learning took place and the testing of memorised facts came in at the end of the course. For example, the big numbers of students in the classrooms contributed to making individual attention to pupils impossible, thus teachers relied on drilling, chanting and making students repeat things over and over in order to get them ready to reproduce these "facts" in the examination. Beyond the examination, students often found it impossible to apply the knowledge in real life situations outside the classroom.

It is true that bantu education produced a cheap and exploitable workforce out of Africans, and through this process a full circle has now been completed with products of bantu education constituting the majority of the teaching core with devastating effects for the quality of black school leavers. The underdevelopment of the potential amongst black South Africans in particular has been an important part of the strategy for domination of the majority by a minority⁹. But it is equally true that bantu education also produced a number of people who are currently holding important leadership positions in South Africa and who made immense contributions to the demise of the apartheid system and its policies in education.

I can think of the influx of publications and journals such as 'Inkqubela'(Xhosa word for progress) which freely circulated among people in the community at large and in the school, and which carried articles on a wide variety of topics like religion and politics. As a child I used to read the articles in these journals both for my parents and for myself as was encouraged both at school and at home partly to improve my reading and writing skills.

⁹See Ramphele, M. Social Disintegration in the Black Community: Implications for Social Transformation, in Everatt, D. and Sisulu, E. (eds.) Black Youth in Crisis: Facing the Future, Braamfontein, 1992. pp. 1-29,

As my family spent time living in the church mission, I read with interest articles in the above-mentioned journals about communism and the church and about terrorism. The articles were always very clear in their resolve to equip the population with steps to take in case of an encounter with, for example, a “terrorist” (an apartheid government’s term for a freedom fighter), the priest, the police or the school principal had to be notified first of the presence of such persons in the community; this was the clear message carried through the above-mentioned journals.

Thus Meerkotter and van den Berg¹⁰ argued that innovation in South African schools under apartheid was almost inevitably seen as a politically provocative or dangerous act and that two things can be said about how schools function:

- a. they tend to be promoting the views that the dominant order within society seeks to establish and promote, and
- b. they tend to be functioning to reproduce the social, economic and political order supported by those who rule.

Today, I think that my reading skills developed substantially from reading ‘Inkqubela’ as was envisaged by my teachers and parents, but, I do not think that the content was always appropriate, in the sense that I cannot think of anything that I read in those publications that represented a different point of view to that of the white minority government; in that way, the materials failed to allow the students and the population at large reading the materials to evaluate and weigh the different points of view held by people with differing backgrounds and experiences. The experiences and views of the very wise and caring African women and men in the community, who taught children like myself at the time, a lot of critically important lessons were never given a meaningful expression in the above-mentioned publications; for example, you could hardly read anything about the experiences of those who were forcibly removed from their lands. My personal interaction with old women and men from a number of villages in the Eastern Cape, also provided me with a practical lesson on Ubuntu¹¹ which I hardly read about in the above-mentioned material.

Unlike some European conceptions of community which are more individual-centred, most African conceptions emphasise that an individual can only reach his or her maturity through interaction with the community. For example, a word ‘*intsengebheka*’, is a Xhosa word for a cow that one neighbour lends to a destitute member of the community so that the latter can use it as a source of food and happiness¹².

In Sesotho, ‘*motho ke motho ka batho*’, persons are persons through persons. The powerful principle of the notion of sharing and respect and the awareness of the interdependence of the

¹⁰Paper read at the Subject Didactics Symposium of the University of Port Elizabeth and Port Elizabeth College of Education, 29 September 1988.

¹¹For a clear exposition of the Philosophy of Ubuntu see Shutte (1993) in particular chapter 5 ‘Traditional African thought’. There is a striking similarity with the principles of the Gandhian Sarvodaya movement which promoted the upliftment of all through all.

¹²See Mandela, N. Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, 1994. p.11 and p. 329 in particular.

person, the community and nature forms the basis of Ubuntu. President Thabo Mbeki promotes the idea of 'African Renaissance' and numerous publications and workshops on Ubuntu or Community have been launched¹³. Those who believe in an African Renaissance believe that it is a different mind-set that could pave the way for an indigenous development as it belongs to the living social experience of the majority of the population.

The indigenous notion of interdependency could also provide the necessary indigenisation to an emerging action research movement¹⁴ and its theory and practice in South Africa and promote understanding for the interdependency of cultures in institutions like the South African National Defence Force, which could be an important source for nation-building.

In my view, the fact that action research has helped bring about improvements in a wide variety of situations¹⁵, does not detract from the fact that no situation is exactly the same as the other (and no teaching and learning experience is exactly the same as the other), thus we cannot superimpose the experiences from one situation to another. At the same time, the fact that the situations and experiences of people embarking on action research projects differ, does not mean that people in a specific situation should only be inward looking and neglect relevant lessons from outside their situation. Action research, it could be said, is about the unity of general and particular experiences and of the unity of theory and practice (McNiff, 1988: 70-72; Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 206-207). In other words we need not be doctrinaire and narrow in our approach to action research. To be doctrinaire, on the one hand, would mean treating one situation as a carbon copy of the other, that what applies in one situation exactly applies to the other. Thus the point made at the beginning of this thesis that an action research theory that developed in the industrialised countries of the North cannot simplistically be applied in the set-up of the developing countries of the South. To be narrow, on the other, means being locked into one's own world and being unable to appreciate what others elsewhere have come up with, which might be relevant or not relevant for one's situation. South Africa cannot afford to see itself in isolation from the rest of the world, but, as part of it, and similarly, an institution like the SANDF cannot afford to see itself outside of the rapidly changing Public Service Sector in South Africa which exists within the context of the African continent and the rest of the world.

I find action research and Ubuntu very much at home with each other. In action research, the practitioner is seen as the subject rather than the object of the research (Hopkins, 1984 and Winter 1989: 4), but, in spite of the stress on self-research, most contemporary studies in action research put an emphasis on the need for practitioners to provide a balance to each other's possibly biased self-perceptions by collaborating on the basis of equality when embarking on self-research (Grundy, 1987:142 and Winter, 1989:55-59), which is all very much consistent with the principle of the interdependence of the individual, the community and nature that forms the basis of Ubuntu. In both Ubuntu and in action research the inputs

¹³Like Bhengu, M.J. (1996), Boon, M. (1996) and Mbingi, L. *et al* 1995.

¹⁴For a clear explanation of how action research developed in South Africa, see van den Berg, O. and Meerkotter, D. (1993) *Emancipatory Action Research in South Africa: From Critical Opposition to Critical Support*, in Boog, B. *et al* (eds.) (1996) *Theory and Practice of Action Research with special reference to the Netherlands*, Tilburg University Press.

¹⁵See Adelman, C. Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research, in *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 1, no.1, 1993. pp. 7-24.

from an individual receive the necessary recognition and are not seen in isolation from the inputs of others and the contexts that underpin them.

Without having to overemphasise the lessons about community or Ubuntu acquired from ordinary men and women from the most marginalised areas of South Africa and their relationship to action research, one also needs to say something about certain issues that needed improvement which action research could possibly help to address.

The culture of not questioning things is an important issue that needed to be addressed, for example, walking in a single file when approaching a police station; not problematising that sort of behaviour helped to socialise the youth from a very early age into a culture of conformity. Such a culture of conformity played a destructive role in the sense that it helped to preserve the status quo rather than challenging it. That culture of not questioning things among many people could be attributed to two things: First, the defeat of the courageous armed struggles waged by African traditional societies against colonialism, and second, to the suppression and banning by the apartheid government of organisations like the SACP in 1950, the ANC and the PAC in 1960. According to Jack and Ray Simons, the Zulu rebellion of 1906, in which almost 4000 Africans were killed, marked the last chapter in 250 years of armed struggle by the traditional societies against white invaders (1983:31).

Sexism was also a big problem that contributed towards the stifling of the social skills and intellectual development among the youth and the community at large. To this day, one still regards the cleaning of the house and a classroom by girls with cow dung a very unpleasant task that society imposed exclusively upon women. Male students at school never had their share of having to touch and smear cow dung on the classroom floors with their hands. The question is, If boys are barred from touching cow dung, will they be able when they become adults to change the nappies of their children or will it still be another job that a woman alone must do? I wish that teachers and students at Balfour Bantu school knew something about action research and that such questions as mentioned above were asked many years ago in my own childhood. Nobody that I knew questioned the fact that all the overcrowded lower grade classrooms were always the responsibility of female teachers whilst their male counterparts occupied all the senior and promotional posts like Head of Department, Deputy Principal or Principal.

On 16 June 1976, secondary school students of Soweto¹⁶ decided that they would not submit to the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and they also showed that they had had enough of racist, sexist and inferior education. The events of 1976 and those that were to follow accelerated the break with a culture of silence and pacifism.

Not even the live ammunition fired at the students by the apartheid State's security forces could dampen the student's resolve and determination as they marched towards Orlando stadium to hold a protest mass meeting. The protest by students and the resulting deaths marked the beginning of an uprising which spread rapidly throughout South Africa; hundreds of school students were killed and education had clearly become a violent and confrontational terrain¹⁷.

¹⁶Soweto stands for South Western Townships, a residential area for black people near Johannesburg.

¹⁷See Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980's, Johannesburg, 1991. p. 104.

The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) which was formed in 1979¹⁸ was to become the largest mass-based student organisation South Africa had ever seen. In 1982, driven to a great extent by the problem of homelessness which increasingly affected my studies in a negative way and inspired by the COSAS slogan: Each One Teach One, and by one of its powerful teachings, that, before one is the student, he or she is first and foremost the member of society, I joined COSAS whilst being a student at Langa High School. On its 60th anniversary in 1997, Langa High, the first black high school near Cape Town, was to present me, whilst being a commissioned officer in the newly formed SANDF with an Achievement Award “in recognition of your achievements and contribution to our rainbow nation”. Having joined COSAS felt more than just belonging to a natural political home, but it also gave me a sense of having begun to live up to my name, because there were so many students at Langa High School who had the same homelessness problem as I did and who also belonged to COSAS. Moreover, having listened to old men and women in the migrant worker’s hostels further exposed me to the bitter memories that people had about how they were forcibly removed from places like Cape Town, Kensington and Ndabeni which they regarded as their homes before being removed, and where they had lived in harmony with people from different cultural backgrounds. Ubuntu, which I learnt about and had lived in the rural areas, sat very well with the principles of COSAS, because COSAS never saw students as existing outside or above the community, but as people who constantly had to learn from each other both at school and within the broader context of the community with the aim of transforming education and the broader social, political and economic context that underpins it. The programme of action of COSAS¹⁹ sought to achieve dynamic, free and compulsory education for all. The organisation was in the forefront of educational protest, consistently demanding the abolition of the harshest features of black education-inferior and segregated schooling, poor facilities, shortages of textbooks, exclusions of students for political reasons, age limits, corporal punishment, sexual harassment and the like.

In 1983 I got elected onto the Western Cape Regional Executive Committee as the Publicity Secretary and in 1984, right up to its banning by the apartheid government in 1985, I served as the Chairperson of COSAS’s Western Cape Region.

In the heat of school boycotts in 1985, people came together to form what became known as the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee (SPCC) and the convening of the first Education Crisis Conference in Johannesburg²⁰. It was at this historic meeting where the future alternative education system was given attention. And it was at the very same meeting where some flesh was given to the slogan of People’s Education for People’s Power. The aims of People’s Education for People’s Power were explained as follows:

It enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial, democratic system.

¹⁸See Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980's, Johannesburg, 1991. pp. 104-123.

¹⁹See Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980's, Johannesburg, 1991. pp. 104-123.

²⁰See van den Berg, O. and Meerkotter, D. (1993) Action Research in South Africa: Classroom Transformation in a Political Cauldron. in da Costa, Y.; Julie, C. and Meerkotter, D. (eds.) (1994) Let the Voices be Heard: Process and Practice in Education, Cape Town, pp. 297-317.

It contributes to eliminating capitalist norms of competition, individualism, and develops and encourages collective input and active participation by all.

It eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of any person by another.

It equips and trains all people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain People's Power in order to establish a non-racial, democratic South Africa.

It allows students, parents, teachers and workers to be mobilized into appropriate organizational structures.

It enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression at their workplace (SAIRR, 1985: 395).

COSAS represented the interests of its students' constituency in the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). The NECC was a mass-based organisation which also included in its ranks, the teachers and the parents. The SPCC had at this stage been transformed into being part of the much wider and national NECC. After the second Consultative Conference in Durban in March 1986, the NECC decided that students should go back to school.

The decade of the 1980's was a time of mass organisation and mass uprisings throughout the Country. By the end of 1989, this mass organisation had become so resilient and strong that it was clear that the decisive shift from the politics of resistance to the politics of transformation was about to take place. The United Democratic Front (UDF) formed in August 1983 of which the NECC was an affiliate, brought together more than 600 youth structures, student organisations, trade unions, church groups, civic organisations, women's groups and political organisations. The UDF identified clearly with the African National Congress (ANC) and the Congress tradition²¹.

The campaign of the racist regime to win the hearts and minds of the people for their broader strategy was to help alienate and isolate the activists. During this period (1980's), the police were often looking for me because of my political activities, coming into our domestic backyards, and then people (even those close to us) would say we must leave that particular place, go and find another.

At that time I started, as the leader of COSAS, to teach people in the community and in the school about the Freedom Charter, especially about the clause stating that: "There shall be houses, security and comfort".

In 1983 I got recruited into the underground structures of Umkhonto we Sizwe²²

²¹See Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980's, Johannesburg, 1991. pp. 13-15.

²²After so many decades of peaceful resistance in the face of State violence, the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) concluded that force must be met with force, and in 1961 formed Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), Spear of the Nation, which became known as the military wing of the ANC. See Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980's, Johannesburg, 1991. pp. 13-15. Also see Mandela, N. Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, London, 1994. pp. 325-450 and Slovo, J. Slovo: The unfinished Autobiography, Randburg, 1995. pp. 145-158.

under the auspices of MK's Western Cape's Regional Command of which the late SANDF Lieutenant Colonel, Lizo Ngqungwana, was a Commander. The Western Cape Regional Command was later to come under the leadership of Commander Tony Yengeni, presently the ANC's Chief Whip in the National Assembly. I then started by recruiting my own brother, Mbuyiseli (a Xhosa name, meaning, the one who returns things to where they belong) who together with a number of others and myself serve in the SANDF as senior commissioned officers of the State. For me it was important when identifying people for the rigours of military training to start by looking for possible recruits in my own home, partly out of belief in the old African saying, that, '*umntu uqala ngokutshayela kokwabo phambi kokuba aye kutshayela izindlu zabanye*', you begin by cleaning your own home before you can clean those of others. Mbuyiseli was a son of my father's (Guga, the one who was born when the parents were quite old) younger brother, Sindekile (the one who was conceived and born late in lives of his parents), who according to the family's oral history, whilst being a Sub B pupil at school, was used as a boy child of his family to sign the land of his ancestors away. At the time when Sindekile signed himself and his family away, his elder brother Guga, was busy with stick fighting²³ in the bush and had already dropped out of school in Standard 1. But, I am happy that the Xhosa meaning of the name Mbuyiseli did not play a major role in my recruiting of him to MK, as opposed to his character which I thought was suitable for the task at hand.

I also worked in a separate unit of the South African Communist Party (SACP) very closely with Commander Lerumo Kalako who had been released after serving a long sentence on Robben Island for his MK activities. The focus of the SACP unit was to help rebuild the cells of the South African Congress of Trade Unions²⁴ (SACTU) in the Western Cape. The SACP unit also served as a literature distribution machine, for example, the SACP had published a leaflet that commemorated the 1946 miners' strike and the unit played an important role of distributing the pamphlet amongst workers. In a humble way, this work contributed towards paving the way for the formation of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) which was launched in 1985 at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Commander Kalako is now a member of the National Parliament.

In 1992 I worked at (ERIP) Education Resource and Information Project at the University of the Western Cape. ERIP was engaged in popular education and community empowerment and was also inspired by the emancipatory aims of People's Education for People's Power and by the radical theories like the work of a famous Brazilian emancipatory educator, Paulo Freire²⁵.

It is at ERIP where some of our underground materials were developed. ERIP (formerly called the Education Resource and Information Centre, ERIC) was founded early in 1981. A group

²³A champion in this game, which prepares boys to be effective fighters in battles, earns him the love and respect from both women and men.

²⁴After the National Party came to power in 1948, black unions found many of their leaders banned from trade union work under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. Determined to resist, the union movement regrouped and in 1955 formed SACTU, see *Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980's*, Johannesburg, 1991. pp. 44-71.

²⁵See Pitt, B. and Michell, M. *Making Workshops Work: A youth trainer's guide to planning, organising and running educational programmes*, Cape Town, 1992. p. 125.

of community activists, teachers and university-based academics decided to start a project to provide information, resources, training and education for members of community organisations around the Cape Peninsula. Trevor Manuel, presently South Africa's Minister of Finance, was among the first community activists who volunteered to form part of the ERIP staff.

Former Director General in the President's office, (during former President Nelson Mandela's term of office as State President), and former Rector of the University of the Western Cape, Professor Jakes Gerwel, said, although ERIP was based in Cape Town as the project of the University of the Western Cape, it was a precursor to scores of similar projects set up throughout the country which were staffed mainly by community activists who were committed to freeing South Africa from a repressive and unrepresentative government, and building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and united South African society. The establishment of resource centres was an important step in the process of empowering organisations and communities in the struggle for a free South Africa²⁶.

At ERIP I took responsibility for co-ordinating the Youth Leadership and Development Programme (YLDP) of which the ERIP Youth Leadership and Development Course (YLDC) was an integral part. The YLDC was a pilot course that was aimed at assisting youth and youth organisations to develop a vision as well as equipping them with practical skills to help them realise their vision.

The YLDC was initiated by ERIP through discussions with different community, political, youth and development organisations. Once the course was agreed to and endorsed, a Management Committee (MC) was established to determine policy for the course. The MC consisted of representatives from UWC, ERIP and different youth sectors participating in the course. An example of policy in the initial stages, was the MC helping to determine the selection criteria for attendance as well as the curriculum.

Advertising for the course was started by a range of organisations amongst their ranks. Different organisations followed different procedures for putting forward candidates. We stipulated that all applicants were to be active leaders within their organisations, and that they should have an official organisational mandate to be part of the course. This implied that their organisation would relieve them from a number of organisational duties and responsibilities for the duration of the course.

All applicants were then interviewed by members of the MC. Unsuccessful applicants in the majority of cases did not represent an organisation, did not get an organisational mandate, or did not meet specific criteria such as the required language (understanding English) proficiency level. In the latter instance discussion has happened with organisations that a short course be constructed for the future in one of the indigenous languages (eg Xhosa) for those applicants failing on language.

All 44 successful applicants attended an initial pre-course meeting in which the course content was introduced and participants put forward their expectations of the course, and assessed to what extent the content would meet their expectations. (That meeting also decided to postpone

²⁶See Pitt, B. and Michell, M. *Making Workshops Work: A youth trainer's guide to planning, organising and running educational programmes*, Cape Town, 1992. p. i-ii.

the start of the course by one week to avoid a clash with the ANC Week of Mass Action scheduled for the same dates).

Participants were drawn from cultural, religious, political, sports, and service organisations. The majority of participants came from the Peninsula and surrounding areas. Women constituted just over 25%, which was half of our stated objective of having a minimum of 50% women participants. Although there had been extensive discussion and negotiation with organisations on this issue, ERIP and the Management Committee reached an agreement to accept the few nominations put forward. A commitment was made that such a situation would have to be addressed for the next course.

The content areas covered were:

- Understanding Society Module
- Development Module
- Youth in Society Module
- Project Planning Module
- Writing and Reading Skills Module
- Research Skills Module
- Computer and Word Processing Module
- Group Skills Module

Students also completed prescribed Practical Projects and were attached to a number of different organisations for the whole month as part of a combined exposure and in-service training programme.

Interestingly for me, particularly in terms of the history, knowledge and experience I was bringing to ERIP, I was given the responsibility of teaching the Understanding Society Module. First, it is necessary to emphasise the fact that the curriculum development process at ERIP was a collaborative one, in the sense that it was enriched by the collective wisdom and experiences of all the stakeholders which included ERIP staff members, organisations that sent their members onto the course, students and representatives from UWC. Thus, one does not think that what one was doing in the classroom was alien to the experiences of one's students and was imposed upon one's shoulders from above, because ERIP never denied trainers an opportunity to learn from and enrich the curriculum development process. Active participation by students in all aspects of the curriculum was always an important source for determining the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. As in Ubuntu, central to ERIP's work, there was a recognition of the interdependence between each person's knowledge and experience on the one hand, ERIP as an organisation engaged in popular education, and the role ERIP had to play in empowering the most marginalised sections of the community to effectively play their role in the struggle against apartheid, on the other. The same old principle learnt in the rural areas, of, persons are persons through other persons, was very much well and alive at ERIP.

What was also very interesting about ERIP was its white, male, middle-aged, Director, Garth Strachan, a member of the Central Committee of the SACP and presently serving as a member of Parliament in Cape Town. Garth enthusiastically stood as a referee and organised a loan for me to pay Lobola, and that was a direct opposite of what I had learnt about communists in 'Inkqubela'. In 'Inkqubela', communists were portrayed as people who were fiercely opposed to and against the cultures of other people.

From ERIP, in 1995 I went to join the Integration Process into the SANDF. Former MK commanders and SANDF Lieutenant Colonels, Sazi Veldtman, Norman Yengeni, and Lizo Ngqungwana (former Western Cape regional commander of MK) had informed me that my name appeared on the Certified Personnel Register (CPR) of Umkhonto We Sizwe. In this way, they encouraged me to join the integration process. I was very excited. I immediately thought that the experiences I had gathered over the years, coupled with my four years of training as a teacher at UWC, would put me in a favourable position to help effect change in the new force that was being born.

I was part of Intake Five that left Cape Town on 19 May 1995 to join others in the Assembly area called Wallmansthal near Pretoria. We arrived there on a very rainy day, the place was very noisy, characterised by very long queues and others being drilled in the rain. We were put under the command of the troops from former TBVC states, a situation that reminded me of the days when, as students, we were not questioning anything about our walking in a single line when approaching the police station. In other words, the SANDF effectively robbed the former NSF members of all that was good about their collective history. The experience of Ubuntu, partnership and co-operation between the integrating member forces of the SANDF was non-existent and the realisation soon came to mind that we were dealing with the same security forces that sought to suppress resistance to apartheid particularly in the decade of the 1980's which preceded the elections of the Democratic Government in 1994. Many former NSF members with proud records of active participation and involvement in the struggle against apartheid, were only left with pacifism, which is reminiscent of the mid 1960's when major political organisations were banned by the apartheid government in South Africa.

The NSF members found themselves in a situation where they had to play the game according to the terms of the dominant integrating partner (SF) in the new SANDF and that made NSF soldiers vulnerable and open to all sorts of negative attitudes and values, like, petty bickering, destructive competition and lack of co-operation amongst each other in a situation that needed maximum unity, collective empowerment and co-operation as they (NSF) were all integrated into a system that was designed to deny them those things.

To compound matters, the military backgrounds of the integrating forces were quite different. The statutory forces, were trained, organised and operated in a western conventional mode. The non-statutory soldiers, were trained mainly in guerrilla warfare in various countries of the world, some with conventional training, others in crash courses internally and externally²⁷.

It appears that the transformation of the organisational culture in the SANDF would need processes whereby the existing culture is acknowledged as being undesirable and that the stakeholders define the kind of organisational culture that contributes to the mission-readiness of the SANDF and the steps to realise it. When the defining process is done for an individual and he or she is not part of it, the individual and (hence) the organisation lacks the will to change, and that is why a change management team needed to evolve from all the integrating member forces of the SANDF. Education and training is part of the process of change, it is only a part and not the whole process.

The integration process of the SANDF was the beginning of yet another painful and

²⁷Salut, Vol. 5, no. 3. (Apr. 1998). p. 19.

humiliating process on the part of NSF soldiers. The NSF saw their experience, knowledge and history being scorned and down-graded, they saw themselves disappearing in the culture and structure of the SADF. It felt as if the old apartheid government was still in place and that the struggles, particularly those of 1976 which culminated in the Defiance Campaign of 1989 against an unrepresentative government never took place, if one is to describe the type of atmosphere that was prevalent during the early days of the integration process, and this is a personal view.

The point is that the value basis of the ex-NSF soldier was consciously undermined and this undermining was reinforced in the SADF framework by what was seen by a number of NSF soldiers as neglect from their former support structures. In this ex-NSF soldier's state of confused vacuum, seemingly, it becomes easier and convenient to embrace a new framework without questioning it. The question of who then carries the framework and the values that underlie a new democratic dispensation in the South African National Defence Force remains more critical than ever.

Curricula in the SANDF did not give credit to the multicultural integration process of the Defence Force. The fact of the matter is that curricula in the SANDF continued to be based on the knowledge conceptions of the old SADF and were predominantly mono-cultural, thus not helping the nation-building process which was expected to grow out of the entire process of the multicultural integration process of the SANDF. It is impossible to separate the educational practice of an individual instructor and his or her students from the whole school and to separate the school from the entire organisation of the SANDF. Changes in the training practice of instructors need to enhance and be assisted in turn by the changes in the school and in the SANDF as a whole.

A few months later, after being ranked as Captain in 1995 with a functional rank of training officer, I decided to go back to UWC in 1996 to register for a B.Ed²⁸ degree, which I managed to complete together with my military bridging training during that same year. I also wanted to rediscover the experience of Ubuntu, co-operation, and one's roots of resistance and struggle which, to me, had become synonymous with the University of the Western Cape and which were nowhere to be found in the SANDF. It is in the B.Ed programme where I had my first encounter with action research. After completing the B.Ed in 1996, two professors and lecturers in the department of Didactics at UWC, Professor Cyril Julie and Professor Dirk Meerkotter (Dean of the Faculty of Education) one after another, encouraged me to study further towards the degree of Master's of Education (M.Ed) in Action Research. The above-mentioned professors and other colleagues in the Education Faculty played a key role in the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) that was affiliated to the UDF.

Professor Meerkotter, a product of the Rand Afrikaans University and a People's Education Commissar (1990-1991), who is my supervisor for this thesis, founded together with Professor Owen van den Berg, the action research master's programme at UWC of which Professor Meerkotter is a co-coordinator.

²⁸The B.Ed is a post-graduate, post-diploma, post-experience qualification, roughly the equivalent of the standard USA master's degree in terms of the quality of work done.

1.3 Why Action Research?

Action research sits quite well with my democratic and political values, experience, knowledge and past history of involvement at different levels in the struggle for the political, social and economic upliftment and emancipation of the majority of the poorest of the poor in South Africa who bore the brunt of over forty years of institutionalised racism and three and a half centuries of colonialism.

Action research is a tool in the hands of the most marginalised sections of society to fight and expose hegemony, racism, sexism, colonialism, and all forms of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. In the context of the SANDF, action research strengthens the soldiers' resolve to defend and uphold the government's policy of Reconstruction and Development programme of which the main aim is the upliftment of the most marginalised sections of the society on the one hand, and to rid the armed forces of our democratic society of any signs of racism, sexism, tribalism and other forms of discriminatory practices that have their roots in many decades of apartheid colonialism, on the other.

The integration process fell short of producing mutual adaptation and collaboration on the basis of equality between the various stakeholders and/or member forces of the SANDF, with the result that solutions offered by the statutory forces located at the top of the SANDF often failed to take into account the knowledge, practical experience and the value system of the NSF soldier. It is acceptable beyond doubt that in terms of the civil-military relations²⁹ that decision-making affecting the entire defence force comes from the top, in this case the democratically elected Government. But, if the armed forces are to succeed in their task one needs both the top and middle management structures to be critically loyal to the democratically elected Government and to the South African citizenry which they have to serve. What seemed to have happened in the SANDF is that the life of former NSF soldiers was often made miserable by the dominant SF soldiers in order to create a general atmosphere of dissatisfaction about the Government and its policies ... particularly those that relate to the SANDF. This is a very serious situation as a number of NSF soldiers believe that their value base was undermined from the beginning and eroded first by their former colleagues in the liberation Struggle (their own former-support structures) and who currently occupy important positions in the State institutions like the SANDF. This NSF state of vulnerability was to be intensified and deepened within the statutory structure and system of the SANDF (which was inherited from the SADF), and that, if not addressed immediately, will have far-reaching consequences for the future of the armed forces and stability in South Africa.

In order to address the above-mentioned situation, action research could play an important role. But the role that action research could play in the SANDF must, as mentioned earlier, take into account the fact that the SANDF is a military organisation and military organisations are based on the principle of hierarchy, according to which the lower office is by law subjected to the dictates of the higher office³⁰. Thus the military has a rank structure, and flowing from the above considerations, it is logical that action research cannot be targeted at a specific level of the defence force and not at the other. Self-research and collaboration from

²⁹See the White Paper on Defence, 1996. p. 10.

³⁰See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. p. 43.

the top to the bottom of the defence force can contribute towards creating the unity of thought that is so pivotal to the military's effective execution of its responsibilities that are spelt out in the Constitution.

My experience of facilitating action research in the military health services of the SANDF has taught me that it is not enough to get action research endorsed and supported by people at the top and then proceed to facilitate the projects at the "lower" level without involving the top echelon in the actual project work. Action research, according to writers like Hopkins (1985: 56) and McNiff (1988: 3) is fundamentally a form of strategic action directed at improving a particular social practice. For example, if the SANDF must do something about sexism in the SANDF, then not only must women be put in key positions, but there must also be an effort by everyone from top to bottom, an effort by the force itself to question its own attitudes towards women and men and also to look at the origins of those attitudes that have to be questioned. Then, I believe, educational action research can play a role in facilitating processes whereby individuals and groups of soldiers decide to change their views about each other and their actions towards each other towards a changed SANDF. Confining the above-mentioned exercise to two or three practitioners will not do much to change male domination in the SANDF and in the broader South African society. The view expressed above is not arguing in favour of institutionalising action research in the SANDF. By institutionalising it in the SANDF, action research will appear to soldiers as yet another prescription which must be accepted without question. On the contrary, action research is a way of taking a systematic, close, critical look at "the way we do things", with a view to changing it so that the educational experience becomes a more meaningful one for all those involved in it³¹.

It is important at this stage to begin looking at the theory of action research so that, without being dogmatic, relevant lessons can be learnt for the developing situation in the SANDF and in South Africa at large, thus also contributing to the development of the theory and practice of action research which will hopefully guide the future practices of soldiers in the SANDF and even be of help to others elsewhere, in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Angola where South Africa, under resolutions of the United Nations and regional organisations such as the SADC and OAU, is expected to make contributions to bringing about peace and stability in the African continent³².

³¹See Davidoff, S. and van den Berg, O. *Changing Your Teaching: The Challenge of the Classroom*, Pietermaritzburg, 1990. p. 28.

³²See the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions, 1998.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS ACTION RESEARCH?

2. Background

Action research is fundamentally a form of strategic action that is directed and aimed at improving a particular social practice (Hopkins, 1985: 56; McNiff, 1988: 3). In the SANDF's context, the practice of teaching and learning of soldiers and the very act of soldiering in a democratic society could also improve if soldiers are prompted and encouraged to reflect upon their practices collaboratively and on the basis of equality (NSF and SF).

Action research is different from the kind of research that is undertaken by people outside a specific situation (like the SANDF), who use that situation as an object of experimentation and who are motivated by an aim of developing theories by means of testing propositions, explanations or predictions. The focus of action research is a specific or a particular form of social practice, and it is aimed at the improvement of that practice by those involved in it.

A further result of the above-mentioned features of action research is that it relates the theory and practice of those engaged in the exercise of improving their own practices in a specific setting¹. While the practitioners critically and closely reflect on their practice in the light of their theory, their theory comes to be seen as changeable in the light of their practice. In other words, theory does not prescribe what their practice should be, the theory that the practitioners hold and their practice inform each other (Grundy, 1987: 155), thus the practitioners themselves are seen as the subject rather than the object of the research. According to Carr and Kemmis, action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by practitioners themselves, rather than research done on practitioners' work by "outside" researchers (1986: 162).

Petzold (1980) and Gunz (1986) have been quoted by Altrichter and Gstettner in *Action Research: a closed chapter in the history of German social science?*² (1993), as having argued that, J. L. Moreno, and not Kurt Lewin, as it is generally accepted, should be seen as the founder of action research. That J.L. Moreno, physician, social philosopher, poet and 'inventor' of concepts like sociometry, psychodrama, sociodrama and role play, might have also been the first to use such terms as 'inter-action research' and action research and to insist on principles like field-based research, participant observation, participation of lay people concerned in the research, and improvement of social situations as an aim of research.

As early as 1913, Moreno thought of group participants in development initiatives as 'co-researchers' (e.g. in the work with prostitutes in the Vienna-suburb of Spittelberg). According to Nonne³ (1989:156), Moreno's direct influence on action research was small although some

¹See Winter, R. Action Research, Practice and Theory, in *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 1 no. 2, 1993. p. 315-316.

²See Altrichter, H. and Gstettner, P. *Action Research: a closed chapter in the history of German social science?*, in *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 1, no. 3, 1993. pp. 329-360.

³See Altrichter, H. and Gstettner, P. *Action Research: a closed chapter in the history of German social science?*, in *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 1, no. 3, 1993. pp. 329-360.

of his ideas and research strategies as “impulses and models” might have indirectly influenced the development of the concept pushed forward by Kurt Lewin and his students.

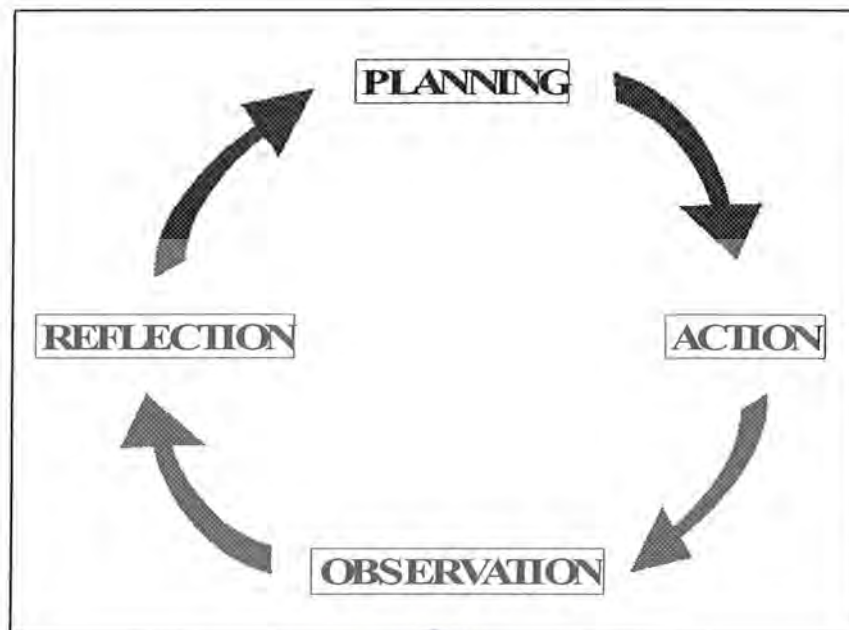
The social psychologist, Kurt Lewin (1946), further developed and applied action research over a number of years in a number of community experiments in post-World War America. It was tried in a wide variety of settings such as integrated housing, equalisation of opportunities for employment, the causes and cure of prejudice in children, the socialisation of street gangs, and the better training of youth leaders⁴. Two of the ideas which were of critical importance in Lewin’s work were the ideas of group decision and commitment to improvement. A distinctive feature of action research is that the people affected by planned changes have the primary responsibility for deciding on courses of action which seem likely to lead to improvement, and for evaluating the consequences of strategies tried out in practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982: 5-6).

Werdelin (1979: 35) employs the term “participatory research” to describe research in which the aims of the project are brought about by the participating members themselves (often in consultation with the researcher); in which the researcher and participants collectively agree on the research design; and in which the researcher becomes a full participant who works with other members of the group on the basis of equality and abandoning the role of the “objective, outside observer”.

The principle of collaboration means that colleagues who share each other’s interests would work collaboratively, observing one another’s practice, when invited, in order to provide a balance to one another’s possibly biased self-perceptions. Grundy (1987: 142) and Winter (1989: 55-59) saw collaboration as a central feature of critical action research. For Winter, collaboration means that every person’s input is accepted as a contribution to resources for understanding; no single person’s point of view is taken as the final understanding of what all other points of view really mean (1989: 56).

⁴See Adelman, C. Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research, in *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 1, no.1, 1993. pp. 7-24.

THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE



Action research is often represented in the form of a “spiral” of successive (and overlapping) phases of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning towards revised action (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982:4). Action research is a dynamic process in which the above-mentioned four phases are not to be understood as static steps, independent of each other, but rather as interconnected and interdependent moments in the action research spiral of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (see the action research cycle above). In the process, the aim is to close the chasm between discourse (planning and reflecting) and practice (acting and observing) on the one hand and construction (planning and acting) and reconstruction (reflecting and observing) on the other, so that improvements in practice and in understanding can be made in a systematic, responsive and reflective manner (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982:10).

Typically, educational action research would involve collaborative planning and discussion prior to embarking on a lesson, course, or the implementation of some policy innovation in the SANDF and it would then involve systematic monitoring of that lesson, course or innovation in practice, and the subsequent reflection and discussion of the practice in the light of theory and of participants’ experience. This collaborative process mentioned above, would lead to further action informed and based on reflection and that the cycle could be repeated indefinitely, for as long as a particular practice lasts.

2.1 Three Professional Paradigms

In an effort to develop an epistemology of practice directed at social transformation, a number of writers (Winter, 1989; Grundy, 1987; Hopkins, 1984; Carr and Kemmis, 1986) have employed Habermas’s early theory of fundamental knowledge-constitutive interests. The interests Habermas identified are the technical, the practical and the emancipatory (1971:308).

The technical interest moves from the premise that all people exist in a material environment, and that people have to interact with each other and with nature in order for them (people) and nature to survive and from this perspective grows an interest in prediction and control of events. The practical interest derives from the fact that human beings live in a symbolic environment, in which their knowledge and actions are to a large extent determined by the meanings they give them, from this emanates an interest in understanding meaning. The emancipatory interest is generated from the fact that human beings not only experience the domination of nature, but are subjected to relations of power and dominance within society and from this fact grows an interest in attaining rational autonomy of action and emancipation from domination⁵.

2.2 The Technical Interest and Positivist Educational Science

The technical interest in prediction and control is the key concern of what Habermas calls the “empirical-analytic sciences”(Habermas, 1971:308).

The technical interest can also be understood against the background of the integration process of the former statutory and non - statutory forces into the SANDF, whereby all member forces of the SANDF, the former NSF and the former SF members co-existed within the system inherited from the old SADF and had to interact within the framework of such a system in order to have a single statutory force in the country. Because the former SF members were not only familiar with the system, but also held dominant positions within it, it became fairly easy for the former SF to exercise control over their former NSF counterparts. In other words, the technical interest driven by the need to predict and control the behaviour and actions of others was very much prevalent in the nature of the integration process of the SANDF in which mutual adaptation, respect and partnership (required by the Constitution) was largely absent between the integrating member forces of the SANDF.

Looking at educational theory and research against the framework outlined above, one would find that the concept of the technical interest describes very well the predominant “applied science” approach which assumes a fundamental separateness between theory and practice; between ends and means; and between educational values and the realities of behaviour. From the point of view of technical rationality, a professional’s skills lie in his or her ability to apply the knowledge supplied by “research”. Professional practice is defined mainly in terms of the technique to be applied in the solution of problems, and the ends and values governing the professional enterprise are accepted as “given”. Given agreement about the ends or goals of practice, the question of how practice ought to be conducted is reduced to a merely instrumental question of which means are best suited to achieve one’s ends (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:35; Schön, 1983:33).

To elaborate this point concerning technical rationality a bit more concretely, I need to draw on the practical experiences of one of my action research projects that focussed on the experiences of instructors and students in the Senior Non - Commissioned Officers Course. Staff Sergeant Poggenpoel expressed her biggest concern and that of her students as follows:

⁵See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

The biggest problem lies with the manuals which are very old, most dating as far back as the 70's. The manuals aren't upgraded in consideration with the newest information concerning the subjects. Most of these manuals are written in one language (Afrikaans) only. The information given is not current thus the student cannot use the information in his or her work environment (Poggenpoel's Project, 11 February 1999).

From the point of view of the technical rationality, as mentioned above, Poggenpoel's professional skill is supposed to lie not in her questioning abilities, but in her unproblematical acceptance of knowledge supplied to her by the "experts" which she must deposit into the minds of supposedly uncritical students (this point is extensively dealt with in Chapter Three of this thesis). The desired output of this whole process is students' ability to remember the memorised facts in the examination. Contrary to Poggenpoel's active participation and involvement in the action research project as mentioned above, no effort is being made under the technical paradigm to encourage training practitioners to be the researchers of their own practices, thus, students are not given the opportunity to learn in ways that enable them to apply in practical real life situations the knowledge acquired in the pedagogical situation. In the first place, the past history, knowledge and experience of students did not get the amount of credit it deserved in the curricula. Nevertheless, the experiences in Poggenpoel's training situation reflect an attempt (by both Poggenpoel and her students) at changing a disempowering situation into an empowering one, by Poggenpoel herself and her students (many of her students spoke African indigenous languages which were downgraded under apartheid), because her students experienced in the course of their training in the SANDF, the same situation reminiscent of the enforcement of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in bantu education schools and which led to student uprisings that started in Soweto on 16 June 1976.

It is thus clear that the technical interest assumes a hierarchical and instrumental relationship between theory and practice, in the sense that theory that is generated through research dictates what the practice and product should be⁶.

In the same way, by manipulating the integration process and the education and training system underpinned by it, desired effects could either be encouraged or minimised and to a great extent controlled by the dominant SF soldier. The situation in the SANDF, that is mentioned above, is likely to have long - term effects on the nature of the armed forces of South Africa. The old SADF was a conscript army bent on safeguarding white minority rule in South Africa and was a nightmare to the neighbours of South Africa. The solution does not only lie with national reconciliation and unity which must take root within the SANDF itself, but it also lies with transformation which involves a concerted effort at changing the organisational culture of the SANDF, thereby changing the mind-sets of soldiers so that they can play their defence role in a non - racial, non - sexist and democratic South Africa. The transformation of the SANDF is going to be a long process and not a single event whose culmination point is an absorption of the one side into the statutory force dominated by the other.

⁶See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

The present SANDF's organisational culture is not at all designed for the growth, development and empowerment of soldiers. As mentioned above, the integration process itself on the ground has not proceeded on equal and partnership terms between the number of stakeholders involved and this allowed one side (SF) to manage the process whilst the other (NSF) played the role of being the "managed". The action research project of Staff Sergeant Poggenpoel reflects the educational implications of the organisational culture dominated by the SF members, as manifested at the lowest levels of the military.

The action research project of Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder captures the present education and training set up at a much higher level in the SANDF. It is proper to quote from his project dated 05 February 1999 at this stage:

The curriculum for the Junior Command and Staff Course (JCS) was not in line with that of the Senior Staff Course and had to be revised. After a thorough appreciation and planning process the new modules were decided on. Three of the modules are already presented on the course and the outcome was only adapted and revised to satisfy the new needs. The fourth module (Environmental Studies) however was not part of the existing curriculum and new outcomes must be written. Captain P. Richardson is a graduate from the Military Academy and busy with his Honours in Industrial Psychology. He loves research and has proven himself as very skilled in research methodology. My action research will consist of the writing of the Environmental Studies module which will now be delegated to Captain Richardson. His research and outcomes will be evaluated by the JCS-qualified instructors. The proposed outcomes will then be presented to the Senior Staff course instructors for recommendations. The final product will then be completed for authorisation and implementation on the JCS course. The practical implementation of the Environmental Studies Module on the JCS course will then become a new action research project.

In the project above, the starting point is not the classroom experience of students and instructors in the JCS course itself, but the requirements of another course at a much higher level (Senior Staff Course). One of the biggest problems of that project is its assumption that the Senior Staff Course is absolute and not worthy of any improvement to start with. The instructors of the Senior Staff Course have an almost final say on the kinds of changes to be made in the JCS course, their say and their power seems to be even greater than that of the instructors of the course. Nowhere in the project are JCS students' classroom experiences taken into account. Captain Richardson, who is, according to the statement above, tasked with writing the objectives of the new module is doing administration for the JCS course, and he is not an instructor himself. When I asked him after a month as to how he was experiencing his new task, he told me that Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder had written the objectives and not he. When I opened the discussion with both Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder and Captain Richardson about the project, Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder told me in particular, that Captain Richardson had been busy for a long time sitting in the library and researching the new curriculum; thus they now have a final product which needs to be implemented in the classroom during the month of April 1999. Captain Richardson looked very nervous and said nothing to correct his senior.

The project of Captain Richardson and Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder reflects the dominant approach used in the SANDF's "educational settings".

There is also evidence of many instructors at the level of the classroom who are bent on transforming their teaching to make it an empowering process for everyone involved as is envisaged by emancipatory action research. The transformation process at the level of the classroom needs to assist and in turn be assisted by innovations in the whole school. In other words, if within the school, the officer in charge or the wing commander is hostile to change, then that will constrain changes initiated in the classroom. If the organisational culture at the level of the whole of the SANDF is such that one of the integrating member forces of the SANDF dominates over others, that will also have a ripple effect on the entire education and training system of the SANDF. The Government has been elected by all the citizens of the country, to put in place and implement broad policies (e.g. RDP) in order to rebuild, develop and reconstruct South Africa.

Out of the broad Government policies, derive specific policies of the Government for the SANDF. Delivery on these policies in the context of the SANDF requires unity of thought from top to bottom of the SANDF and an unflinching loyalty to the principle of civil supremacy over the armed forces because the political leadership of the Country was elected democratically by all citizens of the Country to govern South Africa in the interest of all its people.

Those instructors, like Poggenpoel, who are focussing their research on their educational settings need not be criticised or discouraged from doing so; nor should they be accused of not trying to reform the Academy, the SANDF and society more directly through their action research. The educational practice of instructors and their students cannot be seen outside the identity, culture and strategy of the whole institution within which it takes place. For example, the action research project of Poggenpoel (about the manuals written in one language) is an interesting one to demonstrate the interconnectiveness between the technical and emancipatory action research because, South Africa has a language policy that recognises no fewer than eleven languages and such a policy applies to the SANDF in the same way as it applies to other institutions in the country. What is the use of having a relevant and sound language policy in South Africa which respects and elevates no fewer than eleven languages to official language status and which is not adhered to by institutions such as the SANDF? Why should an educational interaction between the instructor and students be insulated from the country's language policy? Is the gap between transformation policies and the educational practice of soldiers on the ground not hampering the transformation process to a non-racial, non-sexist and united defence force?

The experience of Staff Sergeant Poggenpoel's educational situation referred to above, shows the amount of work that needs urgent attention if unity of thought is to be achieved within the armed forces of the growing democracy in South Africa and if the expectations of all the citizens of the country are to be fulfilled.

We need to disabuse ourselves of the notion that the "critical" is somehow out there above and beyond the world of instructors in the macro-world, and that instructors's struggles in the micro-world in which they work daily are somehow insignificant in the larger scheme of things (Zeichner, 1993: 201).

2.3 The Practical Interest and an Interpretive Social Science

The practical interest in understanding or interpreting meaning is the key concern of the “historical-hermeneutic disciplines” (Habermas, 1971: 308).

I argue, that a practical interest which derives from the need to understand meaning, would, in the context of an ideal SANDF characterised by mutual adaptation of the various stakeholders, help to advance the nation-building process and the notion of the interdependence of cultures in the force. But, the fact that the multi-cultural integration process of the SANDF, especially during the beginning of the integration process, fell short of attaining the above-mentioned ideal of equality between the partners, the kind of understanding that developed (particularly as a result of the control of the curriculum development process which rested firmly in the hands of the former statutory-force soldiers), helped to entrench and reinforce the unequal power relations between the member forces of the SANDF.

The interpretive conceptual framework within which an educational action research approach has mainly developed, is directed towards the improvement of educational practice through improved understanding, and its interest consists in “understanding the communicative and symbolic patterns of interaction that shape individual and intersubjective meaning” (Giroux, 1981: 11).

Its interpretive conceptual framework assumes that statements about human actions are never neutral, and that people never unproblematically receive information of which the meanings are fixed and “objective” (Giroux, 1981: 12). That is, knowledge is perceived as being not only the outcome of the efforts of “noble-minded” individuals, but also as something that is negotiable among people sharing a specific situation (Elliott, 1985: 5).

According to Grundy, the technical interest is basically orientated towards control, but the practical interest’s orientation is towards understanding. This is not the sort of understanding that allows for the formulation of rules in order to manipulate a specific environment, rather, it is an interest in understanding the environment so that one is able to interact and be in harmony with it (1987: 12-13). I argue, that the kind of understanding that developed in the context of the integration process of the SANDF was based on the maintenance of rules and regulations in order for the old SADF to manipulate the integration process, thereby preserving the old “defence” culture in the force.

Much action research is subject to the shortcomings inherent in all purely interpretive social inquiry, namely, an interpretation of a particular phenomenon or event as it appears and in isolation from its history and its causes (Giroux, 1981: 13), in the same way as one would analyse the interactions of SANDF members at face value and ignore the distorting effect of the dominant statutory-force structure and system of the old SADF on such an analysis and interpretation.

Action research holds that a proper answer to the question “What are you doing?” involves both the actual consequences and effects and the self-understanding of the agent. Neither the spectator’s nor the participant’s stance alone is sufficient. A further dimension is added by the consideration that the agent’s self-understanding cannot be private or idiosyncratic-it is necessarily a shared understanding. To the extent that someone’s answer to the question “What are you doing?” involves a denial of its actual consequences, or too radical a departure

from what others can understand, we would say that they do not understand what they are doing (Davidoff, Julie, Meerkotter, Robinson, 1993: 3).

The interpretive approach does not provide adequate allowance for the unconscious and unanticipated consequences of actions undertaken with certain intentions (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:95).

For example, take Colonel Lee who served in the British Armed Forces for more than 23 years of military service after which he came to South Africa as part of the BMATT (British Military Advisory and Training Team) which is charged with the responsibility of mediating in the integration process of the SANDF as well as to help upgrade SANDF training in accordance with the international standards. After a few years he acquired permanent residential status in South Africa and is now a member of the permanent force in the SANDF where he serves as a Wing Commander in one of the SANDF's education and training institutions.

On 24 March 1999, Colonel Lee presented a session on Communication, Leadership and Team-building to a class of Officers' Formative Course students at the Parade Ground of the SANDF training institution. His intended outcome was to enable the students to discuss the factors affecting communication and styles of leadership important to team-building, in any given situation, in accordance with the training institution's teaching.

Colonel Lee started off by giving an instruction to students in German. Not a single person understood him and then he switched over to English and stated the importance of communication. He further told the students (the majority of whom were Africans from NSF) that as he is English-speaking himself, he was quite certain that had the group met him walking around the institution before they got acquainted with him, the group is more than likely to have said to him "Goeie môre Kolonel" rather than "Dumela...". He said the reason for the use of "Goeie môre", rather than "Dumela" is because he is white and not black, but still he would not have understood Afrikaans as he is English - speaking.

In my view, the use of German in the first place was not very useful to explain communication, instead, it might have, as it did in my case and that of many of his students, whilst it might not have been the Colonel's intention, served to communicate the message that reinforces the models which project hierarchies of societies whereby the cultures in the South, especially in many African societies, are reduced to nothing by the image of the sophisticated high-tech society of the North. The reports of the World Bank of the last ten years also reflect a strong economic bias when it comes to ranking countries.

Engels argued that:

Classical political economy, the social science of the bourgeoisie, examines mainly only social effects of human actions in the fields of production and exchange that are actually intended. This fully corresponds to the social organisation of which it is a theoretical expression. As individual capitalists are engaged in production and exchange for the sake of the immediate profit, only the nearest, most immediate results must first be taken into account. As long as the individual manufacturer or merchant sells a manufactured or purchased commodity with the usual coveted profit, he (or she I suppose) is satisfied and does not concern himself (or herself I think) with what afterwards becomes of

the commodity and its purchases⁷ (words between brackets are my own).

The work of Engels cited above captures in a very dynamic way the current processes of globalisation whose one indicator is the shocking reality of more than 40 per cent of world trade taking place within multi-national corporations, and whose thrust is the opening of the entire world into one single market dominated by the interests of the industrialised countries of the North, whilst it is estimated that more than three quarters of the world's population lives in abject poverty, as the other side of globalisation is the increasing poverty that has come to characterise most of the Third World⁸. One of the implications of globalisation on military education and training is the existence of a global discourse on knowledge and its production, as represented by British soldiers in particular, which assumes that the SANDF needs to structure and fashion its education and training to fit into this global reality, otherwise the SANDF's education and training is held to be not up to standard. But, the British soldiers (BMATT) also working on the SANDF's education and training have not yet explained to the satisfaction, especially of the merging non-statutory force members of the SANDF, as to what they actually mean by "international standards". In 1910, British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism joined hands in the oppression and exploitation of the overwhelming majority of black people of South Africa who were excluded in the Union of South Africa that was established in that year⁹. From the point of view of many former non-statutory force members of the SANDF who form an integral part of the majority of South Africans who are the victims of colonialism and institutionalised racism, the question of whose standards being forced down their throats is more important than ever. My view is that the SANDF needs to build on and consolidate the values, education and training traditions of its diverse member forces and meet globalisation as a force well-equipped to defend the African Renaissance.

In his Force Theory, referred to in Chapter Three of this thesis, Engels asserted that nothing is more dependent on economic pre-conditions than the military¹⁰. Therefore, the transformation of the military institution, its culture, and its education and training cannot be seen outside of the transformation of the economic forces which shape and on which the military is dependent. In the same way as Libya has subsidised movements of violence ranging from the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to radical Palestinians, from Basque separatists in Spain to dissident movements in some other African countries, the United States of America has subsidised funds and bombs to the Contras in Nicaragua which placed bombs in civilian buses, on the one hand, and to Jonas Savimbi's (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) UNITA in Angola which placed land-mines near villages-decimating life and limb indiscriminately¹¹, on the other.

⁷See Engels, F. (1876) *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. p. 364.

⁸See Nzimande, B. in Kallaway, P; Kruss, G; Fataar, A. and Donn, G. (eds.) *Education After Apartheid: South African Education in Transition*, Cape Town, 1997. pp. i-viii.

⁹See *The Path to Power*, Programme of the South African Communist Party, adopted at its 7th Congress in Cuba, 1989. The chapter on Colonialism of a Special Type, in particular.

¹⁰See Engels, F. 'The Force Theory', in Semmel, B. *Marxism and the Science of War*, New York, 1981. pp. 49-57.

¹¹See Mazrui, A. *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, Nairobi, 1990. pp.102-115.

The point is that instructors cannot afford to focus their minds too much on the desired outcome of the lesson and forget that learners might be learning other unplanned useful (or valuable) lessons from the instructor. The point I am making is, that there should be no separation of the aims of the course from the content and the methodology used in the SANDF's teaching and learning settings. Similarly, the industry on which the military is dependent for the supply of armaments, cannot simply go on producing weapons of mass destruction solely driven by the profit motive and take no serious account of the unintended consequences of those weapons on humanity.

My interaction with Colonel Lee's group of students, together with Colonel Lee himself revealed that more than seven official languages of South Africa were represented in his group. We then discussed how we could have utilised such an investment in linguistic diversity in assisting students learn tolerance, communication, team-building and leadership. We also agreed that his lesson could have been much richer had he drawn on his students' practical experiences with their leadership (white racist officers commanding in various units) and communication in their own units rather than imposing leadership and communication as abstract concepts that have no day-to-day practical bearing on the lives of the students in their own units.

A further "weakness" of the interpretive approach is its tendency to assume that social conflict is merely the product and manifestation of conflicting interpretations of reality rather than material contradictions in reality itself. To point out this flaw in interpretive theory is also to uncover its "naive optimism" (Giroux, 1981: 13), a faith in the power of purely rational considerations to effect a change in the persons' interpretations, and in the power of "raised" consciousness alone to change social reality.

The Constitution of South Africa is firmly based on the principle of non-racialism. But in the new South Africa racial consciousness plays a prominent role, especially in an institution like the SANDF. We would be utterly naive to believe that education and training alone (no matter how good it is in acquainting students and instructors with the legacy of apartheid) would result in the transformation of the SANDF's organisational culture. The Constitutional requirement of mutual adaptation and understanding between all those involved in the integration process of the SANDF ultimately means that limited resources have to be shared. Since the very first intakes of the non-statutory force members into the SANDF, a very painful and humiliating experience took its toll and made the race factor even more visible. In other words, an empowering educational experience in the SANDF needs to reinforce and be reinforced by an environment in the SANDF which is transformative and empowering to all, especially to the previously disadvantaged SANDF members.

Lastly, pedagogical and SANDF's organisational culture transformations need to coincide with the government's policies of Reconstruction and Development, National Unity, Reconciliation and Transformation.

The underlying interest in practical knowledge and action alone has the potential to give rise to a narrowly "professional" focus which scarcely succeeds to confront issues of ideology or institutionalised relations of domination and subordination. Under those circumstances, professional autonomy could serve to "streamline" and reinforce the inequality (and the legitimisation of inequality) that is inherent in the SANDF, rather than seeking to transform it. "Institutional improvement" may in fact merely result in more effective education and training

towards domination. Once again it should be clear from the foregoing arguments that the practical/interpretive paradigm may form part of, rather than constituting the whole, of the necessary conceptual framework for action research aimed at empowerment and transformation in the South Africa African National Defence Force and in the broader South African society.

2.4 The Emancipatory Interest and Critical Social Science

An emancipatory interest in freedom and rational autonomy is the focus of “critical theory” (Habermas, 1971: 308).

In the context of the SANDF, the emancipatory interest could, I believe, grow in the realisation of an environment within the SANDF, that is empowering to all members of the SANDF irrespective of their backgrounds. Such an empowering environment requires more than just structural transformation of the SANDF. The most difficult and perhaps, the most essential part of the transformation process of the SANDF, remains the need for the transformation of the mind-sets of soldiers. The SANDF is a defence force in the context of the democratisation, non-racialisation and nation-building processes of the South African society, which cannot be divorced from the context of the African continent of which South Africa is an integral part; thus, the SANDF without an African identity, culture and consciousness in the increasingly globalising world where distinctions are under pressure to blur, conform and homogenise, will not be able to help bring about sustainable stability both in South Africa and in the war-torn African continent, where the defence force is expected to continue playing the role of peace-keeper¹² under the auspices of institutions such as the Southern African Development Community, Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations.

President Thabo Mbeki’s inclusive definition of an African which is consistent with the vision of a non-racial South Africa and which continues to gain in acceptability and which permeates much debates, is, I believe, the important point of departure in building the new defence force. Has the time not arrived when the members of the SANDF start to think of themselves as the Defence Force of African Unity committed to the vision of an African Renaissance? How can the process of creating the new structure of the SANDF, and of staffing it on the one hand, be made to be more reinforcing to and be reinforced by the process of changing the mind - sets of soldiers? To what extent has the SANDF succeeded in creating a collective sense of identity among its members?

In order to render the SANDF more capable of enhancing the transformation process away from apartheid, towards a society founded on tolerance, nation-building and inspired by the vision of non-racialism, then, the SANDF must reflect tolerance, nation-building, non-racialism, non-sexism from within the SANDF itself, to a large extent in terms of the educational practice in the SANDF, which must assist and be assisted by the transforming organisational culture of the SANDF.

According to Malegapuru Makgoba, the definition of who is an African today, is premised on three elements: history, culture and consciousness. While colour and geographic space have formed part of this definition, they are no longer sufficient and are increasingly becoming

¹²See the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions, 1998.

redundant in today's non-racialising and creolising world, thus it goes without saying that Afrikaners are Africans as their history, their culture and consciousness is African¹³.

In Habermas's schema, as we have seen, critical social science gives priority to the emancipatory interest in freedom and rational autonomy. For the SANDF and the defence forces of other African countries, the emancipatory interest in freedom and rational autonomy, could mean joint efforts geared towards the tackling of the deplorable legacy of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid as manifested by continuing wars, race and ethnicity-the partition of Africa into meaningless so-called nations, tribes and states¹⁴. Consequently, in the field of education of SANDF members, action research that is framed within this paradigm will seek to transform the educational situation, not merely to improve its effectiveness or efficiency in terms of merely increasing interaction between soldiers from different backgrounds. It will seek to expose social or historical factors that contribute to inequality and marginalisation in the SANDF, in South Africa, the African continent and between the North and the South, and, not merely to enhance interaction between the instructor and his or her students. As Lather points out (1986: 258), research in this paradigm has a "transformative agenda"; Grundy (1987: 191) says that emancipatory action research is not so much a process of steady development but of transformation ... displaying itself in increasing moments of emancipatory praxis rather than developmentally improved practice.

Because critical social science is permeated by the emancipatory interest in freedom and rational autonomy, and in empowering people to take a greater degree of enlightened control of their own lives, each of its chief characteristics is shaped by this combination of interests.

The critical problematic, in summary, has the following key characteristics and elements¹⁵:

- Critical theory questions positivist notions of objectivity, truth and knowledge, especially in the study of human actions. Some theorists, including Habermas, acknowledge that an empiricist approach is applicable in the natural sciences, and that "broadly" positivist, quantitative investigation has a limited role in social science (Winter, 1989: 30). However, critical theorists reject the pursuit of disinterested knowledge and the value neutral stance maintained by positivism as illusory and inappropriate to human inquiry. They also reject the instrumentalism of the "applied science" approach to the solution of social problems, a typical example of which, is the recent bombings of the Kosovo Province of Yugoslavia by the US led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's forces whose aim was to impose peace on Kosovo instead of allowing and encouraging the people of Yugoslavia to see the necessity for peace themselves. The bombings by NATO led to even more loss of innocent lives, thus contributing to more misery on the ground.

¹³See Makgoba, M. Renaissance Could be Africa's Best Chance, in the Cape Argus, 18 August 1999.

¹⁴See Makgoba, M. Renaissance Could be Africa's Best Chance, in the Cape Argus, 18 August 1999.

¹⁵See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

Critical theorists do not accept the technocratic preoccupation with methods, measurement and utility rather than with purposes¹⁶.

- A critical theory accepts that in a situation like Kosovo, that is mentioned above, the heaviest responsibility of bringing about peace and stability lies with the two communities (Serbs and Albanians) that are at war with each other. The might and resources that are at the disposal of the world, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the United Nations, cannot coerce Serbs and Albanians to realise the need for a peaceful co-existence if they (Serbs and Albanians) are not convinced about the necessity to do so. Critical theory does not see human beings as the passive recipients of solutions directly representing a “given” external reality¹⁷. Nor does it see the pursuit of “true” solution in a war - torn situation like Yugoslavia as an effort to detach itself, or as a method achieved by thus detaching itself, from human interpretation and intentionality¹⁸. Thus the South African approach to the resolution of conflicts remains strongly informed by its own recent history, the strong national interest and experience in the peaceful resolution of hostilities, whereby the seemingly intractable conflicts have been resolved in South Africa without following a formula or adhering to prescriptions imported from the North. The above-mentioned perspective informs the nature of South Africa’s participation in peace missions aimed at alleviating the plight of other people who are struggling to resolve similar conflicts in their own countries¹⁹. A critical theory sees human beings as, inescapably, meaning-producers and interpreters of phenomena²⁰. It accepts (with important reservations) the phenomenological argument that in human affairs especially, all knowledge, even the idea of what constitutes objectivity and truth itself, is a social construction and is socially maintained as meaning is negotiated and renegotiated by social actors in their interaction with one another²¹.

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¹⁶See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

¹⁷See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

¹⁸See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

¹⁹See the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions, 1998, p. 4.

²⁰See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

²¹See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

- A critical paradigm, however, particularly because of its roots in Marxist theory, takes cognisance of the shortcomings of interpretive approach²². It criticises the interpretive investigation when it becomes rigid and prescriptive or unable to recognise and come to grips with history and institutionalised relations of power, which form the basis upon which meanings are formed and negotiated (Giroux, 1981: 13), and when it fails to give credit to the structural constraints which severely curtail the number of possible options open to a warring group²³. Just as Marxist theory seeks to unmask the laws governing the motion and development of nature, society and thought²⁴, contemporary critical theory seeks to uncover the social conditions and historical structures over which actors in a specific situation have no control and which partly shape their actions, as well as the unintended (though not accidental) consequences of those actions (Fay, 1975: 94).

While recognising the necessity of the warriors' interpretive categories, and their relevance to research and theory-building, a critical theory also recognizes that even trained practitioners may not be aware of ideological factors and unanticipated consequences that may be operative in their practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 116, 118). Thus the necessity for a sustained and complex critique of ideology which pervades and distorts common-sense assumptions and everyday actions by masquerading the real interests and thereby buttressing injustice by keeping certain groups away from gaining control over their lives and destiny (Gibson, 1986 : 11).

- A critical theory purposefully aims to unite practice and theory conceptually, not instrumentally. Theory and practice inform each other. A critical theory recognises the conceptual link between emancipation and the need for an interactive, dialogic and educative relationship between critical practitioners and those with whom they work.

In other words, the technical, the practical and the emancipatory action research in my military context, need to be dialectically intertwined, interconnected and interdependent. Otherwise, how does one expect the individual soldiers of a specific country to defend, respect and even be sensitive to peace - building and stabilising processes of their own and neighbouring countries and be effective in the international peace missions if there is a failure to realise in

²²See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

²³See Adendorff, M. and Meerkotter, D. B.Ed Core Course: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, (Book 1), (1996), Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

²⁴See Yurkovets, I. The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism, Moscow, 1984. pp. 26-52.

practice the empowering educational experiences that respect and build on diversity? Thus Zeichner argues:

These separations between technical and critical, micro and macro contexts are distortions, and that the critical is in reality embedded in the technical and in the micro-world of the practitioner (1993:201).

Because of the unique goals, role and character of an armed force, think about defence in action, the constant threat of hostilities and war deterrence (the subject of discussion in Chapter Three), one cannot separate the emancipatory, from the technical and the practical modes of action research. In the South African context, how soldiers are taught must link up with an aim of a specific lesson, the aim of a specific lesson must be shaped by the defence aim of the SANDF as stipulated in the Country's defence policy on the one hand, and the content of what is taught, on the other hand, must reinforce and in turn be strengthened by the teaching methodology, the requirements of the defence policy which shape the aims of the Defence Force lessons.

2.5 Why Emancipatory Action Research?

My views with regard to action research have already been briefly enunciated in sub-section 1.3 of Chapter One above. To me (perhaps as a result of my own background), action research, is a tool in the hands of the marginalised sections of society to transform that society into a caring, just, non-discriminatory and people-centred one. In order for it to be emancipatory, action research must succeed to engage the dominated groups of people all over the world (not merely the dominated in a single country alone) in the struggle for an equitable and a just world. Action research is also emancipatory when it enables the oppressed and exploited people of the world and their allies to recognise the inter-connectedness of their oppression and exploitation. When action research enhances collaboration on the basis of equality between peoples of different countries in the process of emancipating themselves from oppression and exploitation, and laying the basis for a fair, humane and equitable world, action research could be said to be playing an emancipatory role. For me, emancipatory action research provides another language of explaining what the people (the majority of them without knowledge of action research) have always been doing in the Struggle against colonialism and other forms of oppressive relationships.

According to Fay, a critical social science is one:

that enables the people to recognise that, it is not as a result of their wishes and conscious knowledge, but the social conditions over which they have no control which cause them to act or do certain things to others. Thus a critical social science is one that seeks to put light on those systems of social relationships which determine the behaviour of individuals and the unanticipated, though not accidental, outcomes of that behaviour (1975: 94).

My interpretation is, it is not that, the people who fought against apartheid necessarily enjoyed fighting, but that the apartheid system imposed fighting upon them and disregarded their appeals for peace, thus they were left with no other option, but to fight in order to bring about peace in south Africa.

To Gramsci:

In order for a state to succeed in moulding and maintaining a certain kind of a citizenry, and to do away with certain cultures and attitudes while promoting others, then the Law, the schooling system and other institutions and activities will be its instrument to achieve this goal (1971: 246).

In our history in South Africa, bantu education with all that it was intended to achieve was challenged from its inception to its demise by the people of South Africa. It is my hope that this tradition of not tolerating marginalisation and of seeing through the mystifying effects of ideology will live on to inspire many generations to come, not just in South Africa, but all over the world.

McLaren stated that:

Hegemony is the process whereby the dominated and subjugated groups willingly participate in their own oppression without being coerced through sheer use of force by the dominant culture but through social institutions such as the church, the state, the schooling system, the media, political system and the home. To McLaren, “hegemony is a struggle in which the powerful win the consent of those who are oppressed, with the oppressed unknowingly participating in their own oppression” (1989:173-174). To him, hegemony was at work in his own practice as an elementary school teacher. Because, “I did not teach my students to question the prevailing values, attitudes, and social practices of the dominant society in a sustained critical manner, my classroom preserved the hegemony of the dominant culture” (1989: 173-174).

In response to the photographs of the old SADF’s generals displayed in the entrance area of my work-place as highlighted in paragraph 3.2 of Chapter Three above, I asked one former SADF Captain who was utilised as a psychologist, as to what he thought about the photos and how they were arranged. The Captain said the frames on the photos of both the State President and the Defence Minister were very cheap as compared to the ones on former soldiers’ photos, and that, had he been given a chance he would have ensured that the President and Minister’s photos are placed in such a way that they strike you first as you come in through the door. I told the Captain that I fully support his observations.

A day later I then proposed to three Captains (including the one I spoken to earlier on) - also psychologists, that we must find time to talk more about the kinds of messages transmitted through such a “decoration” of our work-place. The Psychology Department and the Education and Training Department (of which I became staff officer) shared the same floor. One of them asked me as to what messages I am getting out of the “decoration”. I started by reflecting on the discussion I had the previous day with one of them. The one I discussed the issue with earlier, confirmed what I was telling the other two, for example, the fact that the image portrayed, did not give credit to the diversity of the SANDF and failing to promote mutual adaption by all stakeholders. The whole discussion was received in good spirit.

Ultimately we decided that a floor meeting must be convened and that this meeting should not only concentrate on “decorations”, but that it should also accommodate other things like the sharing of resources (e.g. lecture rooms) between the two departments. My colleagues and I had already informed the officer commanding of the unit about the floor meeting. The four of us then tried to talk to the members of our departments regarding the possible date and time on

which the meeting could be held. Those departmental and interdepartmental consultations produced a floor meeting which started off by dealing with practical things like the sharing of classrooms between departments and tea clubs and then we came to the main issue of the photographs.

In the meeting I gave a short input on Military Professionalism according to the perspective of SANDF policy enshrined in the White Paper on Defence (1996), and also, on the Department of Defence Policy on Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action (1998).

The meeting eventually agreed that the photographs be removed from public sight. Up to now those photos are still hanging there in the same positions, simply because the top management at the unit wants them there. The only thing that the management did was to make little improvements concerning the frames of the photographs of President Nelson Mandela and that of Defence Minister Joe Modise. Although the photographs of the apartheid era generals were not removed, I think quite a lot was achieved. Firstly, we achieved unity within and across departments around a single issue of the need for images that capture mutual adaptation in the SANDF. Interestingly, our floor had members coming from all member forces comprising what is called the SANDF.

At first, the fact that the meeting was representative of all forces integrating was not without its own challenges. For example, black former SADF members felt that the removal of the photographs of white, Afrikaner, male, former SADF generals would constitute an insult to them. They felt that the image of those generals represented their identity in the SANDF.

The stance of the black former SADF members reminded me of the days back in the 1980's when as activists we were campaigning against the tri-cameral parliament of apartheid that came into force in September 1984 in South Africa. According to Cock, the tri-cameral parliament incorporated 'coloureds' and Indians in a parliament that was still dominated by a white minority, and which excluded Africans altogether (1991: 8). The experience of witnessing 'coloureds' and Indians willingly participating in the perpetuation of their own oppression, on the one hand, and the leadership in the bantustans, on the other, were for me, yet other examples of how hegemony worked in practice.

The experience of that meeting reinforced my understanding of how incorrect it is to put people in one box just because they happen to come from the same background and without first getting to grips with important differences between them. I found it equally interesting to work in projects with professional groups such as psychologists and social workers. White former SADF psychologists were very quick to understand and even defend the policy positions in the White Paper on defence. These psychologists took turns in the meeting explaining to the black former SADF members the significance of these government policies for the uniformed and civilian members of the SANDF. One of the psychologists even made an example of how the photographs of the generals contributed to further traumatising her civilian patients coming from areas such as Khayelitsha for treatment for their deep psychological scars inflicted on them by the security forces of the past dispensation.

The important thing about the discussion around the photographs was its ability to create an environment that was conducive to sharing experiences and ideas and acting on plans. This, I think, will grow into a progressive force in the SANDF and be able to help bring about a culture in the SANDF which is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution and various other important policy documents that have relevance to the SANDF. To achieve this is going

to take a long time. Mind-sets and practices are not changed overnight and only action sustained over a long period of time can bring about major changes, as has been shown in the history of the struggle against the apartheid regime which was replaced with a democratically elected government in 1994.

In essence, the social practices in my work environment were designed to preserve the hegemony of the dominant culture in the SANDF. The dominant group in the SANDF secures hegemony-with the consent of the dominated-by supplying the symbols, representations, and practices of social life in such a way that the basis of social authority and the unequal relations of power and privilege remain hidden.

Todd Gitlin is quoted by McLaren (1989: 174) as saying:

Both rulers and ruled derive psychological and material rewards in the course of confirming and reconfirming their inequality. The hegemonic sense of the world seeps into popular "common sense" and gets reproduced there; it may even appear to be generated by that common sense.

According to Fay, the liberation from a social order must be the result of the absorption of the explanatory theory by the audience, i.e. the condition of enlightenment. This is mainly effected by such a theory, providing an account which is radically different from the current self-perception of the actors and which will explain why they are in the situation of alienation and oppression that they find themselves. But enlightenment in itself is of course not sufficient. Not only must a group come to understand themselves differently, they must be moved to action. But this only becomes possible when they are given the means to change their situations, i.e. the condition of empowerment. And finally, empowerment becomes emancipation when the actors have succeeded in eliminating the conditions that give rise to oppression. The whole point of critical theory is to overturn these (oppressive) arrangements and to put into place another set in which people can relate and act in fuller, more satisfying ways (1987: 27).

Emancipatory action research seeks to expose and eliminate hegemony in that collective reflection by subordinate groups leads to recognition not only of the roles of dominant groups in constructing established beliefs and practices, but also of their own roles in that process and of their own potential power to reconstruct such beliefs and practices (Livingstone, 1987: 8).

In terms of the classroom, emancipatory action research recognises the key role of the instructor/teacher in changing her (or his) own practice by reflecting upon it, taking into account the views of both her (or his) colleagues and those of her (or his) students. It also needs a consciousness of the world outside the classroom and its impact on the way teachers and students even frame the question, What are the issues we look at? In this way the teacher's practice becomes emancipatory not only to herself but also to the students. This contributes greatly to preparing the students towards building an SANDF that is empowering to all its members and which acts in defence of a democratic and egalitarian society.

Aronowitz and Giroux have asserted that one way to rethink and restructure the nature of teacher work is to view teachers as intellectuals (1986: 30). Thus, they argue that the category of intellectual is helpful in a number of ways. First, it provides a theoretical basis for examining teacher work as a form of intellectual labour. Secondly, it clarifies the ideological and material conditions necessary for intellectual work. Thirdly, it helps to illuminate the

various modes of intelligibility, ideologies, and interests that are produced and legitimated by teacher work. Within this discourse, teachers can be seen not merely as “performers professionally equipped to realise effectively any goals that may be set for them. Rather, [they should] be viewed as free men and women with a special dedication to the values of the intellect and the enhancement of the critical powers of the young.”

Furthermore, viewing teachers as intellectuals provides a strong critique of those ideologies that legitimate social practices which separate conceptualization, planning, and designing from the processes of implementation and execution.

Education and training practitioners in the SANDF could also be seen as intellectuals. For that matter, defence in a democracy, is the direct opposite of defence in an autocratic, racist society like the one South Africans have seen over many decades which preceded the 1994 democratic breakthrough. At the Western Province Medical Command, during the time when I served as the staff officer of training, my department was confronted with many challenges, one of them being the issue that surrounded the training of Operational Emergency Care Orderlies (OECO). During the days of apartheid OECO training was formally established in the Western Cape as the satellite training wing of the SAMHS Academy to cater for the training needs of black members of the old SADF who, according to apartheid policy, could not be trained side by side with their white counterparts in Pretoria. This training which was executed by black SADF members who were amongst the group trained in the SACC (South African Coloured Corp) which later became the South African Cape Corp, was overseen by a young, white, English lieutenant. The work was accredited through the South African Medical and Dental Council (SAMDC).

Soon after the birth of the democratic government and the SANDF and during the time when new policies were being fleshed out, “experts” in the middle of the force, threatened by the inevitability of change in the force, responded by shutting down OECO training in the Western Cape. The existence of such a training wing in the Western Cape in the context of the new dispensation was beginning to be one of the big embarrassments for the SADF’s discriminatory policies which stemmed from the SADF’s primary role of having been a defender of white minority rule (field notes 16.04.96). This left the instructors, the backbone of the Department vulnerable, insecure and threatened by change. I argue, that this sort of attitude towards the training practitioners serves to routinize their work. In redressing the situation, we need not solely concentrate on the development of training practitioners as intellectuals without changing the change management structure which also shapes what happens in the educational setting. Improvements in the training practice need to support and be supported by changes in the environment. If the curriculum development process in the SANDF is not adequately informed by the experiences of all the members of the Defence Force, irrespective of their backgrounds, how does one expect the SANDF to be sensitive to the wishes and aspirations of all South Africans, irrespective of their backgrounds, sex or creed?

If we believe that the role of teaching cannot be reduced to merely training in practical skills, but involves, instead, the education of a core of intellectuals vital to the development of a dedicated, disciplined defence force then the category of intellectual becomes a way of linking the purpose of instructor education, education and training of soldiers in general, and in-service training to the very principles necessary for the development of a defence force in a democratic order and society. The above compares with Aronowitz and Giroux’s views on rethinking and restructuring the work of teachers (1986: 30-31).

The need to participate in emancipatory action research projects stems from my own history of active participation and involvement in the struggle against marginalisation in the classroom as a student, and against marginalisation in society broadly.

The departure from the rich home-grown traditions makes the future of the education system in this country to be very vulnerable to the top - down educational models designed and dominated by the interests of those in the Northern hemisphere. It seems to me we need to rediscover our proud traditions, join hands with other countries of the South; of course, these processes need to take root in each individual country and within each and across institutions. In the SANDF we need to build on the traditions of all the members of the Force and be a truly South African National Defence Force that is prepared not only to take its honoured place in the 21st century called by President Thabo Mbeki, the "African Century"²⁵, but also a force that is able to advance, defend and deepen an African renaissance.

The unavoidable contradictions in educational development in the South African National Defence Force since 1994 reflect the tension between a state which opts for unity and cultural forces within the SANDF which opt for diversity. The concept of the 'Defence Force of National Unity' launched by the former Defence Deputy Minister Ronnie Kasrils tries to bridge these polar forces. In policy making, as reflected in the White paper on Defence, centralizing forces seem to dominate. They function in the first place as national moulds which can ideally be adapted to meet the needs from top to bottom of the force. The practice of the day however is alien to the experience of the many thousands in the non-statutory forces who have been integrated in the new SANDF.

It is not clear how strong these "indigenous movements" are and what contributions they could give to the multi-cultural integration of the defence force and whether they can give an answer to the increasing impact of the global economic order, but mind-sets and practices are not changed overnight and only action sustained over a long period of time can bring about major changes as has been shown in the history of the struggle which brought about the birth of a new nation in 1994.

In order to understand the challenges involved in introducing emancipatory action research in my setting and thus giving credit to the multi-cultural integration of the defence force, I shall now look at the nature of military practice, in terms of the military's role in society and in terms of its composition, interactions and relations with other military and civilian institutions.

²⁵See Mbeki, T. A Nation at Work for a Better Life, Pretoria, 1999. pp. 1-6.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF MILITARY PRACTICE

3. Background

In this chapter I look at the nature of a military organisation and its practices both in peaceful and combat situations taking into account the military's hierarchical nature in relation to emancipatory action research which essentially is a democratic way of undertaking research as explained in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 above. In other words, the central question of this chapter is: How to reconcile an authoritarian leadership style (which in the SANDF's case is riddled among other things with racism and sexism) with a democratic and non-discriminatory ethos of emancipatory action research?

Notwithstanding the unique nature and the role of the military establishment in society, it has also tended to reflect more of the characteristics typical of any large-scale, non-military bureaucracy like the schools, business and universities. In this chapter I therefore analyse the contemporary military establishment as a social system. The narrowing difference between the military and any large-scale, non-military bureaucracy is a result of continuous technological change, which greatly alters the size of the military establishment, increasing its interdependence with civilian society, and changing its internal social structure. The above-mentioned technological developments in the making and deterring of war require more and more professionalisation¹

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels once wrote in the Communist Manifesto, that, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class (and other forms too, for example, gender, race, linguistic, I suppose) struggles. Oppressors and the oppressed stood in a constant fight against each other, in a struggle that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-making of society at large, or in the common ruin of the opposing forces².

In his work, *The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare*, Colonel Trevor Dupuy, provides us with an intriguing perspective on what constitutes recorded history, when he says that the first battle described in recorded history happened at Megiddo in Palestine in 1469 B.C., in which the tribes of Palestine and Syria rose up against the young Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmosis III³. To be precise and unbiased, armed conflict was a fact of life long before this "first recorded" engagement, as the apes had with the use of their hands grasped sticks to defend themselves against enemies, and with their hands bombarded their enemies with fruits

¹See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 25-42.

²See Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1848) *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Reprinted in *Marx/Engels: Selected Works*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 35-63.

³See Dupuy, T. N. *The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare*, New York, 1984. pp. 1-89.

and stones.⁴ I think that what constitutes recorded history should not merely be seen in western perspective. Irrespective of geographic space, human beings have been recording events from time immemorial. If it is assumed that only western civilisation does the recording, What about the ancient drawings of the San people? The point I am making is that, South African black military history is not without heroes, regardless of whether that history is taught or not in schools which are pervaded with western culture.

If the bows and arrows were for savagery, what the iron swords were for barbarism and firearms for “civilisation”⁵, it is fair then to maintain that, humankind throughout history, has been fighting wars using weapons that they made themselves and which correspond to a specific stage of their material conditions of existence, that each new weapon being made required the necessary skills of mastering and using it and the whole process was to have a far-reaching consequence on both the nature of combat and on the group of people (military) using the weapons.

Thus Marx wrote in the Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy⁶ that, humankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be discovered that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already in existence or are at least in the process of growth. Therefore, the nature of the military is not static, it changes according to the demands, needs and tasks that a specific society has for the military and according to the level of the development of the weapons of war, which in turn influences the nature of military education and training.

Nothing is more dependent on economic pre-conditions than the military, as its armaments, composition, organisation, tactics and strategy depend in the first place on the stage reached at a specific time in production and communications. It is not the “free creations of the mind” of generals of genius which have revolutionised the nature of warfare, but the invention of “better” weapons at the very most, as the part played by generals of genius is limited to adapting methods of fighting to the new armament and combatants⁷.

Thus to Janowitz and Little, the transformation of the aristocratic feudal military establishment into a professional armed force is linked to the acceleration of industrialism and the technological development of war. The emergence of a professional military organisation—that is, more specifically, a professional officer corps—was a slow and gradual transition with many interruptions and drawbacks. Although in the eighteenth century the signs were clearly discernible, it is not possible to speak of the emergence of a military profession until after 1800 (1974:45).

⁴See Engels, F. (1876) *The Part played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. pp. 354-364.

⁵See Engels, F. (1884) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. pp. 449-465.

⁶See Marx, K. (1859) *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. pp. 180-184.

⁷See Engels, F. ‘The Force Theory’, in Semmel, B. *Marxism and the Science of War*, New York, 1981. pp. 49-57.

It is quite enlightening to compare the complex skill structure of a modern professional military establishment—either under democratic or totalitarian political control—with the simple division of labour of the armed force under feudalism. One can speak of the feudal or aristocratic type of military establishment as a composite model of western, european and military organisation before industrialisation began to have its full impact. The birthmarks of the above-mentioned forms have persisted in most military establishments during the twentieth century. The most striking aspect of the skill structure of the aristocratic military establishment, was the fact that it closely corresponded to the then existing feudal society. The division of labour within the aristocratic military organisation was simple, the levels of hierarchy were few and rigidly defined, and within each stratum, specialisation was almost absent. Both family bond and common ideology ensured that military officers would form a well-knit group and that they would embody the ideology of the dominant groups in the social structure⁸.

From the points made above, it is obvious that it is an advance in industry which brings about “better” and more advanced weapons of war, better military force, and consequently the most viable tactics of fighting. The main aspect of the military force therefore, is the type of society in which it exists, in other words, the centrality of the context should always be kept in mind at all times. The commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Soviet Republic from 1917-1919, Ioakim Vatsetis, who was killed during Stalin’s military purges in 1938, captured the centrality of the economic element as a factor of strategy, by asserting that military scientists and military strategists without a good grasp of economics are incapable of preparing for future challenges of the military⁹. For example, the introduction of gunpowder from the Arabian people to Western Europe¹⁰, which completely revolutionised methods of fighting, was, however, not at all an act of force, but an advance in the economy. In turn, such an economic advance (in the form of introduction of gunpowder and firearms), as mentioned above, revolutionised the business of the military establishment and the political relations of domination and subjugation that developed with it.

In terms of dialectical materialism, matter is primary over consciousness, and there is no power in the universe that can hold matter in a static state, that matter is always in a state of flux and constant development due to the internal contradictory force of matter-autodynamism. Historical materialism, which is an application of the principles of dialectical materialism in the sphere of society, holds that society (which underpins the military) is never static, that it is always in constant motion and development due to the internal contradictory class and other interests within society¹¹. Thus it goes without saying, as mentioned above, that the military establishment is never unchanging and static and existing outside of society.

⁸See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 43-66.

⁹See Scott, H.F. and Scott W.F. (eds.) *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics*, Colorado, 1982. pp. 32-34.

¹⁰See Engels, F. ‘The Force Theory’, in Semmel, B. *Marxism and the Science of War*, New York, 1981. pp. 49-57. Also see Dupuy, T.N. *The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare*, New York, 1984. pp. 91-168.

¹¹See Yurkovets, I. *The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism*, Moscow, 1984. pp. 37-153.

Making a point concerning the dictum of Clausewitz, which says: "War is a continuation of policy by other means", Lenin went on to assert that wars are not separable from the political systems that engender them¹².

It is not possible to understand the military establishment when it is de-contextualised. For example, How does one expect a military organisation under a feudal system which is based on patriarchal relations and whose industry is monopolised by closed guilds¹³ to produce a military organisation which is not a mirror image of such a society? For instance, positions of authority in the aristocratic military establishment were not allocated to people on the basis of their distinguished performance, but they were ascribed, in the sense that an individual was born into the officer corp or was excluded. The system was based on strict seniority, which required promotion to be granted to a person on the basis of family connection, age and length of service. The ascriptive basis of an aristocratic military organisation helped to buttress and ensured that those in authority embodied the ideology of the dominant groups in society. As the simple division of labour of a pre-industrial society gave way to a complex pattern of specialisation, ascriptive basis of authority in the military had to be altered and that positions of authority would have to be allocated to persons with demonstrated competence, that is, on the basis of achievement. However, vestiges of ascriptive status in the form of seniority as a criterion of assignments and promotions remain to complicate the incorporation of new skill groups into the modern military institutions¹⁴.

According to Marx and Engels, the modern capitalist society (which underpins the contemporary military establishment) has not done away with oppression, that, it has established new conditions of oppression and the new forms of struggle to replace the old ones¹⁵. The dilemmas of authority based on ascription versus achievement exist in all organisations. In a nutshell, the hierarchical features of the military organisation reinforce the ascriptive sources of authority and complicate the task of introducing new skill groups into the military force. In the South African case, the integration process of the SANDF is complicated not merely by problems of prevalent ascriptive sources of authority, but the problems are exacerbated by the legacy of the system of apartheid which ensured dominant positions in the SANDF for white males. Consequently, there exists a deep source of organisational strain in military organisations like the SANDF, because the military structure of the SANDF does not correspond with its skill structure¹⁶, especially if the latter is also perceived in terms of the peace-building, peace-keeping and nation-building imperatives of the democratically elected Government in South Africa.

¹²See Lenin, V.I. Lenin: Collected Works, Vol. 24, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), pp. 398-421, excerpts.

¹³See Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1848) Manifesto of the Communist Party. Reprinted in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. pp. 35-63.

¹⁴See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. Sociology and the Military Establishment, London, 1974. pp. 44-50.

¹⁵See Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1848) Manifesto of the Communist Party. Reprinted in Marx/Engels: Selected Works, Moscow, 1968. pp. 35-63.

¹⁶See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. Sociology and the Military Establishment, London, 1974. pp. 46-47.

When analysing the contemporary military organisation as a social system, it can be proposed that the military has tended to display more of the characteristics typical of any large-scale, non-military bureaucracy. It is therefore possible, without being dogmatic, to adapt the organisational development approach applicable in other bureaucratic organisations like the schools, business and universities into the set-up of the military, because the impact of military technology during the past half-century and more has had the effect of “civilianising” military institutions and of blurring the distinction between civilians and military personnel. To Janowitz and Little, each of the conditions symbolised by the above-mentioned propositions¹⁷ can be described in a series of the following propositions about social change:

- A growing percentage of the national income of a modern nation is used for the preparation, execution, and repair of the consequences of war¹⁸. Apartheid South Africa’s decades-long war against its neighbours, for example, cost billions in any reputable currency¹⁹. The question is, How many houses, schools and hospitals could have been built in South Africa with such exorbitant resources that were squandered in the perpetuation of a war that was aimed at buttressing white, racist minority interests in South Africa and in the continent of Africa at large? Thus, the current secular trend towards total popular involvement in the consequences of war and war policy, since the military organisation is responsible for the distribution of a progressively bigger share of the available economic values²⁰. In the new South Africa national security is not perceived as a predominantly military and police issue. It has been broadened to encompass political, economic, social and environmental matters and concerns. At the heart of this new approach lies a great concern with the security of South Africa’s citizens. There is consequently a compelling need to reallocate the resources of the state to the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The challenge therefore, is to rationalise the SANDF and contain military spending without undermining South Africa’s core defence capability in the short or long-term²¹.
- Military technology both greatly aggravates the destructiveness of warfare and broadens the scope of automation in new weapons²². It is obvious that both of these trends tend to weaken the distinction between the roles of combatants and

¹⁷See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 33-42.

¹⁸See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 33-42.

¹⁹See Steenkamp, W. *South Africa’s Border War 1966-1989*, Gibraltar, 1989. pp. 7 and p.185.

²⁰See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 34.

²¹See the White Paper on Defence, *Defence in a Democracy*, 1996. p.5.

²²See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 33-34.

the civilians as the destructiveness of war has intensified. Technological developments in the sphere of war-making, socialise danger to the point of equalising the risks of war for both military personnel and civilians. The modern conflict embodies the ruthlessness and totality of warfare, bringing civilians firmly into the front-line²³. A clear example is the consequences of the NATO air strikes on the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. Look at how innocent pregnant women, children and the elderly die in the senseless war which is perpetrated through the ethnic cleansing forces of Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic in Kosovo on the one hand and through the aggression of US-dominated NATO on the other. In Angola, countless numbers of innocent people are either killed or maimed by landmines that are planted by the parties at war. However, there are limits to the trend towards complete civilianisation of the military, as the actual war operations are already executed exclusively by professional military personnel.

- The revolution in military technological affairs profoundly changes the trajectory of military mission to deterring armed conflicts rather than preparing to apply violence. This new path in mission tends to civilianise the thought of military leaders and organisation, as military leadership preoccupies itself with broad ranges of political, social, and economic policies²⁴.
- The complexity of war-making machinery and the requirements for research, development, and technical maintenance tend to narrow the organisational boundary between the military and the non-military, since the maintenance and managing of new armaments require a greater reliance on civilian-oriented technicians²⁵. To reverse the trend, people need to ensure that the military establishment develops and trains military officers with scientific and engineering backgrounds²⁶. This has huge implications for equal opportunities and affirmative action in the context of the SANDF and how the SANDF conducts its recruitment drive in such a way that there is equity in the force, which will in turn positively affect the mission-readiness of the defence force. The timely call made by President Thabo Mbeki for the coming century as the African century, must be kept in mind all the time in our deliberations about the nature of armed forces in South Africa.
- As a result of the “permanent” threat of hostilities, the tasks of military leaders tend to broaden as they enter arenas that have in the past been the preserve of only

²³See McInnes, C. and Sheffield, G.D. (eds.) *Warfare in the Twentieth Century: Theory and Practice*, North Sydney, 1988. pp. 113 - 139.

²⁴See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. p. 34.

²⁵See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. p. 33-40.

²⁶See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. p. 35.

civilian and professional politicians. The widening responsibilities of military leadership are due to their technological knowledge, their direct and indirect power, and their heightened prestige.

- The fact that political and civilian leaders require expert advice from professional military leaders about the strategic implications of technological change serves to blur the roles of soldiers and civilians. In the South African situation, civilian supremacy over the armed forces demonstrates great vigour and ability to give strategic direction and management to the SANDF. While the roles of professional military leaders of the SANDF have broadened, civilian control and direction have been able to adapt to these changed circumstances. The above observations do not deny the crucial differences that exist between military and civilian bureaucracies. The goals of an institution provide a meaningful basis for understanding differences in organisational behaviour. The unique characteristics of a military organisation as a social system stem from the possibility of hostilities which are a permanent reality and from the fact that its members are specialists in the employment of violence and mass destruction²⁷. The results of preparation for future battle and the consequences of previous combat dominate the thinking in the entire military establishment.

The business of the military is grave and “deadly” serious. Military control develops in an atmosphere where all directives tend to be expressed in an authoritative and obligatory manner. Yet, as the nature of contemporary warfare has become revolutionised, the traditional concepts of organisational control become outdated. As the tactical commander must creatively react to the dilemmas of her (or his) role and abandon traditional discipline, so must higher echelons initiate the development of new and relevant concepts of command. In the effective co-ordination of complex operations, military command inevitably gets interfused with military management—a concept that implies greater reliance on persuasion and negotiation²⁸. In the context of the SANDF, the concept of a participative management style is currently being introduced whereby performance agreements are being entered into between the superior and the subordinate, and subordinates begin to play a meaningful role in the assessment of their work as opposed to being assessed by an outside “objective” commander. These new changes in the SANDF create a lot of confusion and frustration to a number of subordinates and commanders. Some subordinates are very accustomed to being dictated to and sometimes tend to view a leader who wants to involve them in management as a weak leader. On the other hand, there are many leaders who, while working in the administration environment of the military, pretend that they are in a combat situation in the manner in which they deal with their subordinates. There are times, like combat situations, in the life of the military where an experienced leader cannot shy away from giving orders to her (or his) troops, in as much as there are times, like peace times, which call for more inclusiveness in the management process. In an educational setting, for example, an instructor, even if she is a non-commissioned officer, wields more power over anyone of her students even if some of the students hold ranks higher than the instructor. A junior officer

²⁷See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 34-40.

²⁸See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 116-130.

facilitating action research in a military set-up, starts by saluting his or her superiors in the project and thereafter takes over, in the sense of giving the group direction and facilitating discussions and other project work.

The tendency to resist and frustrate the above-mentioned organisational changes in the military establishment like the SANDF is concentrated among officers in the middle ranks²⁹. At the bottom of the hierarchy, the realities of training or combat, force leaders to adapt; at the very top, the pressures come from outside (i.e. from the democratically elected civilian authority in the South African case) and leaders are selected because of their propensity towards innovation. But the buffer group in the middle ranks, divorced from these pressures and often aware that their prospects of selection to the top are decreasing, often develop a defensive and conservative stance. Instead of constructively dealing with the challenges of change, they frequently demonstrate indisposition towards innovation, their concern with maintaining the formal prerogatives of rank results in organisational rigidity, ceremonialism, and retreat from administrative responsibility. In the context of the integration process into the SANDF, as highlighted in the first two chapters of this thesis, constant reference has been made to the nature of the process which was not characterised by mutual adaptation and adequate partnership spirit among the stakeholders involved. In particular I have made reference to the “experts” who seem to live in a world of their own as they seem to be bent on trying to maintain the old SADF culture in the SANDF. These are the sort of people who are frustrating the teaching practice of Poggenpoel, referred to in Chapter Two above, as reflected in their imposition of outdated SADF monolingual manuals. These “experts” are the ones responsible for the lack of continuity between theory and practice in the force.

The people at the very top of the SANDF are subjected to all sorts of pressures to deliver and to show ability to implement innovations in the SANDF. This pressure comes from two very important sources, namely, the government, which expects the SANDF to run its business in accordance with government policies. The other source is the civilian consultants who are under no obligation to respect the value base of the majority of the SANDF members who come from the NSF. It is high time that the Department of Defence identify and isolate the intransigent elements within its ranks, question the value base of the outside civilian consultants and also begin problematising the relationship between command and control on the one hand and defence in a democracy on the other. If the consultant value base does not respect the diversity of the SANDF, it simply becomes an inimical power position which must be addressed if transformation process is not to be hindered. If the consultant value base is emancipatory and gives credit to the multi-cultural integration process of the SANDF, then an opportunity for transformation exists.

It is imperative to note, especially in our situation in South Africa, that using consultants such as Deloitte and Touche³⁰, has shifted the emphasis from a non-military civilian force which needs to accept the value base of the Defence Force, to a more removed civilian force which does not need to embrace these values. This is an opportunity for transformation if the consultant base is progressive. It is an insidious power position which must be addressed if transformation is to succeed. New organisational forms such as consultants have opened the military up to the use of new ideas, or, entrenchment and abuse without the same level of

²⁹See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 34-100.

³⁰See Annual Report, 1996/1997. Department of Defence, *Defence in a Democracy*.

accountability-another form of colonialism in my view. I argue that the Government and its Department of Defence need to take a serious look at the value base of external service providers to the military. A database of all the potential service providers to the SANDF needs to be compiled and their values need to be taken into account when choices are to be made. Another important point here is the issue of the SANDF's affiliation need to universities. This also needs to be problematised. The creation of the South African Qualifications Act (SAQA) of 1996 which contains the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) meant that the days when the Department of Defence had to approach universities for accreditation are gone. The only benefit to the SANDF is that of affiliation to a recognised institution. That recognition is based on the reputation of the institution. To further enhance the value of a qualification, affiliation can be sought at institutions such as the University of the Western Cape, University of the Witwatersrand or even internationally, from universities in other countries. Such affiliation also provides the opportunity for employment wider than simply the Department of Defence. The person not only receives competencies that are peculiar to a defence environment, but many competencies that can be applied in other institutions.

The University of the Western Cape has established a Life Long Learning Division in accordance with the University Mission Initiative on Life-Long-Learning (UMILL). This is a rare opportunity that should not be missed by the SANDF, given the value base of UWC to start with and a range of skills and expertise that UWC is willing to impart to the SANDF. I was recently invited (in my capacity as a student in an action research master's degree programme in the Faculty of Education of the University, who had a concern with issues relevant to education and training of soldiers in the new dispensation in South Africa), to the consultative meeting of UMILL in the Senate building of UWC where I participated in discussions about the curriculum of UMILL from the point of view of the University and of its potential clients. A wide range of institutions and stakeholders were present at the above-mentioned meeting, and it provided hope for intensified collaboration between the diverse and rapidly changing institutions of the South African Public Service. The above, could possibly lead to a number of short, tailor-made, part-time, graduate and non-graduate courses being run by UWC for the Department of Defence. The above, could also serve as an enrichment to a discussion about the role of tertiary institutions, especially the historically disadvantaged universities, in the transformation of education and training and of the broader South African public service. The Government is particularly committed to promoting greater involvement by historically disadvantaged tertiary institutions in its efforts to restructure and transform the public service. Given sufficient scope to develop, their contribution could furthermore make a decisive impact in terms of the institutional, social and cultural transformation of the entire public service³¹.

My information briefings to the Chief of Joint Training of the entire SANDF and to the Colonel (Doctor) who is to assume full responsibility of the development of human resources for the entire SAMHS, about the initiatives undertaken by the University of the Western Cape, regarding life long learning and teaching, were very positively received and were characterised by a burning desire to continue being engaged in such discussions in the interests of expediting the transformation process not just within the SANDF, but within other institutions of society.

³¹ See the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995.

Although changing technology creates new patterns of combat, and thereby modifying organisational behaviour and authority in the military institution, the narrowing distinction between military and non-military bureaucracies can never result in the elimination of fundamental organisational differences. The following pervasive requirements for combat set limits to the civilianising tendencies³².

First, while it is conceded that contemporary warfare subjects civilians and soldiers to more equal risks, the difference between military roles and civilian roles has not been eliminated. A traditional combat-ready military force has to be maintained for limited warfare. There is a necessity for naval and air units to carry on the tasks of continuous and long-range reconnaissance and detection, which all demand organisational forms that bear the stamp of conventional formations³³.

While the technological developments in war-making civilianised wide sectors of the military organisation, the need to maintain combat readiness and to develop centres of resistance after initial hostilities bears testimony to the continued importance of military organisation and authority.

Second, if the military is compelled to think about preventing wars rather than fighting wars, therefore, the traditions of the "military mind," which are based on the inevitability of hostilities, must also undergo a process of change and military authority must undergo transformation as well³⁴. There can be no doubt that this shift in mission is having important effects on military thought and organisation. Again, there are limits to the consequences of this civilianising trend. The responsibility of deterrence is not a particularly new mission for the military organisation. Historically, the military's contribution to the balance of power has not been made solely because of the civilian character of the military organisation. On the contrary, the operation of the balance of power formula, is dependent on the existence of a military force that is prepared to fight effectively and immediately. In a nutshell, there can be no effective war-prevention without an institution that is prepared for warfare.

To summarise, neither the accelerated automation of military technology, nor the change of gear in military mission from war-making to prevention, nor the decline in the traditional military apathy towards innovation can bring about a complete civilianisation of the military organisation. The rank structure of the military-the key to military organisation-expresses the particular goals of the military, namely, warfare and war preparation.

At this stage I will give a broad overview of the way in which the military can be conceptualised *as an organisation*. Such a framework for understanding the military as an organisation, is an adaptation to the military set-up, of an organisational development approach that was applied in a school setting by Davidoff and Lazarus (1997). Such a framework, when it is applied in my own setting, reflects various elements of military

³²See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 36-38.

³³See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 36-42.

³⁴See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. p. 34.

organisational life which are unique to the military institution and which in the military acquire a different emphasis and concrete meaning from the way they were understood in the context of the school as reflected in Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:17-40). Within such a framework, attention will be paid to the contextual factors underpinning any military organisation, and the important role of leadership and management within the military institution, with special reference to the SANDF, will be highlighted.

Although it is conceded that the military is a unique kind of organisation-with particular goals and methods of pursuing those goals-it has features which are common to all kinds of organisations. In a military establishment, as it is the case in other institutions like schools and universities, there are certain aspects which make up that institution, and each of these aspects needs to be functioning harmoniously with other elements or aspects for the whole to be effectively and efficiently functioning. Any dysfunctional element will have a negative ripple effect throughout the system. Similar to any system³⁵, the above is a central feature of a military establishment. One needs to become acquainted with the different elements of the military system and how they interrelate in order to understand where the particular strengths and weaknesses of a military establishment lie, and where, for example, there is a need to focus for an effective process of change.

It must always be kept in mind that an understanding of the military establishment needs to be developed within a sociological understanding of the military and, more specifically, within the broader society or context underpinning it. It is not possible for one to develop an adequate understanding of the problems that beset the newly formed defence force in this country or the solutions that should be pursued without this broader perspective. In the framework outlined below, an attempt will be made to constantly maintain this broader analysis, keeping in mind the complex nature of a military force like the SANDF within the historical and current context, as well as future imperatives, of South Africa.

The framework outlined above is as adaptable to the SANDF as it is also adaptable in a school setting³⁶. Yet, it is fair to ask whether there are any specific features that relate to the military in particular.

The hierarchy is the distinctive feature of a sociological conception of a bureaucratic military establishment like the SANDF. As a result of the legacy of apartheid colonialism, and the gender relations in society, the hierarchy in the SANDF tends to be white and male-dominated. But, the current growth and emergence of bureaucratic organisation in government, industry, and education implies the growth (in other non-military spheres of life) of this same hierarchical principle, which is historically associated with life in the military. The principle of hierarchy simply means that every lower office is subordinated to the control and supervision of a higher one³⁷. The military establishment is by definition a comprehensive and an all-embracing hierarchy, where career soldiers are assumed to be ideal

³⁵See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. pp.17-40.

³⁶See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p.19.

³⁷See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 43-65.

example of professionals operating under bureaucratic authority³⁸. Professional officers have entered a career that attaches them to a single authority through which all their life chances are regulated. The recruit finds that the full cycle of his or her daily existence is now, possibly for the first time, under the control of a single authority. Life in the military is, in short, institutional life³⁹.

The point is that no hierarchical organisation, (except for the military) of any size or complexity, has an authority system based on a single principle. Thus the concern with the types of authority that predominate in the military establishment and the linkages between the various hierarchies of authority. In the pre-industrial period, authority in the military profession was founded in customs, traditions, laws and heroic achievements⁴⁰. To come to grips with the changing patterns of authority in the military organisation, one needs to direct attention to changes in the skill and rank structure, the status system, and the techniques of discipline⁴¹. Each of the above-mentioned dimensions introduces new strengths and new weaknesses in authority patterns in the military establishment.

But, it must always be borne in mind, that the purpose of the military and the particular country's visions for it, do influence the particular way in which the military as an organisation functions and gets structured. Because the kind of organisation one is describing is military, we need to note that every element of organisational life of the military has an impact on the educational realities in the military.

When working with and in order to understand the contemporary military organisation, the micro, macro and the global context underpinning the military, as well as the various elements of military organisational life, the role players, need to be taken into account at all times when seeking to come to grips with the nature of the military establishment. In other words, any analysis of the future education and training in the SANDF, which fails to take into account the relationship between the internal contradictions within the force (race, sex, former force etc.) and the macro (the democratisation process and the ending of apartheid in South Africa), as well as the global (the end of the Cold War and the intensification of the processes of globalisation which play a significant role in influencing the nature of South Africa's transformation process from apartheid to democracy) cannot be useful as it will not help the SANDF in particular to develop into an organisation capable of defending an African Renaissance; and it will not be able to learn from its own practical experiences and be capable of adapting to its own conditions whatever relevant lessons are learnt from other countries, both in the southern and in the northern hemisphere.

To Davidoff and Lazarus, the organisational life of the school is made up of the following

³⁸See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 43.

³⁹See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 43.

⁴⁰See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 43-60.

⁴¹See Janowitz, M. and Little, R.W. *Sociology and the Military Establishment*, London, 1974. pp. 43-44.

elements: Leadership and Management, Human Resources, Technical Support, Structures and Procedures, Strategy, Identity and the Context (1997: 18). I argue that the above-mentioned elements of organisational life identified in the school set-up are also applicable in the military setting, but that they need to be adapted and given a concrete military meaning as means of further explaining the nature of the challenges faced, for example, by a military organisation like the SANDF. In the military, the most important elements include, in the first place, the context, because the advance in the development of the economy or industry of a specific country influences and gets influenced by the technological development in the arena of weapons of warfare. The focus of education and training of soldiers under the above-mentioned conditions, often tends to be on making sure that the soldiers are able to utilise the available armaments in order to make the military organisation to effectively carry out its responsibilities. In the context of the SANDF, the important question is not merely about enabling soldiers to make use of the new military technology, most importantly, the soldiers need to know why they are doing certain things and under which circumstances they have to do those things, how, in whose interests and under whose command? In other words, the process of the creation of an environment conducive to mutual respect and tolerance among soldiers, is integral to the process of mastering the technical aspects of the use of new weapons and should not be seen in isolation from the non-racialising and nation-building processes in the broader society that underpins the SANDF.

The structures and procedures element, is best expressed through the civil-military relations, in terms of which the military is by law under the control of the civilian authority, in this case, a democratically elected government. Delivery in terms of the implementation of government policies and programmes, which imply a fundamental overhaul of the old defence culture in the SANDF, largely depends on the suitability of the existing structures and procedures within the military, which in turn cannot be understood in isolation from other elements like the existing “culture” in the defence force. Another important element which is relevant for the military, which was not mentioned above regarding schools, is tactics. The element of tactics cannot be separated from the strategy element and all others in the framework. In other words, if the strategy is the principal means of achieving an objective, then tactics are the practical means of implementing a strategy. If one has an objective, he or she must have a certain strategy to reach that objective. If one has a certain strategy, one must also have certain tactics which can be used practically to implement the strategy⁴². Thus an objective without a strategy and tactics becomes meaningless.

The military role players include, commissioned and non-commissioned members of the military, the officer commanding, the staff officers, professionals like the social workers, psychologists, doctors, engineers, and instructors and their students, troops on the ground, various military leaders, administrators, and various support service personnel. Although the more obvious members of the military are the uniformed commissioned and non-commissioned officers, we should not forget the important role that the other players, like civilians working for the Defence Force, play in the life of the military. In the South African context we should always keep in mind the civilian control of the military through the democratically elected Government.

⁴²See Aziz, H. *The Power of Revolution*, Durban, 1991. pp. 112-119.

3.1 Elements of the Military Organisation

Before going into some detail about each of the elements identified above, we need to remember, as mentioned above, that one can seldom separate any element from another as they are interconnected in so many ways. It is therefore difficult to talk about any one element of a military organisation without referring to others. So, while the separation of elements in this thesis is important, for the purposes of analysis, their interdependent nature must be kept in mind at all times. In particular, the dynamic relationship between society, the military organisation and the individual soldier is a thread which runs through the entire analysis.

The culture of the military organisation is placed at the centre of this framework, because it determines and reflects how the elements of military organisational life develop. Culture should therefore be seen as the central factor when considering the whole-military development interventions.

According to Ali Mazrui, culture serves seven functions in society (1990:1-10). I argue that in the new international cultural order in which military organisations play a critical role, the seven functions of culture that Mazrui identifies, have relevance for the military. First, culture helps to provide lenses of perception and cognition. How soldiers view themselves, the military and the world that surrounds them is greatly conditioned by one or more cultural paradigms to which they have been exposed.

The second function of culture lies in its provision of motives for human behaviour. In a military setting, what makes a soldier respond behaviourally in a particular manner is partly cultural in origin. Under the first Reagan administration, American marines were greatly taken by surprise in Lebanon because they did not allow for the factor of martyrdom and sacred suicide in Shiite political culture. And so the driver of a car full of explosives was able to smash himself and his car into an American compound and more than 240 marines were killed⁴³.

The third function of culture lies in its provision of the criteria of evaluation. The evaluative function of culture need not always articulate or correspond with the behavioural. The USA condemns "terrorism" when it is committed by Palestinians, but has been known to subsidise it in the case of UNITA in Angola or the Contras in Nicaragua. One person's "terrorist" is often another's "freedom fighter"-partly because one culture's hero could be another's villain⁴⁴.

The fourth function of culture lies in providing a basis of identity. How a military organisation identifies itself in a form of symbols, uniforms and images that it portrays and how it caters for the spiritual needs of its members, has roots in culture.

Fifthly, culture is a mode through which communication takes place. Language is the most elaborate system of communication. The language of instruction in the educational practice of soldiers and the one used for command and control is a child of culture. Recently, in a television programme, called, Two Way, Professor Zakes Mda, said that no African

⁴³See Mazrui, A. *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, Nairobi, 1990. pp.7-8.

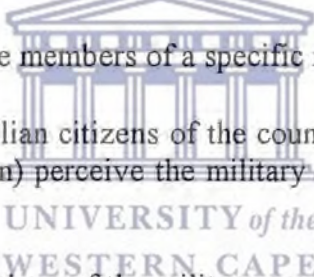
⁴⁴See Mazrui, A. *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, Nairobi, 1990. pp.7-8.

Renaissance can ever succeed if conducted in languages other than African. In the same programme, a well-known educationist, Professor Neville Alexander said that there can be no economic, political, and cultural development unless there is full development of all languages in South Africa. In the case of the SANDF which exists within the context of an African continent, is it perhaps not time to begin to unlock the spontaneity and creativity of many soldiers from the non-statutory forces by also using their languages as medium of instruction?

The sixth function of culture serves as a basis of stratification. Whether the military allocates senior ranks to its members on the basis of achievement or age, custom or by birth is cultural in origin.

The seventh function of culture is rooted in the system of production and consumption. Patterns of consumption at times affect production as profoundly as production helps to shape consumption. Knowledge production, as reflected by curricula in a military organisation and how meanings get disseminated to soldiers has deep cultural underpinnings.

The culture of the military comprises the values, the underlying norms which are given expression in daily practice and the overall climate of the military. A way of describing the culture of a military organisation is by looking at “the way we do things around here”⁴⁵. Examples of aspects of military life that reflect its overall culture are:

- 
- the extent to which the members of a specific military organisation are motivated;
 - the way in which civilian citizens of the country and the military personnel (both uniformed and civilian) perceive the military and are involved or not involved in the shaping of its life;
 - the way in which members of the military organisation (e.g. the SF and NSF in the SANDF context) relate to one another;
 - the general attitude of military leadership, middle management and junior ranks towards military education and training;
 - the approach to military discipline; and
 - linked to the fourth aspect above, the extent to which staff development is enhanced or fostered.

In South Africa, therefore, irrespective of the specific differences that do occur between the different institutions of the entire rapidly changing public Service sector, the dominant values and norms of the South African society (which include many positive as well as negative aspects of, for example, race, gender and class), and also hierarchical management approaches, manifest themselves in the different institutions of the public Service sector in South Africa. The “culture” of society which pervades⁴⁶ the culture of the different

⁴⁵See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 20.

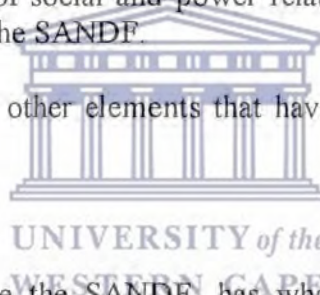
⁴⁶See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 21.

institutions of the public Service sector, in South Africa, “invades” all other aspects, and unless people are made aware of this aspect, it is unlikely that attempts to improve culture in each of those public service institutions will be successful and that improvements will be sustainable.

In the SANDF there is an overriding culture of demotivation in the units. There is a growing number of soldiers coming to work under the influence of drugs and alcohol and racism and sexism are still the order of the day, the training practitioners do not see any role for themselves in the curriculum development process and the integration process of the statutory and the non-statutory forces into the SANDF is not characterised by mutual respect and tolerance between the above-mentioned member forces of the SANDF. This situation often leads to frustration amongst many former NSF members integrated into the SANDF, as they find themselves disappearing in the structure and culture of their former adversary. Former NSF members integrated into the SANDF had to wear the very same uniforms and symbols which embodied the former enemy. In Thaba Tshwane, training practitioners, who are overwhelmingly white, male, Afrikaner, former SADF members, particularly those that did not master English, carried on using Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in a very diverse class of students.

The scenario in the SANDF, as outlined above, reflects a particular way of relating, determined by particular views of social and power relations between the statutory and the non-statutory force members of the SANDF.

In the next section I look at the other elements that have been identified in the framework described above.



3.2 Identity

Every military organisation, like the SANDF, has what is known as its own particular identity. The military organisation's Identity can be explored by posing questions like, How does the SANDF identify itself? or, How is it viewed from outside? Is the SANDF known for excellent service delivery to all the citizens of South Africa irrespective of race, class, geographical location and gender? or for its sterling contributions towards the maintenance of peace and stability in the African continent? *Who are we and where are we going?* becomes the central, guiding question here⁴⁷. When we look at the SANDF, we can see the long road that must still be travelled in order to bring about a sense of collective identity among the members of the Defence Force which will help off-set the damages caused by the discriminatory system of apartheid in the formation of peoples' identities in the past. We can see that the SANDF has a fairly strong Afrikaner, male-dominated identity, reflected, for example, in the photographs/portraits of the white, male, Afrikaner, middle-aged Generals that are in the reception areas of many units of the SANDF.

The question of, *Where we are going?*, relates to an important aspect of this element: the broad purpose of the SANDF as enshrined in the Constitution, and in the Defence Policy of the Government, which, must be intrinsically linked to the collective practices of the members of the SANDF and to the curriculum development process of the SANDF, so that

⁴⁷See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 22-24.

the gap between policy and practice in the SANDF and in its education and training is closed. In other words, the SANDF with the strong support of the Government, needs to urgently identify and expose those soldiers who are not loyal to the Government and who do not identify with mutual adaptation and the nation-building process in the SANDF and are thus not committed to serving all of South Africa's citizens. The Constitution states that the primary object of the SANDF is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people, in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force⁴⁸.

3.3 Strategy

The "strategy" element identified in the framework encompasses stated areas of accomplishment or goals, as well as criteria for evaluating those achievements. When goals have been set, planning to realise the goals becomes an important set of activities. Once plans have been practicalised, assessment relating to the set goals and the processes pursued, has to be conducted. The process of setting goals, planning action steps to achieve the goals and ensuring that the process is evaluated in an ongoing way, is known as strategic planning, an important concept in all organisations. It is the central organising action within this element⁴⁹. It includes a process of strategic decision-making where a military organisation:

sets out to understand and monitor changes in its environment (both locally and internationally);

considers and looks forward to future trends;

sets itself appropriate aims and goals;

plans strategies to achieve set goals;

implements an action; and

evaluates the implementation in terms of the set goals.

The strategy element has a direct relationship to all other aspects or elements in the military establishment. Military strategic planning:

includes the review and development of the military organisation identity and culture;

incorporates the development of procedures and structures to support set military goals;

requires access to and the development of both the military's technical and its human resources to achieve the goals; and

⁴⁸See the South African Defence Review, 1998. p. 11.

⁴⁹See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 23.

is dependent on effective military leadership and management.

The above compares quite well with Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:17-40). When looking at the military as a particular kind of organisation, the specific nature of the military and its role in society is highlighted within this element. Goals set need to cover the different tasks of the military, including all aspects of the curriculum. The process of curriculum development in the SANDF therefore, requires to be intrinsically linked to the process of strategic planning referred to above. The process of evaluation refers to the review of curricula, organisational evaluation, as well as to evaluation that is based on the military's educational settings, and assessment of students. Over the past twenty years in South Africa, there has been a crisis in terms of the question of the evaluation. Many education and training institutions, educators and students have, and must, resist the imposition of teaching and learning content and values with which they have not been able to identify, and which have provided the backbone for apartheid education⁵⁰. Ongoing evaluation of strategies and goals that the military sets itself is an essential aspect of military life.

3.4 Structures and Procedures

The next aspects we need to consider are the structures and procedures of the military establishment, since these two aspects provide the basis for how systems interrelate within the military establishment and between the military and its broader environment. Structures and procedures allow the different aspects of organisational life of the military to interrelate in a (in)coherent way⁵¹.

Structures consist of lines of responsibility and authority, of individual soldiers, their departments, units, arms of service and civilian authority and military personnel and how they relate to one another, and how individual and team contributions are combined. They also consist of lines of communication and accountability.

Procedures refer to the rules, regulations and methods whereby these structures relate to one another. Three central aspects of military structures and procedures which need to be understood and developed are:

3.4.a Decision-making

Decision-making structures and procedures refer to specific structures, rules and methods developed in the military that provide the framework for making decisions around the various tasks of the military. Questions that help us to analyse decision-making processes in a military organisation like the SANDF include: Who makes the decisions, and how? and, Are they made by a democratically elected Parliament, through consultation, by consensus, by majority vote? Are structures and procedures in place to facilitate decision-making processes whereby the voices of the political parties, academics, non-governmental organisations, pacifists, the defence industry, defence analysts, and members of the public and the SANDF can be heard? or, Do the military officers, take their own decisions and ignore the voices of

⁵⁰See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 23-24.

⁵¹See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 25-27.

the taxpayers who are the ones sustaining the military? Is there some form of appropriately representing the views of the different stakeholders? Are the decision-making procedures in the military transparent and clear to everyone so that a sense of ownership of the decisions is fostered? These, plus many other questions, help us to measure the extent to which democracy has been integrated into the military's structures and procedures.

We need to understand how accountability operates in a military environment. Fundamentally, we need to ask the question, Who is accountable to whom, and for what? When it comes to military development, we need to identify and set in place an accountability system that fosters the fundamental aims of the military establishment. If one of the aims is to be a Defence Force that stands in defence of all South African citizens, then a system that optimally and efficiently allows for mutual respect, acceptance, tolerance and mutual adaptation within the Defence Force, between all the soldiers irrespective of their backgrounds, needs to be developed as that will contribute to mission-readiness and further the aims of defence in a democracy.

3.4.b Information flow/formal communication

This aspect of structures and procedures relates to systems that provide a link between the different aspects in the military organisation. This includes:

The extent to which the different departments or units are (as far as possible) staffed to reflect the diversity of the South African society and how they communicate with one another.

What and how information is being shared within the military organisation. Questions that are useful in the analysis of these processes include:

Are the lines of communication between the different levels of the military viable enough in the eyes of all soldiers? Are these lines of communication representative enough so as to warrant respect from all soldiers irrespective of backgrounds?

What kind of information is shared or communicated and how is this done?

Who has access to what information and through what means? In other words, has every soldier in the SANDF, irrespective of background, been granted a security clearance to be able to access information and function effectively in his or her rank?

If only a few people have access to important information, then clearly only a few people can make informed decisions about important matters pertaining to the military. It is clear, therefore, that information flow cannot be separated from the decision-making process. In organisations like the SANDF that are required to establish a democratic ethos suited to defence in a democracy, it is important to ensure that access to appropriate information is facilitated. The above could help in establishing "transparency" in the military establishment. Access to information is a way of bringing about a sense of shared ownership of decisions on the part of all soldiers irrespective of their backgrounds. Shared ownership is likely to encourage commitment to ensuring that decisions are implemented because each soldier has been empowered by her (or his) knowledge of the situation and participation in the decision-

making process. This, in turn, is likely to result in a higher level of the morale of soldiers, and a reduction in suspicion and uncertainty.

When one considers the specific nature of the military as an organisation, and the difficulties involved in trying to develop a defence force suited to function in a democratic environment, structures and procedures must be noted. While society's values and norms may aspire to democracy, and in South Africa this is now so, military establishments worldwide have generally not been developed to operate within a democratic mode. The military reflects hierarchy at all levels, and some argue (for example, Janowitz and Little), that hierarchy is the distinctive feature of a sociological conception of bureaucratic institution like the military. This principle of hierarchy simply means that every lower office is under control and supervision of the one above it. The professional officer has entered a career that attaches him/her to a single authority through which all his/her life chances are regulated. The recruit finds that the full cycle of his/her daily existence is now for the first time under the control of a single authority. The life of a soldier as mentioned earlier, is, in short, institutional life (1974: 43). Once again, the specific society's (context) fundamental purpose of the military must always be kept in mind as it plays a central role in determining how the other aspects or elements of the military need to be developed.

From my action research projects in the SANDF, one can also understand that the structures and procedures of the SANDF are such that they do not lend themselves to equal "partnership" and meaningful co-operation between the statutory and non-statutory force soldiers integrated into the SANDF.

Decision-making clearly does not always actively involve all the member forces of the SANDF (for example, the selection committees which are not always representative of all the seven forces integrated to form the SANDF and the member force representation in the merit assessment committees which is most of the time, not equal at all), and structures to support, for example, staff development to foster the changing of mind-sets of soldiers, are virtually non-existent. Procedures around whose heroes were going to be hung on the walls, in the reception areas of the SANDF units, are clearly unsatisfactory and cause resentment among many black and white military personnel who are committed to nation-building in the Force and who do not identify with racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

3.4.c Technical Support

The next element, technical support, is one element which is critical to the development of the military organisation. The complexity of military technology and the requirements for research, development, and technical maintenance tend to weaken the organisational boundary between the military and the non-military, since the maintenance and managing of new armaments require a greater reliance on civilian oriented technicians. The counter-trend, or at least limitation, is the greater effort by the military establishment like the SANDF, to develop and train mainly black and women officers with scientific and engineering backgrounds, and the above has huge implications on the focus of the Defence Force's recruitment strategy.

It is important to note, especially in our present situation in South Africa, that using consultants e.g. Deloitte and Touche, has shifted the emphasis from a non-military civilian force which needs to accept the value base of the Defence Force, to a more removed civilian institution which does not need to embrace these values. This is an opportunity for

transformation if the consultant base is driven by an emancipatory interest. If not inspired by an emancipatory interest, consultants find themselves in an insidious power position; upholding certain values and discouraging others without an acceptable form of accountability. This must be addressed if the creativity of soldiers is to be stimulated and the transformation of the military is to succeed. New organisational forms such as consultants have subjected the SANDF to the use of new ideas-or-entrenchment and abuse without the same level of accountability-another form of colonialism as far as I am concerned.

One's view is that the State and its Department of Defence needs to take a serious look at the value base of external service providers to the military. A database of all the potential service providers to the SANDF needs to be compiled and their values need to be taken into account when choices are to be made. Another important point here is the issue of the SANDF's affiliation need to universities. This also needs to be problematised taking into account the potential role of historically disadvantaged universities in the advancement of the change process of South Africa's military establishment.

3.5 Human Resources

The human resources aspect of the military involves issues concerning all the personnel in the employment of the military establishment (in this case, the SANDF) as well as other role players in the military. Three basic areas belong with this element.

Human resource development (HRD)

This element includes the area of staff development which, in a military context, usually refers to the professional development of soldiers. This incorporates education and training opportunities through various forms of in-service programmes. Without ongoing programmes and processes to encourage and support staff development, the education and institutions of the military become out of touch with educational trends and the educators lose the sense of renewal and inspiration which is such an essential part of a meaningful education. Questions that highlight the strengths and weaknesses of this aspect of military life include: 'Is staff development supported in the defence force?' 'What opportunities are provided for staff development?' 'Who has access to these opportunities?' This aspect links to other elements in the military in various ways. For example, staff appraisal, identified as an aspect of the "strategy" element, should be closely linked to staff development. A second example relates to the process of strategic planning, where the question of capacity within the military in terms of material and human resources has to be addressed. All the military staff development programmes need to be developed around the particular needs of the individual soldier's utilisation within the military and should correspond with the vision of the defence force. For example, if one wants to build and enhance co-operative and mutually beneficial relations between the former statutory and non-statutory force members, insights, knowledge, and skills relevant to participation in such a system should be facilitated. While the professional development of the SANDF's educators is the main focus for this aspect of military life, development of other role players should also receive attention if the development of the whole military is to be achieved.

Informal, interpersonal relations and dynamics

This area of the 'human resources' element of the military refers to the informal, interpersonal relations among the members of the military and stakeholders of the military

generally. It includes various group dynamics issues, with conflict and conflict management being one key area. Conflict and other group and interpersonal dynamics need to be understood in relation to other elements in the organisation and, indeed, in relation to broader social dynamics. For example, 'power' dynamics, between the former statutory and the non-statutory force members of the SANDF (for example, race, gender, social class, military background), should be understood and addressed within the context of the elements of the defence force as an organisation, on the one hand, and against the background of the transformation process towards a defence force that is the pride of all South Africans, on the other.

Conditions of employment

This area includes recruitment of staff, induction of new members, duty sheets, scales of remuneration, leave conditions, and other personnel policies and practices. In the SANDF, it took soldiers who were certified members of the NSF three years just to become members of the SANDF. In the meantime, these people who were waiting to be assembled had no means of livelihood. Other problems originated from maladministration, individual experiences and a lack of training to meet the current situation. In the beginning, the conditions at the assembly points were not up to the standard that the integrating members from the non-statutory force expected. The facilities scarcely met the challenge and, because they were provided by one of the former forces, this created an even bigger problem. The question of mistrust played a part, people began suspecting that this was deliberate⁵².

In a number of cases, the rules and regulations reinforced the feeling of being swallowed on the part of the NSF. The years of service of the former NSF members in their own forces were not taken into consideration. However, this was not the case with the SF members. Many former NSF members who retire do not receive a full pension because they have not "worked" for ten years.

There was no alternative but to use the SADF as a base and this presented a problem. In the minds of many NSF members it seemed that they were being absorbed into an SADF structure because the structure remained unchanged. This created problems. They thought that integration implied all the diverse forces having to integrate. They saw only themselves (NSF) being integrated. There were laws in place that protected certain activities and even the salaries and positions of authority of former SADF members. This created an impression of the bringing in of the NSF people. This was however an imperative imposed by the democratisation process in South Africa. A force was urgently required to protect the election process and the political change. Only the statutory forces could take that responsibility. Another reason was that the statutory forces, especially the SADF, were the custodians of South Africa's military property. Therefore for continuity, there was a need to recognise the above and put the statutory forces in place. In a nutshell, this was a painful and humiliating necessity⁵³.

In the face of the problems of the integration process of the SANDF, the question of affirmative action and equal opportunity needs to be addressed urgently in order to build appropriate and just conditions of employment for all the members of the SANDF. Questions

⁵²See Salut, Vol. 4, no. 9. (Sept. 1997). pp. 38-39.

⁵³See Salut, Vol. 4, no. 9. (Sept. 1997). p. 39.

that should be asked to highlight strengths and weaknesses of this aspect of the military life include: 'Are conditions of service perceived to be just and are policies developed to ensure just working conditions?' 'What criteria are used to recruit staff?' 'Are they adequately inducted into the SANDF?' 'How is the issue of affirmative action pursued in the defence force?' 'Are duty sheets appropriate to the needs of defence force's tasks?'

3.6 Leadership and Management

Leadership and management functions are located at both the top and the bottom of the framework, because they are seen to have a leading, guiding role (leadership), as well as a containing and holding role (management). At the heart of the military or any organisational life are leadership and management⁵⁴. It is these aspects of military life that ensure that all other aspects are held together and developed.

What is meant by 'leadership' and 'management'? It can be said that leadership is the art of facilitating a military to 'do the right things at the right moment(s)', while management could be said to be the discipline required to ensure that the military 'does things the right way', or functions well. Another way of looking at it is to see leadership as directing the military, and management as holding the military, maintaining the well-being of the military and ensuring that the systems set in place are working optimally.

Leadership and management relate not only to those in positions of power (for example, the Defence Ministry, Secretariat, Generals, etc), but also to leadership and management capacity: the ability of all those in leadership positions (and potentially that means every soldier and other role players in the military) to be creative and responsible leaders. A healthy military organisation, within this broader understanding of leadership and management, is one in which leadership capacity is developed in all the members of the military and other constituencies, through ongoing personal and professional development processes.

We can see, particularly from above, that this central element of organisational life is closely linked to other aspects of military life, and, in particular, reflects and maintains central aspects of the military's culture, which is usually a microcosm of society's values and norms. Working with this element must, therefore, include an engagement with broader social forces that have a profound influence on the military establishment.

Questions that should be raised to facilitate an analysis of leadership and management in a military include: 'What styles and approaches to leadership and management are adopted in the military?' 'Do they express the chosen identity and culture of the defence force?' 'Are they appropriate in terms of the purpose and main tasks of the defence force?'

3.7 The Context

Perhaps the overriding aspect of the military as an organisation that should be taken into account, never to be underemphasised or ignored in organisation development interventions, is the broader contextual element. This includes taking cognisance of the dynamics linked to the various aspects of the milieu, including social, political, economic, technological,

⁵⁴See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 32.

legislative, ecological, physical, cultural and institutional dynamics. Issues with which the military is faced must also be understood and responded to within the context of societal dynamics, including issues around power relations, race, social class, gender, and other areas of potential exploitation and oppression. If an understanding of and response to military issues does not take these dynamics into account, they are unlikely to be addressed in any satisfactory way. The relationship of the SANDF as a military organisation located in a democratic South Africa and global context has been discussed in Chapter One, so will not be explored further here.

In apartheid South Africa, you had a defence force which stood in defence of the system of apartheid. Young white men were forced to take part in an unjust war to protect the white racist minority rule. During the apartheid era the Department of Defence was highly militarised, with most of its functions being executed by Defence Headquarters. In the interests of entrenching and consolidating democratic civil-military relations, the Defence Amendment Act of 1995 provides for a restructured Department of Defence which is made up of the SANDF and a civilian Defence Secretariat. All of the above can and need to be understood in a context which extends beyond the immediate boundaries of the military itself.

At this stage I briefly look at the role of a duty sheet in my own experience in the force. As the nature of military practice has already been highlighted above in this Chapter, duty sheets cannot be understood in isolation from the nature of an organisation that uses them. In the context of the military, duty sheets reflect a power relationship between the superior and the subordinate as well as an authoritarian leadership style that is prevalent in the military force. Given the lack of a democratic ethos within the military, duty sheets often tend to be expressed in authoritarian and obligatory ways and are often understood by soldiers as a set of prescriptions that must be accepted unproblematically by those on whom they are imposed. My own duty sheet is attached to this thesis as an appendix in order to show an example of what a duty sheet looks like.

I was, on the 15 September 1995, appointed as a member of the South African Military Health Service as the Captain and in the capacity of a training officer. The South African Military Health Service is one of the four arms of service of the South African National Defence force. For instance the rank of Captain which I then carried, is in the three of the four arms of service of the South African Army, Air Force and the SAMHS symbolising an officer above Lieutenant and below Major. In the Navy, Captain is an officer of rank above Commander and below Rear Admiral. In other words, the Captain of the Navy is the senior officer whose rank is equivalent to the Colonel of the Army, Air Force and that of the SAMHS whilst the Captain of the Army, Air Force and the SAMHS is the most senior of the junior officers. I was appointed under command and control of the officer commanding of Western Province Medical Command who held the rank of Brigadier. The rank of Brigadier is for an officer above Colonel and below Major-General in the old SAMHS, Air Force and Army. Officers with the rank of Brigadier have recently in the SANDF been incorporated into the highest category of General officers as they are now called Brigadier-Generals. In the past Brigadiers were accorded the status of being the most senior of the senior officers.

The following glossary of military ranks as used in the Defence Review helps explain the rank structure of the South African National Defence Force from top to bottom.

| RANKS AS USED IN SA ARMY, SA AIR FORCE, SA MILITARY HEALTH SERVICE | RANKS AS USED IN SA NAVY |
|---|---------------------------------|
| GENERAL | ADMIRAL |
| LIEUTENANT-GENERAL | VICE-ADMIRAL |
| MAJOR-GENERAL | REAR-ADMIRAL |
| BRIGADIER | COMMODORE |
| COLONEL | CAPTAIN |
| LIEUTENANT-COLONEL | COMMANDER |
| MAJOR | LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER |
| CAPTAIN | LIEUTENANT |
| LIEUTENANT | SUB-LIEUTENANT |
| SECOND-LIEUTENANT | ENSIGN |
| CANDIDATE-OFFICER | MIDSHIPMAN |
| CHAPLAIN | CHAPLAIN |
| WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1 | WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1 |
| WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 | WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 |
| STAFF SERGEANT (ARMY, SAMHS) FLIGHT SERGEANT (AIR FORCE) | CHIEF PETTY OFFICER |
| SERGEANT | PETTY OFFICER |
| CORPORAL | LEADING SEAMAN |
| LANCE CORPORAL | ABLE SEAMAN |
| PRIVATE | SEAMAN |

SOURCE: Based on the South African Defence Review, 1998. p. viii

Under normal circumstances of the military hierarchy and its chain of command, administrative, disciplinary control, functional command and control as well as regular supervision and in-service training of myself would be executed by the most senior person (the staff officer who held the rank of Major) of the department in which I was deployed, in this case, the training department. Under the circumstances of the integration of the statutory and the non-statutory forces into the SANDF in which I found myself, the situation was far from normal. On my arrival at my unit in the Western Cape, I found a former SADF young white Lieutenant who was in his twenties literally in charge of the training department, including taking charge of the black former NSF senior officer who carried the rank of Major in that department. Within few days of my arrival at that unit I became part of the three-person delegation that went to see the officer commanding about the issue. Other members of

the delegation were the above-mentioned Major of training department and another Captain who was involved with the integration committee. The white, middle-aged, Afrikaner Brigadier responded to us by officially appointing the Major of training as the staff head of the training department, thereby giving him the authority to restructure and rebuild the department. We welcomed the recommendation. But, it soon became clear to all members of the delegation to the officer commanding, that in as much as it was correct to attempt bringing about changes in a specific department, those changes needed an environment in the broader environment of the command which was conducive to change.

The Western Province Medical Command which was dominated by Afrikaner, male culture of the old SADF was the immediate context that underpinned our practices and we were a three-person delegation which comprised of black soldiers from the liberation movement. Thus the Major in return could not do enough to help restructure the department, because the unit as a whole of which the training department was a part was characterised by an environment which was resistant to change. The largest bulk of work continued to be concentrated on the hands of the former SADF Lieutenant; consequently, the Major wrote impressive merit assessments for the white officer which enabled him to quickly get promoted to the rank of Captain. My merit assessments were always very poor. For the rest of that year and the one that followed it, I had consistently asked the Major and later those above him to draw up the duty sheet for me so that the Major, himself, could have the basis from which he could assess me. At the beginning of 1997 I had ultimately received a new duty sheet which spelled out the tasks I had to perform (see appendix).

Clearly, my duty sheet was designed in such a way as to prevent me from tampering with the unequal power relations between the former statutory and the former non-statutory force members of the SANDF; secondly, it represented a clear indication and admission that members of the old SADF who continued to hold important positions in the SANDF, were themselves in desperate need for knowledge, skills and expertise to effectively cope with change and work with people from diverse backgrounds. My duty sheet referred me to a series of rules and regulations which protected and even promoted the superior position of the members of the former statutory force in the SANDF. In essence, what my duty sheet required me to do was to help fit-into the statutory structure of the old SADF members of the non-statutory force in a manner that discouraged these members from questioning and influencing such a statutory force. The implementation of my duty sheet constituted the core of the build-up to my action research projects in the SANDF, dealt with in more detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

After a period of time my duty sheet changed significantly, due to achievements in terms of the old duty sheet and as the result of significant changes in the leadership composition of the organisation, which to a considerable extent influenced the organisational culture of the SANDF. For the first time in the history of South Africa, the Chief of the SANDF became a black person with roots in the non-statutory force. This was accompanied by other important appointments of former liberation struggle soldiers in strategic positions like the Surgeon General (Chief of the SAMHS) as well as that of the Chief of Joint Training. At local level, the old officer commanding with his chief of staff and a significant number of people loyal to his beliefs left the organisation. After the staff officer of training department (of which I am part) also got out of the system, the white junior officer who wielded more power than the staff officer purely on racial grounds as opposed to competence and ability, found himself with lessening support structures he needed to maintain himself in the position of power, thus he quickly took a transfer to another department.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS ACTION RESEARCH IN THE SANDF

4. Background

In the Western Cape I also became the regional co-ordinator for on-the-job-training and mentoring for all members at Western Province Medical Command. Doing this work further exposed me to the inadequacies of our formal training to cope with integration and the process of change as a whole. People from the non-statutory forces arriving at different units where they got deployed for work after facing placement boards (which were, in a number of cases, unrepresentative of all the stakeholders) at various assembly areas, often found themselves encountering fresh problems. NSF People were not given duty sheets spelling out how each individual had to function. It was only the SF people who possessed duty sheets. One advantage of possessing a duty sheet has always rested in the fact that it provided the basis of assessing how one progressed in performing one's tasks within the framework and the confines of the inherited system of the old SADF. NSF members found themselves reading news papers the whole day having no one to help them acclimatise in the new situation.

When assessment time came the white commanding officers gave very high marks to former SF members. In this way, the former SADF members allocated exclusively to themselves the whole budget set aside for merit bonuses worth millions of rands (Mail & Guardian, April 17-23 1998:2). The merit bonuses are accompanied by promotions. The former NSF people did not qualify for any of these incentives. Frustration took its toll on many NSF members to such an extent that some even came to work under the influence of alcohol. In this way, as mentioned above, many NSF members frequented the court martials for such offences as being absent without leave or being under the influence of liquor thereby closing their chances of upward mobility in the force whilst their white counterparts were busy exploiting fortunes guaranteed for them under apartheid.

According to the report published in the Mail & Guardian (April 17 to 23 1998: 2), it is said that the Ministry of Defence is probing the armed force's decision to pay officers R77-million in performance bonuses, nearly all of which went to white officers of the former SADF. Amid the hefty cuts in the military budget, senior officers in the South African National Defence Force quietly distributed the generous payouts late in 1997 without the sanction of the ministry.

At that point in time, the reality of the absorption of the non-statutory forces into the structure and system of their former adversary had become even more clear. It then seemed to me that non-statutory force people of which I am part, needed a way of engaging with their inherited system, gain a greater understanding of it and eventually help change it. At that time I had a very

rudimentary understanding of action research.

I took the initiative to help design a programme for on-the-job-training (OJT) and mentoring for everyone in the unit. The guidelines for such work were adapted from the SAMHS orders of the previous years, as well as from my previous training experience gained outside of the SANDF. The programme had to be designed in such a way as to cater for everyone irrespective of background, as all members needed the skills to cope with change and to be fruitful in their positions, on the one hand, and to unlock their creative abilities in helping to bring about the kind of OJT and mentoring they saw as being appropriate for their unit level conditions, on the other. The NSF members were in a very disadvantageous situation in that the system they were incorporated into was quite new and inimical to them. The best thing to do appeared to be to attempt to change the system right at the level where we found ourselves. I must confess that the whole idea of (OJT) and mentoring was not from the beginning popular among all the former NSF members. Some people from NSF saw OJT and mentoring (the same way as I saw my duty sheet) as another way of harmonising the system rather than changing it fundamentally to the one where former non-statutory and former statutory force members were equal partners in the integration process. In a metatheoretical language, I would say, essentially, what some former NSF members were saying was, that OJT and mentoring were only capable of technical and practical solutions as opposed to emancipatory solutions. I explained to people (ex-NSF) that I shared their commitment towards bringing about a fundamentally changed system characterised by mutual adaptation and equal partnership in the SANDF. I said this commitment needed to take into account what was possible and not possible for the uniformed personnel of the SANDF. It was only later when each of the former NSF members came to the realisation of the need to grapple with the situation not as though it was contained in our minds, but as something that existed outside our minds and which needed people to share their understandings of it in order to develop a common approach towards changing it.

My position was always that, whatever small achievement we scored as a result of OJT and mentoring, that achievement would be easily snatched away and therefore meaningless if we perceived it to be an end in itself and not linked with the broader goal of realising a fundamentally changed system of education and training in a fundamentally changed SANDF characterised by all stakeholders in the integration, adopting an equal partnership approach to the process and being ready to pursue the SANDF's vision and mission as spelt out in the defence policy of the Government.

In other words, the technical and practical solutions stemming from OJT and mentoring would help open the way towards emancipatory solutions that are addressed in Chapter Two of this thesis, provided that former NSF members greatly influenced what they learned and how they learned in the various departments.

Thus it is said that a critical educational science has the aim of transforming education; it is directed at educational change. The aims of explanation (characteristic of the positivist view of educational research) or understanding (characteristic of the interpretive view) are merely moments in the transformative process, rather than sufficient ends in themselves (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:156).

Active engagement by all members at the grassroots level with their learning would definitely affect education and training firstly at the bottom of the force in that all the possibilities and constraints involved in the situation would be revealed and improved. That would further affect the way soldiers looked at the education and training system for the entire organisation, whereby the educators and the marginalised students would be seen and also see themselves as people capable or not of researching their own practices reflectively. I held the view that, if people were to take responsibility for their own learning and teachers took responsibility for learning from their experiences, then education and training curricula in the force would change and the constraining factors to the ideal of unity of thought at all levels of the force would be known and therefore addressed appropriately.

Josef Bleicher is cited by Carr and Kemmis (1986:156) as contrasting between a species of interpretive research he calls 'hermeneutic philosophy' and a form of critical research he calls 'critical hermeneutics': ...hermeneutic philosophy attempts the mediation of tradition and is thereby directed at the past in the endeavour to determine its significance for the present; critical hermeneutics is directed at the future and at changing reality rather than merely interpreting it. In the SANDF context, changing reality means all stakeholders having to integrate on the basis of equality and mutual adaptation.

Before compiling the programme, I, together with a group of people involved with in-post-training in the sick bays, had started by undertaking a study in the various military bases falling under the auspices of the SAMHS in the Western Cape. The study was sanctioned by the commanding officer at Western Province Medical Command Head Quarters. The study focussed on how well the commanding officers of sick bays and those they led were coping with the changing human resource composition of the SAMHS. The aim of the study was to hear the people involved in these situations speaking in their own voices. Another part of the focal area of the study was to elicit the views of members of the different integrating forces on how they experienced in-post-training and the entire integration process itself. The programme was then designed in close collaboration with the member of the integration committee as well as with all the department heads and it was discussed widely by former NSF members.

The programme was then endorsed by all stakeholders mentioned above and was accepted by all eventually as a legal document. It bore the signature of the commanding officer and was from then onwards called in military language, The Command Standing Operational Procedure (SOP) 6/97: Mentoring and On-The-Job-Training in the Western Province Medical Command, Institute of Maritime Medicine, 2 Military Hospital and all Sick bays falling within the Western Cape area of jurisdiction.

The aims of the programme as enshrined in the standing operational procedure were as follows:

- a. to help the organisation (SANDF) to benefit from the experiences, knowledge and expertise of all its members regardless of their backgrounds.
- b. to ensure that knowledge production and distribution in the SANDF reflects the diversity of the SANDF and that of the entire South African society.

- c. to ensure that our training builds on the experiences already held by members of the SANDF.
- d. to help build morale and confidence amongst all members of the SANDF in carrying out their duties.
- e. to help build and reinforce a common vision that everyone (from higher to lower ranks) is proud to strive towards.
- f. to help build a defence force whose members are always eager to learn from their own experiences and from those of others.
- g. to discard unnecessary misunderstanding and promote efficiency, discipline, hard work, and a quest for success.

It is worth mentioning that at first the document was outrightly rejected by two heads of department who did so in a manner that influenced others too. They did this as I was busy with my presentation to all the staff heads. Their bone of contention was, as they put it, that the programme firstly, represented an intrusion into their own 'private' areas of responsibility and secondly, they felt strongly that OJT was not new in the SANDF, and, that they have always been implementing OJT.

I then cited quite a number of examples which supported the view that OJT was at best non-existent in the Western Province Medical Command; at the same time I conceded that I am prepared to meet with those departments that are already having OJT programmes in operation so that we could collectively learn from each other and explore ways of integrating their programmes into the main OJT programme for the command whilst respecting the peculiarity of the different departments. The meeting then decided that it was better to continue with the programme and for the co-ordinator to meet separately with the two heads of departments with the view not to isolate them but to incorporate them and their programmes into the broader programme.

The Western Province Medical Command became the first unit of the SAMHS to have some guidelines that would keep everyone a little more accountable for those placed under him/her and at the same time encouraged and motivated people towards greater responsibility towards their careers, although this took place within the old system of the SADF.

The programme was not without its own problems. For example, when people were asked to comment on the old policy documents from Pretoria which prescribed what to do and how to do it, SF members often said that it was not their duty to do so and that the OJT co-ordinator is the person who is paid to do that job. Comments such as, "You want me to do your work?", were used. This, once again, showed two things: first, that people did not see themselves influencing policies in any way and second, that the existing organisational culture which is inimical to the NSF members was in fact serving the interests of the dominant SF group in the SANDF.

When another departmental head who had initially shown a lot of enthusiasm about the

programme was asked to submit his departmental report, he said that there were no NSF people in his department so OJT is not necessary for his situation. What was even more interesting was to learn that some NSF people themselves shared this departmental head's view. The implication of the view is that it strengthens the current processes in the SANDF which are not about integration but about absorption. Everybody in the SANDF, irrespective of background, needed to move beyond his or her existing mind-set. SANDF members needed to look at themselves as constituting a necessary service to all the citizens of South Africa, that the SANDF needed to be credible in the eyes of all South Africans and also in the rest of the war-torn African continent where it is expected to play an important role in peace-keeping missions. OJT was a humble attempt to realise the constitutional obligation of the SANDF, but, the culture of the old SADF as perpetuated by middle management in particular, sought to frustrate and suffocate many of those attempts.

An OJT-register used for the purposes of reporting back, often proved to be limiting the very elaborate reporting process envisaged by the programme itself. Instead of allowing people to elaborate on the process of establishing their department's training needs, the experience, knowledge and expertise already held by individual members of a department, as well as the training programmes put in place to meet the identified needs of the individual members, the register concerned itself with providing information pertaining to matters such as, who has been put on what course by whom and what mark was achieved. However, it was better than having nothing at all. To help deal with such a shortcoming, people had been asked questions pertaining to the motives and processes underpinning their practical experiences of OJT. The following questions were asked in group discussions and questionnaires:

- What does OJT mean for you and each member of your department, and what is it aimed at?
- What are the training needs of each person in your department?
- How did the training needs come to be established?
- Submit a duty sheet and a job description for each person in your department.
- What is the content of OJT-programmes in your department and how do you evaluate them?
- In the light of your practical experience of OJT in your department, what suggestions do you have to enrich the existing policy guidelines on the issue?
- Who mentors who in your department? Specify each person's mentor and submit reports of individual mentors.
- What are the shortcomings of mentoring in your department? What are the causes of shortcomings and what suggestions do you have to overcome them?

The first aim of the above questions directed to every department's staff head was to further help establish whether it was possible for people at grassroots level to reflect on their own practices, to be able to critique the prescriptions coming from the old SADF regarding their practice in the new SANDF. The second aim was to find out if collaboration on the basis of equality between the SF and NSF members was possible. The third aim was to help empower people by turning every department into a theatre of dialogue and it was hoped that the exercise would lead to people recognising that knowledge about what they engaged in was not something outside the terrain of the engagement, not something objective and existing outside of them, but that through the process of dialogue, people construct knowledge collectively.

Thus McLaren argues that:

When critical theorists make the claim that knowledge is socially constructed, they mean that it is the product of agreement or consent between the persons who live out particular social relations (e.g. of class, race, and gender) and who live in particular junctures in time (1989:169).

4.1 Change Strategies

Havelock isolated the following three models of innovation strategy (Eraut, 1972:6-9).

The Research, Development and Diffusion (RD&D) Model, far from being driven by the participants in a specific setting, derives its driving force from the initiator and then its products get given to people as prescriptions or recipes that people, as product-users, must accept unproblematically. In this paradigm the emphasis is on product rather than on process. The RD&D model proceeds from the following main assumptions:

- rational sequence in the evolution and application of an innovation in the military environment.
- planning is usually on a massive scale over a long timespan.
- division and co-ordination of labour.
- a more or less passive but rational consumer who will accept and adopt the innovation if it is offered to him or her in the right place at the right time and in the right form.
- a high initial development cost, compensated for by the long-term benefits of the innovation and its suitability for 'mass dissemination'.

The Social Interaction Model, based on the following assumptions:

- the individual user or adopter belongs to a network of social relations which largely influences his or her adoption behaviour.
- his or her place in the network (centre, periphery, isolated) is a good predictor of his or her rate of acceptance of new ideas.
- informal personal contact is a vital part of the influence and adoption process.
- group membership and reference group identification are major predictors of individual adoption.
- the rate of diffusion through a social system follows a predictable S-curve pattern (very slow at the beginning followed by a period of very rapid diffusion followed in turn by a long rate adoption or 'laggard' period).

The Problem-Solving Model, emphasising the following major points:

- i. user need is the paramount consideration.
- ii. diagnosis of need must always be an integral part of the total process.
- iii. outside agents should only undertake non-directive roles, rarely, if ever, violating the integrity of the user by placing themselves in a directive or expert status.
- iv. internal resources, i.e. those resources already existing and easily accessible within the client system, should always be fully utilised.
- v. self-initiated and self-applied innovation will have the strongest user-commitment and the best chances for long-term survival.

Havelock's RD&D model reflects a centre-periphery strategy or a top-down approach to innovation. The outside consultants and 'experts' at middle management level of the SANDF design and develop the innovation, which is then, imposed on all the other integrating member forces of the SANDF. Those whose values and principles are watered down, as rational beings, find themselves embracing the innovation devised by the consultants and the 'experts'. In a word, ordinary soldiers at the unit level often look at the problems imposed upon them from above not through their own spectacles but they see themselves and their problems through the lenses of those who develop the innovation.

Havelock's social interaction model takes priority of the context within which the recipients of top-down prescriptions act. In other words, the normative/re-educative and social interaction model often capitalises on the inferior positions of those who are compelled to accept the innovations imposed on them.

OJT and mentoring in the Western Province Medical Command does not proclaim itself to be located within the problem-solving model of Havelock, but, against the odds of operating within a very racist and sexist environment, it managed to place the responsibility for innovation in the hands of the users. In other words, everybody, irrespective of background and sex is moved to the centre of action in this project.

The co-ordinator's role, the one I personally played at the time of the implementation of OJT and mentoring, was a 'non-directive' role in that innovation remained owned by those using it in the various departments of the organisation. It is up to a specific department's members and head to determine their training needs and the nature of the intervention necessary to meet the identified needs.

Each department invites the co-ordinator to engage him or her in a discussion (in which the co-ordinator him or herself at different stages becomes both the learner and teacher) whenever it deems necessary to do so. The Personnel Department at the unit level and the Human Resources Department at the higher Head Quarters (HQ) is partly through this process, at least in possession of each member's duty sheet which can assist in the process of career planning of each individual soldier.

Paulo Freire makes a distinction between "problem-solving" and "problem-posing". The former follows certain prescriptions in education and seeks to block and constrain the creativity of those engaged in such an educational setting. The latter is more emancipatory, it not only moves people to the centre of action, but it also challenges and stimulates their creativity and unmask the distorting and consciousness-submerging factors in education (1972: 45-59).

4.2 Reflection and Future Challenges

OJT and mentoring is a continuous programme. Measuring it against its own aims it could be said that it has already achieved quite significant success. NSF people are now in possession of duty sheets and are presently participating actively in their various departments. I am also in possession of a duty sheet after spending close to two years without it. As mentioned above, from the time the former NSF members arrived in their units, they have always been subjected to merit assessments whilst not possessing duty sheets. Former NSF members complain that a number of white officers (former SF) were promoted twice in less than three years. These white officers always had clear duty sheets.

The programme attracted a lot of interest and enthusiasm from a number of departments, especially from the Psychology department at the command and from the higher HQ in Pretoria. The Western Cape is the only region to date which has a formal OJT and mentoring programme running.

When I arrived at the Western Cape unit in 1995, I started to demand a job description from my immediate superiors. When they failed to provide me with one, I took the matter up with the higher HQ. The higher HQ responded by saying that regions must provide their own members with job descriptions. At this stage it became even more clear to me that the organisation as a

whole lacked a coherent plan to evaluate and monitor the day to day progress of the members in the integration process of the SANDF.

This is only a possible background to create an atmosphere conducive for emancipatory action research in the SANDF.



CHAPTER FIVE

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE SANDF

5. Background

This chapter is not a report on my own action in the action research tradition. It is rather, about my efforts to introduce action research in the South African Military Health Service of the SANDF.

Over and above acting as the staff officer of Training in the Western Cape as stipulated in my duty sheet, the officer commanding of SAMHS Academy, SSO (Senior Staff Officer) of training at the Training Management Centre of the SAMHS Academy together with the Human Resource Development head at the Head Quarters in Pretoria and in consultation with the Commanding Officer of COLET (College of Educational Technology) agreed on the following extra Pretoria-based responsibilities for me and authorised that:

- I visit the SAMHS Academy, and in doing so, attend classes presented at that unit (not for evaluation purposes, but to visualise and experience the execution of training at that unit).
- To have conversations with members of the SAMHS Academy Training Management Centre with regard to the compilation and updating process of training curricula.
- To visit COLET of the SANDF and help with the conceptualisation of curricula and monitoring of their practical implementation.

How do we then introduce action research in the SAMHS and in the broader SANDF?

Before we can answer the question above, we need to do some reflection pertaining to how the four moments of action research, discussed in Chapter Two above, helped give shape to the OJT and mentoring programme in the Western Province Command. We need to ask ourselves, what lessons we can draw from OJT and mentoring experience which could be meaningfully utilised within the educational settings of both the Academy and the SANDF broadly.

5.1 First Cycle

5.2 PLAN

OJT and mentoring was inspired by the need to bring about improvement at unit level. The unit level was characterised by marginalisation and lack of engagement which was particularly felt by NSF members. People from the NSF did not have a say in matters directly

affecting their lives. The NSF did not have duty sheets; they received very low marks when being assessed. This situation inspired the conceptualisation of the Command Standing Operational Procedure (SOP) on OJT and Mentoring. The SOP consisted of broad guidelines to help each department design its own programmes to meet its specific needs. The SOP was distributed widely, including the higher HQ in Pretoria, for discussion and critiquing.

5.3 ACTION

Presentations to the general membership of the organisation, staff officers, section heads, commissioned officers, in short, to everyone affected by the SOP were held. The commanding officer at Western Province Medical Command HQ and his chief of staff helped in convening these meetings. After this whole process of consultation, the commanding officer signed the SOP and the whole programme got launched.

It was decided that the best place where an impact could be made was at the unit. The local unit level was identified as the best place to wage the battle. Action is retrospectively guided by planning in the sense that it looks back to planning for its rationale (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982:8).

People at local level, especially sick bays, took part in the research on their activities related to OJT and mentoring.

5.4 OBSERVATION

This related to reconnaissance of the circumstances of the field and fact-finding or research about the field. Here we needed to know where all the sick bays were situated, their relationship to the Western Province Medical Command. We subsequently found out that the commanding officers of the sick bays were directly accountable to the department heads located at Western Province Medical Command and that the Institute of Maritime Medicine and 2 Military Hospital were part of the Western Province Medical Command.

5.5 REFLECTION

Reflection showed that there was a real need for OJT which was aimed at everyone and not just limited to NSF. A young white medical doctor in one of the sick bays, was appointed the commanding officer of the sick bay. Part of his responsibility as the commanding officer was Personnel Management and Logistics Management at the sick bay. He felt that he really needed OJT and mentoring regarding Personnel and Logistics Management. There was also a general desire from a significant number of the members of various departments to develop a working knowledge of each other's cultures. Others needed conflict resolution skills and leadership skills. In the end it was clear that training needs differed from person to person and from department to department. Departments and individual members began to need a more individualised attention. The individual department head's training needs became more clear. The needs that gave rise to a number of workshops ranged from teaching skills, counselling, interviewing skills, needs assessment, needs analysis, programme development, evaluation, interpersonal skills to communication skills.

The co-ordinator utilised the training needs identified above to help break the artificial walls that are unnecessarily separating one department from the other. For example, the co-ordinator talks to the head of psychology department to run a short programme on

counselling for the supervisors in the logistics department, asks the logistics department to help run a short programme on logistics management for the commanding officer of a specific sick bay and asks the training department to run a teaching skills programme for the personnel department. In this way people learn to share knowledge and experience. Where knowledge and experience to meet a particular identified need lacks inside the organisation, the co-ordinator, the chief of staff, the commanding officer and the department concerned look outside the organisation for another state department or any other institution that has the necessary expertise to meet the need.

The action research cycles in the Western Cape needed to carry on simultaneously with action research cycles in the broader environment of the Defence Force. The two cycles would inform each other. When I was doing my officers course at the Academy in 1996, I saw the extent to which teachers and students were marginalised in the classroom. As students we were taught through transmission methods of teaching by teachers who had not even mastered English. Students had to memorise facts and to reproduce them in the examination in order to be successful.

Instructors often demonstrated very little knowledge about the topics they were dealing with. One of the instructors came to class on one occasion to present a lesson. She had a piece of paper in her hand which she struggled to read to students. The students struggled as they were writing, to come to grips with what the teacher was saying. Clearly, someone had given her the piece of paper to come and read to students. My plan for work at both the Academy and COLET was driven by the need to emancipate teachers and students from being marginalised by outside the classroom curriculum “experts”. This work provided me with the means to be able to reflect upon my own practice as I interacted with trainees, trainers and the “experts”.

I had envisaged to work with a group of teachers at both institutions. Anticipated activities included identification of “problem” areas by teachers themselves in relation to teaching during the multicultural integration process of the SANDF, joint planning of action research project-aims, objectives and time frames, joint teaching, researching the classroom practice by the teachers, exposing “experts” to teacher research, involving “experts” in researching and reflecting upon their own practice and lastly I also needed to reflect upon my own practice regarding how I worked with others.

These educational action research projects in the SANDF needed to involve collaborative planning and discussion amongst all participants prior to embarking on action. The implementation of the joint plan would need to involve systematic monitoring of its implementation, and subsequently, reflection and discussion of the practice in the light of theory and of participants’ experience and this cycle would be repeated indefinitely.

I planned to put in place a core group of not more than ten researchers, firstly at the SAMHS Academy. The choice of these researchers would as far as possible reflect different forces comprising the SANDF, gender and race sensitivity.

I used a video camera, a tape recorder and field notes as means of capturing data in as many educational settings as possible which had to be analysed by those involved in the practice of teaching and learning, especially the teachers.

In the military, as with other bureaucratic institutions, one cannot simply go and work with classroom practitioners and students without first obtaining the sanction to embark on such a

process from the top management of that institution. In my case, I firstly had to go and address the officer commanding of the SAMHS Academy, together with the senior staff officer in charge of training co-ordination within the Training Management Centre of the Academy and get action research endorsed and accepted as a necessary innovation at that level. I also needed to get action research endorsed from the office of the Surgeon General, the Chief of Joint Training and the Chief of the SANDF. All of this work needed more than just a good grasp of what action research is all about and how to go about doing it, one also needed to be a good and well-disciplined soldier in order to win the confidence of the Generals behind action research.

The top structure of the SANDF and the SAMHS gave action research an overwhelming support and endorsement. The Captain of the Navy in his capacity as officer commanding at COLET said to me, "Why were you not placed at COLET from the very beginning and how can we incorporate action research into the Research and Development (R&D) Wing of COLET?" The Chief of Joint Training stated that in as much as the action research projects have a SAMHS focus, we should not lose sight of the wider implications that the work will have for the entire education and training system of the SANDF broadly. The officer commanding of SAMHS Academy, said, "There are a lot of challenges facing us and I want this work to cover the whole of the Academy". Each visit by the facilitator to the action research project teams in Pretoria was seen and treated as detached duty by the Surgeon General's office.

The next step was to hold a series of workshops with the wing commanders and instructors who served in the different wings. It is at this level where the reaction started to be quite varied and it is also at this level where the action research project teams were established in order to initiate classroom-based action research projects. One needs to state that there was no precedence for school-based action research projects in the SANDF and that the SAMHS did not have its own internal teacher/instructor in-service programme. Thus one of the wing commanders at SAMHS argued that "The ability of the instructors to teach is very low. No proper training is done to prepare them" (field notes 12.10.98). A senior officer in one of the teams said, "Curricula in the SAMHS need to be updated, but the problem is that we do not have the skills and the expertise to do the updating. Your presence here is a blessing because you are bringing to us the knowledge and skills which we have needed for a long time. I think that you must be permanently transferred here" (field notes 14.10.98).

Elliott (1988) is quoted in Walker's (1992: 4) article "Developing the Theory and Practice of Action Research: A South African Case" as saying, "Far from being imposed on teachers by academic researchers, action research developed organically from an existing teacher culture receptive to notions of innovations, of reflective practice and curriculum theorising".

Clearly, there is no culture in the SAMHS and in the SANDF on which to build research and development endeavours among the instructors as the instructors did not perceive themselves as playing an active role in curriculum development. The instructors saw curriculum development process as a preserve of "experts" and not theirs. I argue that this self-perception of instructors as implementers of the cultural capital designed from elsewhere does not necessarily and exclusively have to do with the military hierarchy per se, which is the reality of our situation in the SANDF. Firstly, in the SANDF, the dominant teaching culture had been shaped under the old apartheid system in order to buttress the system of white racist minority rule which relied on the old SADF for its defence. For the SADF to execute its tasks, it had to rely on the conscription of white males to assume dominant

positions in the SADF and thereby safeguard their racial privileges both in the SADF itself and in the country. There were different classrooms for white and black members of the SADF. Take for example the SAMHS College, the precursor to the present day SAMHS Academy, which solely catered for the training of white members of the SADF to the exclusion of their black counterparts. The training department of which I am the staff officer at Western Province Medical Command is mainly composed of black members of the old SADF; historically, this department has always played the role of training black SADF members who could not be trained side by side with their white counterparts in Pretoria.

It is alleged by a number of Operational Emergency Care Orderlies in the Western Cape that the decision to marginalise the training department at Western Province Medical Command by taking away most of the training that it used to run does not originate from the top structure of the SANDF, but with officers in the middle of the organisation who controlled the old SAMHS College and are presently holding important positions at the SAMHS Academy (Field notes 15.04.98). This is the same group which is threatened by the inevitability of change in the SANDF and which continues to control the lives of instructors even at the Academy itself.

Secondly, you have civilian non-military consultants for the SANDF whose value base has hardly been scrutinised to see if it coincides with the provisions of the key government policy of Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Lieutenant Colonel Lee, the Officer in Charge of the Officers' Formative Course in one of the SANDF's educational institutions and one of the Action Research Project Team members struggled for five months to identify an area in his own practice that needed improvement. On 24 March 1999 he invited me enthusiastically to witness an implementation of his Learning Event Plan. He provided me with his (lesson) plan before hand. This exercise was designed and implemented in part fulfilment of the requirements for the ETDP (Education, Training and Development Practitioners) course run by the SANDF COLET (College of Educational Technology) to qualify instructors in the SANDF as a whole. Two COLET instructors arrived towards the middle of the session to evaluate him. Somebody else from COLET had earlier on looked at his plan and given him comments on it though not in collaboration with the two instructors who had come to do evaluation of the practice. I realised the lack of collaboration on the part of COLET regarding this issue when the two instructors failed to account for all the comments written by some other member of COLET about the lesson plan. The evaluators were themselves very pleased with the presentation as they clapped hands, gave the Lieutenant Colonel an excellent pass mark and left behind a very enthusiastic Lieutenant Colonel Lee who admitted to being relieved from the stress imposed on him by the comments he had earlier on received.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder on the other hand, the wing commander of Junior Command and Staff Course, could not avoid using his senior rank to dictate to every member of the action research project team of which he was part. He at some point even attempted to play the facilitative role that I was playing. In the workshop in which we were discussing problem areas, he tried to force his own concerns on the rest of the group. At another training institution, the head of Research and Development Wing, Lieutenant Colonel van der Kemp was not as optimistic as her commanding officer about action research. She told me that discussions about the prospect of action research projects in their institution could only begin after six months as everybody in the institution was extremely busy at the time of my meeting with her.

Poggenpoel's project on out-dated and monolingual manuals referred to in Chapter Two, on the other hand, was one of the most exciting projects as it shows the extent of the marginalisation of the junior instructor and students by Lieutenant Colonels who represent discontinuity between the top structure of the SANDF and the lowest ranks, a typical example of which is represented in the action research project that involved Lieutenant Colonel Van Tonder.

Another interesting action research project at SAMHS Academy that I had a privilege of facilitating, involved Major Stem. In this project we had already learnt from the experiences of the projects that came before it. The area of concern of the project was the issue of the marginalisation of soldiers with hearing disabilities in the education and training of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). This project work was not about the deaf, per se, but, about making people aware of the marginalised sectors in the SANDF, and not about deaf people in the first place. Since we were SAMHS members, our focus was on the marginalisation of deaf soldiers within the education and training sector of the SAMHS. In practice, this marginalisation meant that the curricula in the Defence Force did not cater for the education and training needs of deaf soldiers. The lack of interest and expertise on the part of curriculum policy makers and instructors to communicate in Sign Language meant that these members could not be nominated for any promotional courses on the one hand, and that they were not being prepared with skills for civilian life either, should they, for whatever reason, find themselves outside the SANDF. In the Department of Defence, the word discrimination refers to unfair treatment of a person either directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, based on, but not limited to, race, sex, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, marital status, pregnancy or family responsibility¹. Clearly, the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies and programmes in the SANDF need to be based on a clear plan of action, the practical implementation of which must be evaluated in an ongoing way in terms of their effectiveness in terms of redressing the imbalances created by the system of apartheid.

The action research project plan involved investigating institution(s) that offer a course in Sign Language and possible sources of financial assistance should members be accepted on the course. The organisation planned to get some of its members, particularly those involved with education and training, onto such a course so as to be enabled as an organisation to deal far better with deaf soldiers in the Defence Force. The plan was also aimed at soliciting the support of higher authorities in the SAMHS to support applications to study for such a course at state expense so that on completion of the course, the graduates are in a position to give basic training to the members of the SAMHS who are likely to train and interact with deaf people within the SAMHS.

The action involved applying for a Sign Language course offered at the University of the Witwatersrand and writing a letter of application for state funding for these studies through one of the Wing Commanders and the acting officer commanding of the SAMHS Academy.

The organisation ultimately managed to get some of its members accepted at the University of the Witwatersrand for the Sign Language Course and the members also received state funding for it, which shows that an action research project undertaken at all levels of the

¹See the Department of Defence Policy on Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action, 1998.

force is the one which is most likely to succeed; the issue received an overwhelming support from the Defence Force authorities right down to the individual deaf soldier. One of the members of the project also interpreted using rudimentary Sign Language skills in a Curamus (body looking after the well-being of soldiers with special needs) seminar for deaf soldiers who otherwise, although physically there, would not have felt part of the seminar as other people would have continued to make deliberations about their situation which might or might not suit deaf soldiers themselves.

The project was met with immense enthusiasm in the SAMHS. The project is now looking at ensuring that some of the members graduating from the University of the Witwatersrand with a qualification in Sign Language, get nominated for the Education, Training, Development Practitioner course run by COLET as soon as possible. A teaching-learning process will have to be organised in which the whole squad of deaf soldiers will have to come to SAMHS Academy for a pilot course. Participants on the project will now have the opportunity to teach the squad and be evaluated and evaluate themselves in terms of the aims of the action research project, lecturers from the University of the Witwatersrand and COLET will have to monitor the classroom process, so that their respective curricula in their different institutions can in turn be influenced. All these role players will then have to share their perspectives and that will lay the basis for a fully-fledged course which will have to be accredited with SAQA and the NQF.

I argue that, if the SANDF is able to cater for the interests of all the different categories of marginalised soldiers in its curricula and in the broader environment of the SANDF, then the SANDF is more likely to be credible in the eyes of the general public and acceptable as a meaningful and trustworthy partner in the peace-keeping operations outside the borders of the Republic of South Africa. The above has to do with an emancipatory way of thinking and not necessarily with action research per se.

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CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS AND WAY FORWARD

6. Context

The instructive point made by some writers, and which is quoted in Chapter One of this thesis, is that action research is based on a critical self-reflection and research undertaken by a person on his or her own actions with the aim of bringing about improvements in those actions, improvement in the understanding of the actions by the ones embarking on them and improvements on a specific social environment which provides the basis of the persons' actions (McNiff, 1988:70-72; Carr and Kemmis, 1986:206-207).

Having been promoted in 1999 from the military rank of Captain to Major in the SANDF, and looking back at one's personal life journey as briefly outlined in Chapter One, one can say with certainty that, although fraught with pain, hopelessness and suffering, such a journey radically changed one from being a passive student who was strictly subservient to authority to a questioning person who became aware of the evils of the apartheid system. The role played by the knowledge of one's true history as told by parents and other ordinary men and women in the community, even at that dark and hopeless hour under apartheid, served to ensure that one was able from a very young age to help determine the direction of one's journey as opposed to being an uncritical and unquestioning traveller without a clear sense of direction. Thus, in my opinion, every child deserves to know from a very early age who he or she is (identity), where he or she comes from (historically), both as an individual and as part of the society, in order to know where he or she is going. The school system has a critical role to play, in ensuring that students are able to develop a clear sense of identity and are in possession of the skills they need to implement their vision, but, bantu education in a very systematic way sought to buttress the inferior position of black people in the land of their ancestors. The challenge of the coming millennium, referred to by President Thabo Mbeki as the African century, remains the extent to which the education and training system in any institution, is able to give credit to the knowledge and experience of everyone irrespective of race, gender, class and geographical location.

The struggle for the transformation of South African society away from apartheid to a non-racial, non-sexist and united society, itself, and access to literature on similar struggles from elsewhere, provided one with very real and meaningful learning experiences which in turn helped one to contextualise the South African student struggles within the broader social, political, historical and economic context that underpinned them.

The roles of fellow students both at school and at the University as well as teachers and lecturers in their diversity, were very crucial in the course of my intellectual development and in my abilities to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

During the early days of the integration process of the SANDF, the situation was very far from normal. People sought refuge in their own backgrounds and that posed a real threat to the mission-readiness of the SANDF and to being a credible protector and defender of all South African citizens irrespective of race, sex, religion, class, language and geographical

location. In the context of the SANDF which continued to be dominated by a racist, sexist, white male culture, I decided to make my adherence to socialist ideology very public, and in my writing this was sometimes taken to the extreme-left stance. My writing reflected a very strong view of the SANDF as a defender, solely of the interests of the South African working class, a view that was a direct product of the contest for the soul of the SANDF and which was contradictory to the current positions of each of the ANC-SACP-COSATU alliance member organisations. Clearly, none of the contesting ideas, be it those about racism, sexism or classism, were consistent with Government policy. The Constitution provides that the primary object of the SANDF is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people, in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force¹.

As highlighted in Chapter Two above, that, while it is important to recognise the necessity of social actors' interpretive categories, and their relevance to research and theory-building, critical theory also recognizes that even trained practitioners may not be aware of ideological factors and unanticipated consequences that may be operative in their practice, thus emancipatory action research seeks to liberate people from being prisoners of ideology (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:116, 118).

A critical social science as explained in Chapter Two of this thesis, is one that recognises that a great many of the actions human beings perform are caused by social conditions over which they have no control, and that a great deal of what humans do to one another is not the result of conscious knowledge and choice. In other words, a critical social science is one which seeks to unmask those systems of social relationships which determine the actions of people and the unanticipated, though not accidental, consequences of those actions².

Recently, I was appointed by the acting officer commanding as the master of ceremonies (MC) in a medal parade where some former NSF members were given their medals for services rendered in their former forces. In the medal parade, I addressed the ceremony in Xhosa, Afrikaans and English. I advised the Sergeant Major responsible for ceremonialism in the force to ensure that next time we must listen to a minister coming from a different religion or consider a minute of silence for contemplation.

When one was appointed as the staff officer of the Training Department, one made it a point that each of the department's members owned a new duty sheet. The way in which each duty sheet was arrived at constituted an action research project between the member concerned and the staff officer who facilitated the process. Collaboration proved not to be a difficult thing to realise between the members of the department as each duty sheet within a department could not be seen in isolation from the other. The starting point is the vision and mission of the department from which duty sheets flow. Members of the department decided to put aside their old duty sheets which were characterised by a gap between their contents and what people actually did in practice. In other words, each person needed to research his or her own practice. It was decided that each person would write down what he or she actually does in practice, and this phase of self-study was carried out over a period of six weeks. Departmental workshops and discussions were held where members shared with each

¹ See the South African Defence Review, 1998. p. 11.

² See Fay, B. Social Theory and Political Practice, London, 1975. p. 94.

other their written work. After the sharing of written project work, people decided to identify all the factors constraining and enhancing their work, coupled with the strengths and weaknesses of the entire unit within which the Department is located.

The next step involved members of the Department meeting together every morning in order to talk about their individual daily plans, sitting together and reflecting on these plans during lunch times and tea times. The continuities and discontinuities between the Department's work and the context of the SANDF's unit, on the one hand, and the broader South African society, on the other, were also discussed. Quite often people complained that the top and middle management of the unit did not always contribute to mission-readiness of the SANDF as required by Government policy. People in the Training Department said that their achievements were always attributed to their commanders, and that, for the first time in their working lives in the defence force, they had a department head who took their conditions of service seriously. It is from the above-mentioned process of self-research that duty sheets were drawn up, and that liberated many members from being coerced to sign duty sheets written in a language they did not understand.

Merit assessments, in my case, were also quite participatory, in that each member would sit with his or her staff officer in doing the assessments, as opposed to being a process which is an exclusive preserve of the "objective" staff officer who uses assessment to punish those he or she does not like. The salary increases, medals and commendation certificate motivations were mainly to the advantage of the most deserving, hard working, especially, lowest ranking and needy soldiers.

Staff development especially for women soldiers was always a top priority and it entailed a range of functional courses like computers as well as attending seminars, re-training medical instructors in areas such as advanced life support and placing them in the trauma units of hospitals such as Tygerberg Hospital so as to gain the necessary real life experience they needed to acquire as instructors and as Operational Emergency Care Orderlies.

6.1 What is the Way Forward ?

The following models which apply in other bureaucratic institutions like the schools could prove useful in terms of illuminating a discussion which would help us realise a defence force that South Africa needs.

6.2 Model 1: Cultural Assimilation and Integration

Assimilation and integration is common in those countries which became multi-racial or multi-cultural as a consequence of immigration (e.g. USA, Canada, Australia and recently much of Western Europe) and have sought, through the school system, language and cultural institutions, to integrate immigrants into the mainstream of a homogenous society. The dominant values are transmitted at the expense of all other values or cultures. Accordingly, immigrant groups display the characteristics of the "traditional" societies from which they come and their main challenge is primarily that of adapting to the "modern" environment of Britain³, for example. Assimilation is in many instances justified as a means for gaining

³Cross, M. "Culture, Education and National Unity": Resistance and Transformation, Johannesburg, 1992. p. 170.

social equality. Its educational implications are quite explicit. Teachers are on many occasions selected from the dominant group and the curricula and syllabi reflect the value system and ideas of the dominating group. In the new South Africa, the SANDF is in terms of civil-military relations subjected to the control and supervision of the democratically-elected Parliament and its policies, but the old defence culture of the old SADF is still being imposed on the new SANDF. The situation in the integration process of the SANDF can be translated into the formula $A+B+C+D=A$, where the symbols represent the different integrating forces in the SANDF and A represents the dominant culture of the old SADF.

6.3 Model 2: Cultural Amalgamation

This model is premised on the unification strategy employed by countries in the Southern hemisphere (e.g. Sudan, Ghana, Chad, Dahomey, Tanzania, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mozambique) in an effort to bring about a unified sense of nationhood through the schools (Cross, 1992: 171). Here the curriculum is centrally prescribed and is aimed at changing the mind-set of the people so as to get rid of negative traditional practices (superstition, fetishism, obscurantism, and magic) and colonial cultural practices (racism, tribalism, regionalism, individualism and elitism). The educational consequences of this strategy are much more complex.

The implications of this model on education involve the re-training of teachers as they have to promote the value system of the society of the future (or the one that is still in its embryonic stage of development towards the future). In this model the educational, political and ideological framework precedes the emergence and development of the respective socio-economic base. The curricula, syllabi, and methods are integrated and based on old and new value systems, mainly the latter. A core curriculum and a core language gets adopted. It can be represented as $A+B+C+D=E$, where E represents the national culture of the "New Person" or "New Society" (Cross, 1992: 171-172). For the SANDF this would mean bringing everybody together and discarding any negative aspects from each of the integrating cultures. Cultural amalgamation would also mean combining the positive aspects from all integrating cultures with the values of a non-racial and non-sexist society as enshrined in the new Constitution of 1996. This model would be critical to each and every one of the integrating forces, not just to some and not to others. It would place more emphasis on the things that are common to all and which can positively influence the mission-readiness of the SANDF, or on the need for the creation of a "new" soldier of the coming millennium. As far as I am concerned, there is a whole area which remains untapped, the education and training traditions of the former liberation forces be it in the underground, exile or prison. Many of the members of the former non-statutory force members had their training in many countries the world over. It would be quite interesting to see their diverse and sometimes similar experiences feeding into the whole curriculum policy formulation process for the SANDF that all South Africans can be proud of.

To me, respecting the cultural roots of diversity, while at the same time guarding against locking people in their own cultures, seems to be the way to go in the SANDF.

6.4 Model 3: Insular Cultural Pluralism

This model is common in those countries that have a deep-rooted cultural diversity (e.g. USSR, China, India, Belgium and Netherlands). In this model the rights of minority languages, culture and education are recognised in the national constitution. Each group

maintains and protects its own identity. An emphasis is put on group rights over individual rights. However, pluralism and cultural regionalism taken to the extreme can as a matter of fact be divisive and patronising. While it seems to have worked well in countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands, it gave rise to serious tensions in India and, not long ago, in movements towards balkanisation in the Soviet Union. Economically, the model needs a considerably heavy and expensive bureaucratic apparatus to maintain the education system. Every school system has its own teachers, methods, students, curriculum and medium (Cross, 1992: 172-173). This model can be represented by the formula $A+B+C+D=A+B+C+D$. Obviously, this is a very exclusive model which can never help to create a sense of cohesion in the situation like the SANDF. All it can do is further polarise the situation and in the end lead to a situation inimical to the spirit of 'jointness', whereby soldiers from the different arms of service of the Army, Air force, Navy and the SAMHS, are being brought together in the same education and training courses as means of enhancing mission-readiness through mutual understanding between the arms of service, thereby preventing duplication from taking place and the wastage of resources resulting from such a duplication.

6.5 Model 4: Modified Cultural Amalgamation

Modified cultural amalgamation is common in the countries where the cultural layout is a direct or partial result of colonialism (e.g. many of the Asian and African countries). The above is a unification approach which is pursued by developing countries such as Nigeria, where the need for common nationality is not emphasised at the expense of the different minority languages and cultures. Ethnic identity gets modified. Although the existence of minority languages and cultures is respected and recognised, the focus is placed on global rather than on merely local concerns. Curricula, school syllabi and methods reflect the diversity of cultures and identities. Teaching and learning are conducted through different language media. The teaching of children primarily in their own mother - tongue is perceived as both correct and desirable. The above can be formulated as $A+B+C+D=A'+B'+C'+D'$, where ' represents the unifying variable (Cross, 1992: 173-193). This model is not based on global concerns exclusively, but, it is also based on respecting the multicultural integration process of the SANDF, respecting diversity, whilst at the same time recognising the interdependency and interrelatedness of cultures. The basic assumption is that among all cultures there are common unifying factors that need to be understood and be emphasised more, in order to move towards the future.

As a result of the fact that the model encourages interaction between groups and individuals, it is possible to deduce that differences here are understood in a positive light, where people learn from each other in order to advance the vision and mission of the SANDF. A good example of this model, in my view, would be South Africa's new national anthem. The love for South Africa, the need to protect people and sovereignty seem to be common in both Nkosi Sikelela and Die Stem. This can be represented as $A+B+C=A'+B'+C'$. National unity requires to be underpinned by mutual adaptation, cohesion, mutual acceptance, and harmony of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, economic and social differences which must concur to the project of nation-building, through the consciousness of common history, common values and common interests.

I have a vision of the education and training system in the SANDF that, while not attempting to lock people into their 'own cultures', respects diversity in a way that allows people from diverse backgrounds to share each others' experience. This can be utilised as building blocks for a system that never existed previously and which is at the same time critical to everyone

in the SANDF. The framework for such an education and training system should be rooted in the different traditions of the different integrating forces.

In the SANDF it must be possible to be a South African, a member of the international community whether one is a Zulu, Shangaan, Afrikaner, Tsonga, Atheist, Muslim, Isindebele speaker, English, Venda, Christian, Hindu, Jew etc. The education and training system should not be founded or based on any one of the above to the exclusion of others, but should strive towards promoting an understanding of the interdependency between the soldiers, society and nature.

However, a limited degree of assimilation and integration into the principles of non-racialism and non-sexism is quite desirable in the process of nation-building in the force, given the divisive impact of apartheid and the levels of “mental colonisation”. This points to a multicultural curriculum with an emphasis on nation-building rather than ethnic, tribal or any other narrow interests, while presumably making use of the actual diversity that exists. This means that the education system will have to emphasise national unity at the expense of group diversity. This will enable those white soldiers from the old SADF and also the large numbers of blacks who have been alienated from their African cultural roots, to value each others’ cultural heritage.

6.6 Organisation Development (OD)

The particular understanding of the military as an organisation, developed in Chapter Three above, rests on a belief that development of the military organisation is not only possible, but is a necessary aspect of integrated military life. However, while imperative and crucial, these developments and changes in the military need to be located within the context of the whole military organisation as the immediate environment, which will either hamper or enable individual soldiers to make these changes and develop professionally. In other words there is a need to build a military environment which is supportive of change-for the individual soldiers as well as for the military as an organisational whole. This means that the military needs to be a learning organisation-an organisation that constantly and systematically reflects on its own practice, and makes appropriate adjustments and changes as a result of new insights gained through that reflection. In this way we are talking about the professional development of soldiers (with emphasis on ‘people’ change) and organisation development (organisational change), in order to equip the military as a whole to become more effective in its purpose and goals, thus contributing to mission-readiness of the defence force. We cannot develop a military organisation without developing the people who work in the military; thus professional (human resource) development is seen to be a necessary aspect of organisation development. According to Bennis⁴, Organisation Development (OD) is a response to the process of change, a complex educational strategy aimed at changing the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structures of organisations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself.

To Dalin and Rust⁵, Organisation Development is a self-correcting, self-renewal process,

⁴See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 35.

⁵See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 36.

undertaken by the members of an organisation, although support is usually sought from external consultants or self-assessment instruments. The consultants seldom impose their solutions, but assist the members of an organisation in identifying for themselves what the strong and weak points of the organisation are and what changes shall take place in the organisation. However, the members of the group itself (e.g. the Department of Defence), carry an ultimate responsibility for the way the organisation is to be transformed.

Organisation development can be described as a “normative re-educative” strategy for managing change, which is aimed at facilitating development of people and the organisation as a whole for the purposes of maximising human fulfilment and increasing the capacity of the organisation⁶. A central focus in organisational development within my own setting is that of the culture of the SANDF. When one talks about organisation development interventions within the SANDF’s context, what one really describes is the changing of the culture of the SANDF. Strategies aimed at improvement and change are unlikely to be effective and sustained, if the overall culture of the SANDF is not recognised and then transformed. Although organisation development has its roots in the business world⁷, it has, more recently, however, come to be an important strategy for building organisational capacity in many different kinds of institutions. I argue that it is an important strategy for the ‘whole-military development’. When one looks at organisation development, one needs to take into account the particular and central purpose of the military, in this case the SANDF. It is about learning and all the strategies used to facilitate learning.

Some of the key characteristics of organisation development include:

- a focus on the development of soldiers and structures;
- a reflection of humanistic and democratic values that underpin the Constitution;
- collaboration on the basis of equality and self-determination;
- a focus on military organisational self-renewal;
- an emphasis on rigorous and rational planning, including goal setting and planning accordingly;
- a particular focus on creating an effective open “problem-posing” climate;
- a continuing process which reflects the action research cycle of ongoing planning, action, observation and reflection.

The types of strategies used in organisation development include:

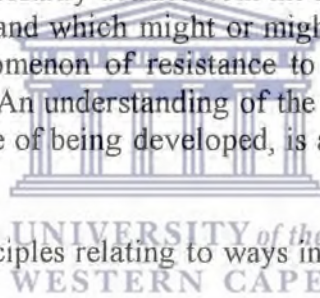
- person-centred strategies which take the form of educational interventions, included among which are the military personnel, educators and student development;

⁶See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 36.

⁷See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 36.

structural change strategies which tend to concentrate on changing structural aspects of the military itself-for example management structures and processes, regulation and policy, codes of conduct; also included here would be structural aspects relating to the environment within which the military operates (the broader context).

The inevitability of change in life is known to all of us. Rumbles, rhythms, ripples and cycles of change are an integral part of the realities of everyone's life. As such we all change in response to changes in our circumstances and in turn we influence the direction, intensity and depth of change in our circumstances in a constant way. However, it is important to recognise that within these cycles and ripples of change, where broader social issues affect our day-to-day lives and where our day-to-day lives shape broader social changes, we have a responsibility to engage consciously in the process of change, towards constructive and meaningful directions⁸. For the SANDF to engage in an organisation-development process means deciding to choose a conscious direction for the South African armed forces-one that will most likely enable the SANDF to become more effective in its focus, orientation and purpose. According to Fullan⁹(1991), it is imperative to note that such change, even though consciously chosen, is still very likely to be threatening, painful and difficult for those engaging in it. It also needs to be recognised that there is very likely to be resistance to change, as participants in the process move from a situation which is familiar (whether it is pleasant or unpleasant need not necessarily detract from the safety of familiarity that it offers) to a situation which is not known, and which might or might not be better than the situation which has preceded it. This phenomenon of resistance to change contributes towards the unevenness of the change process. An understanding of the military as an organisation, with its interdependent elements, capable of being developed, is a crucial aspect of organisational change.



The following are some broad principles relating to ways in which organisational issues can be addressed in the SANDF.

In military development it is important to develop an understanding or analysis of the military that helps all concerned to identify strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of improving things.

Finding out what the various role players in the military institution consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation, is an important first step. Given that organisation development is about facilitating and developing self-understanding and self-renewal, it is crucial that the issues are identified by the relevant role players in the military institution itself, and not by the officer commanding or organisation-development consultant alone.

One way in which one could do the above is to ask all role players in the military, through workshops, interviews or questionnaires, to write down their views of issues facing the Defence Force, or its strengths and weaknesses. The above views could

⁸See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 37.

⁹See Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. *The Learning School: An Organisation Development Approach*, Kenwyn, 1997. p. 38.

then be shared in a workshop format, or compiled in a paper.

The framework outlined in this chapter and Chapter Three above could then be introduced to all concerned through a workshop. For the purposes of helping participants integrate the framework and making it meaningful in their own military context, one could ask the participants to rework the framework in a way that conforms to their ideal of the defence force. The framework helps participants to organise and make sense of their strong and weak points. At this point one could, together with the participants, link the issues the participants initially raised with elements identified in the framework-and in this way help them to categorise the issues, so that some order is made of the overwhelming number of issues or problems usually facing one and one's organisation.

One could then make an overall analysis of where most of the defence force's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what potentially should be targeted for change.

Besides using this framework for a holistic analysis as described above, soldiers could use it as a means of understanding and solving a particular problem. One way to do that, could be to hear the participant's views of the issue; then introduce them to the framework; then ask the participants to redefine the problem and pursue solutions in the light of the framework.

The main reason for doing the above is to retain a holistic and complex understanding and intervention approach. For example, if the defence force requests assistance in developing a code of conduct (identity), it would be helpful to explore, with the defence force, what underlying concerns are prompting this need. Through such a process, it might well become clear that there is a lack of accountability (structures and procedures) through ineffective leadership and management. Initial steps would probably focus on building leadership and management capacity, and developing a vision for a military organisation, accompanied by appropriate strategic planning.

The framework is particularly helpful as a basis for military strategic planning. It reminds everyone concerned of the necessity to include analysis and development of every aspect. However, defence force planning which does not reinforce a particular vision (identity), or identify the necessity for restructuring to support the realisation of such a vision (structures and procedures), or recognise the current capacity in the force or the capacity-building required (technical support and human resources) will not help the military to move forward significantly.

CONCLUSION

The process of introducing emancipatory action research in the military health service and in the SANDF broadly is a continuous one. I am of the opinion that what has been achieved thus far in the SANDF, in terms of unmasking marginalisation in its different manifestations, through reflecting on our practices, forms an initial and important step towards emancipatory action research and that achievement needs to be consolidated and deepened. However, such a consolidation and deepening, will only happen if soldiers are supported and prompted to continuously reflect critically on their work. It could even be said that the action research projects I reported about in this thesis, only existed because some enlightened soldiers have

developed lessons from their own mistakes, and from the mistakes of others.

Unfortunately for the SANDF the learning is too slow, partly because of its British tradition upon which the SANDF is based. This British tradition, coupled with the impact of business-oriented consultants and the pervasiveness of a strong white Afrikaner institutional culture in our armed forces, bring about a state of affairs where collective and critical self-reflection as a source of legitimate understanding, are devalued and mistrusted.

Action research, which is essentially a group activity¹⁰, is, in a military setting strongly imbued with a western consciousness; where people with different powers (SF and NSF), status and influence come together to work on a specific project, the idea of collaboration and participation on the basis of equality becomes problematic. Robin McTaggart (1989:3) argued that:

Authentic participation in research means sharing in the way research is conceptualised, practised, and brought to bear on the life-world. It means ownership-responsible agency in the production of knowledge and the improvement of practice. Mere involvement implies none of this; and creates the risk of cooption and exploitation of people in the realisation of the plans of others.

Thus emancipatory action research is about the members of the SANDF (irrespective of the force of origin), being equal agents and masters of their history and destiny. Only thus can we help rebuild sustainable peace and stability in South Africa, the African continent and the rest of the world.



¹⁰See McTaggart, R. Principles for Participatory Action Research, a paper presented to the Third World Encounter on Participatory Research, Nicaragua, 1989, p. 3.

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APPENDIX

DUTY SHEET ONE

1. Orientation and induction. You are to act as a coordinator responsible for the orientation and induction training of new members in the Western Province Medical Command. This includes the following:
 - a. An assessment must be done to ascertain the needs of the organisation and new members entering the command regarding the aspects that should be included in an orientation and induction programme. The target group for this assessment should include all new members and staff officers and line managers in the command. Newly appointed members already working could also be included.
 - b. You are to compile and ensure the implementation of an induction and orientation programme, to be used with all new members entering the service of Western Province Medical Command.

2. In post training. You are to act as coordinator responsible for all in post training in Western Province Medical Command. This includes the following:
 - i. The drafting of a Standing Work Procedure to ensure the implementation of in post training by staff officers at Western Province Medical Command.
 - ii. You are to develop an effective system to monitor the progress of in post training in the command and feedback regarding the above, must be given every three months to the staff officer of training and other staff officers.

Authority. As training officer you are hereby given the authority to conduct yourself in the manner which your appointment demands within the regulations of the Defence Act, general regulations, SANDF Orders and directives, SAMS Orders and Unit Orders and delegations.

DUTY SHEET TWO

The following is the new duty sheet which was put together by the acting officer commanding and the new chief of staff of Western Province Medical Command. These officers who drew up the new duty sheet for me were not so new as they were both white, Afrikaner, middle-aged male Colonels who had spent a great deal of their working lives in the old SADF.

In other words, what was new to the not so new leadership at Western Province Medical Command, was not only the deepening democratisation process in the country, but also the new leadership that everybody had to serve in the SANDF.

1. You are hereby appointed as the Acting Staff Officer for training of WP Med Comd, excluding IMM, 2 Mil Hosp and 3 Med Bn Gp and are instructed in this duty sheet as to the tasks and functions linked to this appointment. This appointment is valid from 20 July 1998 until further notice.

2. The duty sheet is divided into the following categories:

- a. Aim and overall mission of the Staff Officer for training.
- b. Reporting channels (including command and control and liaison with internal and external institutions).
- c. Key performance areas and areas of responsibility.

3. Aim and overall mission of the staff officer for training: As the staff officer for training you form an integral part of the leadership element of the command and are responsible for the overall training and development of the human resources of WP Med Comd as well as the management of the following:

- a. First Aid Training Wing at WP Medical Command.
- b. Para-medical training in the Comd (excluding diving medical training at IMM).
- c. You must form a close liaison with the Training Department of 2 Mil Hosp.



The abovementioned training departments form part of the Support Services of the Command and their respective units alike and should continuously be reminded that their primary function is one of support to the various functional disciplines/clients.

4. Reporting channels (including command and control and liaison with internal and external institutions): As staff officer for training you report directly to the Chief of Staff and have direct contact with all command department heads for the execution of your duties. You will have an open channel of liaison with Surgeon General Headquarters and must ensure that discretion is used in this regard. It is expected of you to liaise and visit with the following institutions regarding various training issues:

- a. Other Arms of Services and Staff Departments wrt aspects concerned with medical training.
- b. Other unit wrt the application and execution of the Training Policy.
- c. All units under command to conduct evaluations and monitoring actions.

- d. You are to furthermore liaise by means of meetings, communication/work sessions, conferences, seminars and symposiums with the following external institution.
 - i. Provincial Emergency Services.
- e. You are to furthermore liaise by means of meetings, communication/work sessions, conferences, seminars and symposiums with the following internal institutions:
 - i. The SAMHS Academy.
 - ii. First Aid Training Wing.
 - iii. Diving Medical Training at IMM.
 - iv. Computer Training at 2 Mil Hosp.

5. Key Performance Areas. As staff officer for training you are responsible for the management of the following KPA's (and any others which you may deem necessary to include from time to time). These have been identified as follows:

- a. Productivity Improvement through Training and Development. Numerous shortcomings in the execution of member's daily tasks can be attributed to the lack of training or insufficient knowledge to empower them to perform their tasks according to required norms and standards. You will be required to establish, conduct and monitor a training and development programme for WP Med Comd. This programme must address the following issues:
 - i. Induction of newly appointed/transferred members to WP Med Comd.
 - ii. OJT (on-the-job training).
 - iii. Military Training.
 - iv. Functional Training.
 - v. Special Training eg Occupational Health and Safety, Weapons Training etc.

During the monitoring of the abovementioned programmes it is imperative that you conduct regular needs analysis to confirm that the programmes are meeting with both individual and organisational objectives. You are to effect the necessary changes where necessary.

- b. Policy Awareness and Formulation. You are to continuously keep yourself abreast of all training policies effecting your environment and are to ensure that

your Training and Development Programmes comply with the specifications as laid down in these policies. It is expected of you to review these policies to their effectiveness and to amend the policies as required.

6. Areas of Responsibility. During the execution of your tasks you must bear the following in mind:
- a. You are the chief co-ordinator wrt all training that takes place in the Med Comd, excluding 2 Mil, IMM and 3 Med Bn Gp.
 - b. You are to determine the feasibility of introducing new courses within the comd and are to ensure that the correct design specifications are met in the compilation of any such courses.
 - c. You are to become involved in the compilation of specific training courses and are to ensure that the following steps are adhered to:
 - i. Research.
 - ii. Formulate training objectives.
 - iii. Structure course content.
 - iv. Determine presentation methods and strategies.
 - v. Design an evaluation system.
 - d. You are to provide advice and leadership wrt the formulation and presentation to members who wish to conduct in-house training sessions.
7. It is also your responsibility to notify the Chief of Staff of any changes, concerning training which may have an impact on your duty sheet.



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