DEFENCE, DEMOCRACY AND SOUTH AFRICA'S CIVIL-MILITARY GAP

Lindy Heinecken[1], Lt Richard Gueli, Centre for Military Studies, and Dr Ariane Neethling, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University

Introduction

Civil-military relations theory suggests that a functional and effective military requires a unique culture, separate from its parent society. This is based on the assumption that a "gap" between the military and society is inevitable as the military's function, the lawful application of military force in accordance with government direction, is fundamentally different from civilian business. Those interested in civil-military relations are essentially concerned with determining when the "gap" between the military and parent society becomes dysfunctional in terms of civil-control over the military and/or the military's ability to execute its mandate. The correct balance needs to be obtained to ensure that the military remains strong enough to defend the state (protected *by* the military) and subservient enough not to threaten the state (protected *from* the military).[2]

Since World War II, there have been at least three distinct waves addressing the nature of the civil-military gap, the factors that have shaped it and the policies necessary to keep civil-military differences from harming national security.[3] The gap debate crystallised with Samuel P. Huntington's 1957 book, *The Soldier and the State*,[4] and Morris Janowitz's 1960 book, *The Professional Soldier*.[5] Huntington argued that the military's unique function required a military culture independent from societal influences. Any "fusionist" efforts by the civilian government, he argued, would be disastrous for military effectiveness. Janowitz disagreed with Huntington's assessment of its impact on military effectiveness. He claimed that the changing demands of modern warfare and the broadening of military tasks (to include constabulary non-military roles) required a shift in professional skills and values and that the armed forces would not be able to resist "civilianisation", for doing so would isolate it from broader society.[6]

120

The trauma of the Vietnam War marked the second wave of literature addressing the nature of the gap focusing this time on the work of Charles Moskos. His institutional/occupational thesis highlighted the implications of an organisation shifting from one highly divergent from civil society (institutional), to one more akin to the civilian marketplace (occupational).[7] Moskos maintained that the potential outcomes of the move away from the professional/institutional model of military organisation towards an occupational/civilian model, was that soldiers instead of being motivated by a desire to serve the "common good" were more concerned with pay, benefits and quality of working life. This he believed, would impact negatively on loyalty, commitment and military culture, and by implication, military effectiveness. Of interest is that while Moskos considered these civilianising trends harmful to the military, Janowitz disagreed on the seriousness of these occupational values for the military.[8] He maintained that due to technological advance and changing values in broader society, the military would be obliged to adapt to maintain both its legitimacy and effectiveness.

The end of the Cold War and the extraordinary changes in the international security environment sparked renewed interest in the gap debate. This time, analysts turned their attention toward the new security challenges of the post-Cold War and how these challenges would affect the mission, strategy and character of the military. Disagreement between the military and its civilian superiors flared into confrontation over questions like women serving in combat roles, trade union rights for soldiers,[9] and the involvement of the military in peace missions.[10] Collectively, these problems revived the classical Huntington-Janowitz debate, between those who emphasised the need for the military to be different and for this difference to be respected, and those who argued that, given the new missions of the armed forces, traditional military culture now served a less essential purpose.[11]

Although the issues associated with the civil-military gap debate have remained much of the same, tension in civil-military relations has heightened in the post-Cold War era due to the impact of a number of new systemic forces. In an international security environment where armed forces are asked to help, protect and save rather than fight, commanders have grappled with ways to bridge the gap between their mandate (to fight wars), the demands placed upon them in terms of the new security environment (maintaining peace and global security) and the need to accommodate individual rights (political imperatives) imposed upon it by broader society.[12] Increasingly academics in other countries (that is, apart from the US) have begun to recognise these tensions between the military and civil society and the impact this has on civil-military relations in democratic societies.[13]

Against this brief theoretical background, this study seeks to establish the status of the civil-military gap in South Africa, by analysing the responses of civilian students and military officers on a range of security issues, and comparing these quantitative findings with the qualitative information obtained during interviews and literature in the field. In so doing, an attempt is made to ascertain whether a civil-military gap exists in South Africa and the implications this holds for civil-military relations.

Research Methodology

The instrument used to measure the civil-military gap was a questionnaire designed by the European Research Group on Military and Society (*Ergomas*) and used in eighteen different countries. This study reports only on the South African findings. The study was conducted in three phases, the first comprising a literature review of relevant material in the field, the second in-depth interviews with specific target groups and third, the distribution of the *Ergomas* questionnaire to civilian students and military officers of comparable age and educational background. Not all the questions were included for analysis in this study, only those of relevance to the military gap in South Africa are discussed.[14]

Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with two senior South African National Defence Force (SANDF) military officers, one responsible for Corporate Communications and the other for external military operations; two journalists, one from a daily Afrikaans newspaper, the other from a weekly English newspaper; two politicians, a representative from the ruling African National Congress (ANC), the other from the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA); two anti-war/peace campaigners; and two military analysts, one working at a civilian university, the other employed by a leading non-governmental organisation involved in security research and capacity building in Africa[15]. The interviewers were sensitive to the political, cultural and military backgrounds of the respective interviewees, as well as race and gender.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were distributed to respondents during the period July 2003 to March 2004. The military officers (hereafter officers) responding to the questionnaire were either in their first year of commission, or final under-graduate or post-graduate year of study at the South African Military Academy, Saldanha. The civilian respondents were civilian students (hereafter students) attending the Stellenbosch University, the University of the Western Cape, and the University of

Cape Town[16] in the following academic departments, political science, law, economics and engineering. Only persons who volunteered to take part in the study completed the questionnaires. A total of 226 questionnaires were handed out of which 36 questionnaires were incomplete and were discarded. A total of 190 questionnaires were processed.

Demographic profile

The demographic profile of respondents by race and gender for the two control groups in the sample is reflected below (Table 1).

The age of respondents varied between 19 years and 38 years. The mean age of all the respondents was 24. Of the respondents, 38.4% indicated that their father has served in the military, while 1.6% revealed that their mother served in the military.

Table 1: Demographic profile

	Military Officers		Civilian Students	
Gender	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Male	51	26.8	76	40.0
Female	10	5.3	53	27.9
Race	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Black	29	15.6	31	16.7
White	23	12.4	71	38.2
Coloured	5	2.7	24	12.9
Asian	2	1.1	1	0.5

Data analysis

The aim of this study was to determine if there were any differences in the opinions of students and officers on a range of civil-military relations issues. Most of the data was recorded on a four-point scale and differences were determined through a *chi*-square test at a 5% level of significance. For statistical purposes, responses were often grouped by combining two adjacent categories to enhance the validity of the test. The Student's *t*-test was conducted with to compare the opinions of students and officers on a ten-point scale. This was done since normality could be assumed and because of the variability of the data over larger range of values.

In the final interpretation of the data, the findings were discussed with reference to information obtained from the interviews and other secondary sources. The ultimate aim was to determine if there is a convergence in the attitudes of

officers and students on range of security issues discussed and whether, with reference to the qualitative information obtained from the interviews and literature in the field, if these 'gaps' can be confirmed, and if so, what this means for civil-military relations and military effectiveness in South Africa.

Limitations

Although this project is the only comprehensive study of the so-called civil-military gap in South Africa, there are a number of limitations. Firstly, the survey focused on an elite group of officers and students and the results may not be indicative of the opinions of the rank and file of the SANDF, or of the broader South African student or general population. It is acknowledged that differences, such as race, gender, educational qualifications, years of study and direction, are important in terms of how different groups perceive security. However, in the discussion of the findings, these factors were not reported. In terms of demographic profile, more whites responded to this survey than blacks.

Nonetheless, these respondents represent a cohort of our educated youth and their perceptions as our future leaders and decision-makers serve as an indication of how security matters are perceived. When the findings are compared with the qualitative information obtained in the interviews and literature in the field, the trends are clear that a civil-military gap is evident in South Africa.

Main findings

In the following section, the findings of the Ergomas survey conducted among military officers and civilian students are discussed. Studies point to an emergence of a civil-military gap on three levels – a cultural gap, a functional gap and a knowledge gap.

Indications of a cultural gap

The cultural gap,[17] refers to a clash in values between the military and civilian cultures. Loyalty and selfless service are considered the most desirable qualities in individuals serving in the military. Accordingly, the military profession requires all members to demonstrate high standards of patriotism, discipline, courage, and self-sacrifice in the course of their duties.[18] The less emphasis civil society places on these values, the more difficult it becomes for the military to inculcate and enforce these values. Thus, the first set of questions relate to the value individuals attach to certain character traits and their willingness to submit to authority.

Personal and military values

The respondents were asked to indicate the importance of 19 virtues in the education of their children, among them discipline, responsibility, tolerance, patriotism, comradeship, orderliness, traditionalism, obedience, creativity, loyalty, spirit of equality, generosity, initiative, self-control, determination, open-mindedness, team spirit, and so forth. Of the 19 qualities listed, significant difference in opinion emerged between students and officers on seven characteristics. Officers felt far stronger that discipline (p=0.021), patriotism (p=0.005), comradeship (p=0.020), traditionalism (p=0.052), obedience (p=0.017) initiative (p=0.006) and determination (p=0.047) are important in their children's education. Although not statistically significant, other characteristics such as loyalty, team spirit, and honour were of greater importance to military officers compared to the students

Following this, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the same virtues for the military. On this there was consensus, with most respondents indicating that discipline, responsibility, honesty, team spirit, obedience, loyalty, orderliness, honour, self-control, comradeship, orderliness, and determination as important for the military. Only on the values of obedience (p=0.052) and traditionalism (p=0.028) did officers score higher than students, while the need for self-control, was regarded significantly more important for the military by students (p=0.021).

Individualism versus collectivism

The military demands a higher sense of obedience and compliance of its members than the civilian world. Thus, the responses to the questions measuring the level of individualism among respondents are important in terms of authority relations and traditional military culture. In this regard, students were significantly less "willing to give into arguments" (76% versus 90% usually never give in) than officers. Little difference in opinion emerged between students and officers when it came to whether they would "change their minds when in an argument" (officers 84% versus students 89%).

Most of the respondents indicated that they "do not easily give into arguments" or "change their opinions", and most favoured "consensus decision-making". Across the board both students and officers indicated that they were "not hesitant to disagree with the group". They were almost equally divided on the question on whether they "like to beat the system".

Table 2: Questions on consensus decision-making

Variable	Level of Agreement				*Chi-square*
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	***p***
I usually favour group consensus	**25.9**	**42.9**	**21.8**	**9.4**	0.646
Military officers	32.1	39.6	20.8	7.5	
Civilian students	23.1	44.4	22.2	10.3	
I do not hesitate to disagree with the group	**55.0**	**32.2**	**10.5**	**2.3**	0.795
Military officers	50.9	34.0	11.3	3.8	
Civilian students	56.8	31.4	10.2	1.7	
I like to beat the system	**23.3**	**31.3**	**34.4**	**11.0**	
Military officers	26.0	20.0	38.0	16.0	0.169
Civilian students	22.1	36.3	32.7	8.8	
I always listen to my leaders	**24.3**	**41.6**	**28.9**	**5.2**	
Military officers	42.6	37.0	14.8	5.6	0.001
Civilian students	16.0	43.7	35.3	5.0	

Percentages in 1=agree strongly, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly.

The only, rather obvious, difference between officers and students on the issue of individualism and collectivism was that officers were significantly more (p=0.001) prepared to "always listen to their leaders" (see Table 2). Nonetheless, what these responses indicate a strong sense of self-determination by both the military and civilian youth.
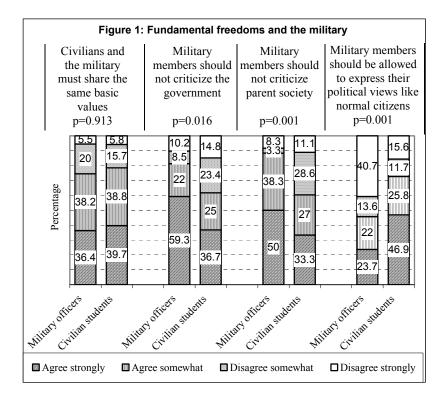
Indications of a functional gap

The functional gap underscores the pressures placed on the military to conform to politically, socially, and morally correct imperatives.[19]   Here respondents were asked to respond to questions relating to equality of rights, gender equality and the use of the military in various roles and how this is perceived to impact on the operational effectiveness of the SANDF.

Equality of rights

With the emphasis placed on equality of rights in the Constitution of the RSA, it is not surprising that across the board, both officers and civilians attached a great deal of importance to these principles and most agreed that the "equality of people", the "respect of individual rights" and that the "basic freedoms of

individuals" are very important. No significant differences between the two groups were observed on the question "civilians and the military must share the same basic values" which indicates that officers generally felt that they should be granted the same basic fundamental rights and responsibilities as any other citizen.

Figure 1: Fundamental freedoms and the military

Some interesting differences of opinion were established with regards to freedom of expression. From Figure 1 it follows that at a 5% level of significance, most officers were not comfortable with the idea that the military should criticise the government (p=0.016), or the parent society (p=0.001). Even more interesting was the fact that a significant amount of students strongly agreed that "military members should be allowed to express their political views like normal citizens", while officers strongly disagreed with this statement (p=0.001).

Gender equality

In line with the provisions of the new Constitution, military policy guidelines were issued to allow women to serve in all roles in the military, including in combat roles.[20] In this regard, differences of opinion existed between officers and students on gender equality. Students were significantly more ($p=0.032$) in favour of women being fully integrated into the military on an optional basis than officers, but did not support the full integration of women on a compulsory basis. Officers, on the other hand were more (p=0.017) in favour of women serving in the military on a compulsory basis, but not in combat roles.

Respondents were asked to indicate what factors they thought, if any, would warrant women not serving in the military. Although not statistically significant, officers felt stronger than students that women should not serve in combat because "women are not effective in combat", that "women could be taken prisoner or abused", that "the death of women soldiers will demoralise male soldiers and the public", and that there is "little privacy for men and women in military jobs". On the aspect of the impact of pregnancy on deployability, officers felt significantly stronger that this has a negative impact on the organisation (p=0.016).

Prioritising defence tasks

Most of the respondents agreed that the military's primary role is to defend the country, but that it should also be deployed in military operations other than war (MOOTW) including "peacekeeping missions, disaster relief, to fight terrorism, combat drug-trafficking and to deal with domestic disorder". The only significant difference with regards to the military being used in non-traditional missions was that officers were more in favour of their involvement in controlling mass immigration (p=0.014). However, when it came to the missions that entailed the use of force, officers were far more in favour of their involvement in peace-enforcement missions (p<0.001) and combat missions (p<0.001). Moreover, a significantly higher number of officers reported that "the most important role for the military is preparation for and the conduct of war" (p<0.001) and that "war is sometimes necessary to protect the national interest" (p<0.001). This suggests that officers still view their core function as warfighting, even though they are used predominately in missions where the use of force is the last resort.

Hereby it is not implied that officers object to being deployed in MOOTW. Although officers did not entirely agree that "peacekeeping and other non-combat missions are presently central to the military function", most (66%) strongly supported the idea that "the military should be prepared to cover a wide-spectrum of possible missions". This is particularly significant, as both officers and

students seem to agree that government should not focus only on national security issues, but also deal with security issues which contribute towards the well-being (quality of life) and survival of people.[21] In this regard, both officers and students regarded organised crime (89.3%), international drug trafficking (88.8%), the threat of mass immigration from foreign countries (88.0%), terrorism in our countries (68.4%), and the possibility of armed conflict between African countries with which we have cooperative relations (53.9%) as the most likely security threats facing the country.

Despite the consensus on the level of importance of these threats, some differences emerged with regards to the likelihood of these threats to the country. The fact that SANDF has been responsible for borderline and soldiers are often sent on border control duties explains why officers felt significantly stronger (p=0.007) that mass immigration posed a serious threat. Significantly more officers (71.7%) than students (54.5%) felt that the threat of "attacks on computer networks" was likely. This may be ascribed to the emphasis placed on information warfare in the education of officers. Moreover, although neither officers nor students rated the possibility of nuclear blackmail from developing countries as a serious threat, officers thought this more likely (p=0.012) than students.

Indications of a knowledge gap

The *knowledge* gap denotes a lack of understanding between the military and parent society, which affects informed decision-making on military matters, interest in, and support for the armed forces.[22] In this section, questions relating to civil control of the military, the influence of the media and the status of the military reflect the implications a growing knowledge gap has for civil-military relations.

Civil control of military

Given this, the responses of officers and students to the questions relating to civil control of the military are noteworthy. Although not statistically significant, officers were more inclined to support the statement that "the military profession should be subordinate to the political leadership" and that "politicians must give professional autonomy to the military". However, both students and officers agreed that "the military should advocate policies that it believes are in the best interests of the country". In terms of the gap debate, this is important as it indicates a need for the military to make known and defend its needs. This could imply that the military is prepared to accept civil-military *control* provided that there is enough civil-military *cooperation* or dialogue with government on issues that affect the military (Table 3).

Table 3: Military subordination and the military's role in society

Variable	Level of Agreement				Chi-square
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	*p*
The military profession is subordinate to the political leadership	**38.9**	**38.3**	**18.3**	**4.6**	0.070
Military officers	52.7	30.9	14.5	1.8	
Civilian students	32.5	41.7	20.0	5.8	
The military should defend and support the government's policies	**36.3**	**30.2**	**17.6**	**15.9**	0.873
Military officers	35.6	30.5	20.3	13.6	
Civilian students	36.6	30.1	16.3	17.1	
The military should advocate military policies that it believes are in the best interests of the country	**47.7**	**33.5**	**11.4**	**7.4**	0.756
Military officers	47.2	30.2	15.1	7.5	
Civilian students	48.0	35.0	9.8	7.3	
The military should have direct political influence in society	**12.1**	**25.8**	**28.0**	**34.1**	0.731
Military officers	8.5	27.1	27.1	37.3	
Civilian students	13.8	25.2	28.5	32.5	
Politicians must give professional autonomy to the military	**30.6**	**32.9**	**26.0**	**10.4**	0.086
Military officers	42.6	29.6	16.7	11.1	
Civilian students	25.2	34.5	30.3	10.1	

In percentage1=agree strongly, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly

Despite the fact that officers felt that the principle of subordination of the military to political leadership must be respected, 58% reported that politicians are very or somewhat ignorant of military affairs, and only 6.1% regarded politicians as being very and 35.9% somewhat knowledgeable on military matters. The student group expressed similar reservations on the level of competency of politicians on military matters. This explains why both officers and students felt that the military

should be able to influence decisions affecting defence so as to ensure informed decision-making by politicians.

When asked how much confidence they had in various institutions on a scale of 1-10, officers held institutions of the state in higher esteem than students. In this regard, the *t*-test showed that officers held significantly higher levels of confidence in the President (p=0.001) and in the military (p<0.001) than students. The level of confidence expressed in other state institutions was comparable between the two groups, although officers, on the whole, were more supportive of government compared to students.

The media and public opinion

The media plays an important role in influencing and directing public opinion. In light of this, the responses of officers and students to the questions relating to the media and the military are noteworthy. Officers and students reported that their main sources of information on the military were newspapers, television news and radio news. Very few students consulted special military newspapers or magazines on military affairs. For officers this was their main source of information on military matters and compared to the mass media, obviously more creditworthy.

The fact that students relied heavily on the mass media for information on military matters is of some concern, given that both students and officers (54.6%) stated that the "level of information the media is not good". The lack of accurate and factual information on military matters plays an important part in shaping perceptions of the military. Although most respondents thought the depiction of the military in the media was neutral to somewhat hostile, officers felt significantly stronger that the media was hostile towards the military (p=0.01).

The status of the military in society

The relatively poor public image together with a general lack of interest in security issues, explains why students displayed a high level of apathy towards the military and few stated that they had any keen interest in security issues. On a scale of 1-4, where 1 equals strongly agree and 4 strongly disagree, only 36.4% students compared to 75.4% officers demonstrated a keen interested in security issues, with almost a fifth of the students indicating little or no interest in military service (p<0.001) (Table 4).

Table 4: Importance of military service

Variable	Level of Agreement				Chi-square
	1	2	3	4	p
South Africans should always feel patriotic	**53.3**	**33.7**	**10.1**	**3.0**	**0.036**
Military officers	69.8	22.6	5.7	1.9	
Civilian students	45.7	38.8	12.1	3.4	
Good citizenship means serving in the military	**23.2**	**28.6**	**31.0**	**17.3**	**<0.001**
Military officers	40.4	38.5	17.3	3.8	
Civilian students	15.5	24.1	37.1	23.3	
All South Africans should be willing to fight for the country	**39.6**	**26.0**	**19.5**	**14.8**	**<0.001**
Military officers	73.6	18.9	3.8	3.8	
Civilian students	24.1	29.3	26.7	19.8	
Strong armed forces improve our image throughout the world	**33.9**	**32.7**	**25.6**	**7.7**	**<0.001**
Military officers	56.6	28.3	13.2	1.9	
Civilian students	23.5	34.8	31.3	10.4	
The military is the most important part of public life	**20.1**	**21.8**	**37.9**	**20.1**	**<0.001**
Military officers	37.5	23.2	33.9	5.4	
Civilian students	11.9	21.2	39.8	27.1	
All men should do some national service	**28.2**	**22.4**	**26.4**	**23.0**	
Military officers	44.6	26.8	17.9	10.7	**0.001**
Civilian students	20.3	20.3	30.5	28.8	
I am proud of women and men that serve in the military	**47.0**	**31.9**	**16.3**	**4.8**	0.491
Military officers	53.7	24.1	16.7	5.6	
Civilian students	43.8	35.7	16.1	4.5	
The South African armed forces are attracting high-quality, motivated recruits	**28.8**	**19.2**	**32.1**	**19.9**	**0.002**
Military officers	44.4	9.3	22.2	24.1	
Civilian students	20.6	24.5	37.3	17.6	

In percentage 1=agree strongly, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly

Highly significant differences were observed on the willingness to serve in the military. Students were less patriotic than officers (84.5% versus 92.4%) and few thought "good citizenship means serving in the military" (39.6% versus 78.9%) or that "all South Africans should be willing to fight for their country" (53.4% versus 92.5%). This places a serious question mark over loyalty to the country should its national interests be threatened.

Apart from the general lack of interest in military service, a significant number of students did not agree that the "military is the most important part of public life" ($p<0.001$). They also disagreed with the statement that "strong armed forces improve our image throughout the world" ($p<0.001$), implying that powerful armed forces are not in realist terms, central to state power. There was also significant disagreement over whether all men should do some form of national service. Nonetheless both students and officers respected those who serve in the military, although students did not think that the SANDF was attracting high quality, motivated recruits ($p=0.002$).

Discussion

For the South African armed forces, the post-Cold War era has truly been an era of uncertainty and change. Unlike many other Western armed forces, the SANDF had to adapt not only to a new strategic environment, but to a new political dispensation which affected almost every facet of its being. These systemic forces have influenced civil-military relations in various ways, impacting on attitudes towards military service, the functioning of the military itself and civil control over the armed forces. In this regard, when an analysis is made of the findings on the three themes presented and compared with the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and available literature in the field, the evidence clearly points to an emerging civil-military gap similar to that observed in other countries.

In terms of personal values and attitudes, the DOD established a Workgroup on Organisational Culture to formulate a value system for military personnel that was acceptable to all and in line with national values as defined in the Constitution. The seven values identified as guiding principles were patriotism, loyalty, human dignity, professionalism, integrity, leadership and accountability.[23] Together with the Code of Conduct, these values serve as the guiding principles for members of the SANDF.[24] The emphasis placed on these values largely explains why officers regarded discipline, patriotism, comradeship, orderliness, traditionalism, obedience, initiative, and determination as more important in their

children's education than students. However, both officers and students agreed that these values are important for the military.

Although officers were far more "prepared to listen to their leaders" than students, they were equally assertive in terms of their opinions. This implies that the youth of today want to be valued and respected as individuals. In an environment where egalitarianism is becoming the norm, tolerance for authoritarian leadership and even unqualified obedience to authority in the military is on the wane. In future, military leadership will face a greater challenge in socialising members into accepting traditional military values, especially where members have become more questioning and less accepting of a military culture based on subservience and conformism.

Exacerbating this trend is the growing rights-based culture within society, based on the need of the military to conform to civilian values and practices espoused in the Bill of Rights. In terms of accommodating individual freedoms in the military, officers attached a great deal of importance to certain democratic principles and less on others, depending on how they perceived the impact on military effectiveness. For example, officers were concerned that certain freedoms would impact negatively on loyalty and the political neutrality of the forces. In terms of gender integration, while officers accepted that women should be allowed to serve in the forces in all roles, they had reservations about their suitability for combat. Typically militaries prefer a gap to exist in terms of certain cultural values in order to retain an ethos and regulatory framework necessary for its operational effectiveness. However, across the world armed forces are increasingly having to justify why it is necessary to restrict certain individual rights.

In this regard the Department of Defence has faced a number of court battles, which have compelled the SANDF to recognise for example, the right of military personnel to belong to trade unions and to adjust the military justice system to ensure "equality before the law". According to a senior military officer, the correct balance between these democratic rights and the need to maintain the effectiveness in the SANDF "has still not been reached".[25] The findings illustrate that whilst there is the acceptance that soldiers are citizens, military personnel felt strongly that the difference lies in the fact that "they are soldiers not civilians", and that the nature of their profession requires that certain fundamental rights be limited in order to maintain their warfighting capability.

Besides the emphasis placed on egalitarian values, another societal trend that influences military functioning is the growing pacifism within society. Students

for example, were less supportive of the military becoming involved in missions that require the use of military force. These results are by no means unique to South Africa. Similar gap studies conducted in Germany and France revealed that the military not only attached more weight to military force as a political instrument, but was more readily inclined to use military force for security goals, whereas civilians were more reserved and reluctant to make use of force.[26] Numerous other studies in America have yielded similar results.[27]

In terms of South Africa's defence policy, the primary role of the SANDF as stipulated in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,* the *White Paper on Defence*[28] and the *Defence Review*[29] is to defend the country against external aggression. However, it is for its secondary function, "to defend and protect its people in accordance with the Constitution and principles of international law", that the SANDF has been most operational since 1990. More recently, the political demand to realise the objectives set out by the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)[30] has ensured that the SANDF has become more involved in peace support operations. Indeed, developing a regional capacity to deal with Africa's security challenges and participating in NEPAD's programmes is currently one of the government's priorities.[31]

For students and those interviewed, the concern was less with external security, and more with internal security threats such as crime, drug trafficking and disaster relief.[32] Many hold the view that South Africa's security is best served by preventing internal conflict caused by high unemployment, poverty, as well as ethnic and racial tensions, than by keeping the peace in Africa.[33] However, government has taken a definite decision to remove the armed forces from these internal roles and channel the available resources to external deployments in line with its foreign policy objectives. The findings indicate that definite tension appears to exist in terms of what the military is trained for, what civil society wants from the military and what politicians regard as national and foreign policy priorities.

Who decides on the defence priorities? In South Africa, civil control over the armed forces is exercised through parliamentary defence committees, the Minister of Defence and Defence Secretariat. A civilian Defence Secretariat is responsible for the formulation of policies, programmes and budgets and controls the execution of the mandate of the Defence Force. The Chief of the SANDF, previously effectively in command of the DoD, now has a greatly reduced role, and is chiefly responsible for the efficient management, command, and administration of the SANDF and its operations. This system of civilian control has been adopted in order to guarantee that the armed forces are excused from involvement in politics

except through prescribed channels, and that the civilians cannot interfere in operational matters.[34]

As members of the SANDF pledge, "to respect the democratic political process and civil control of the SANDF"[35] it is not surprising that they felt significantly stronger than students that "the military profession must be subordinate to the political leadership". Yet at the same time, they felt that "politicians need to give professional autonomy to the military". This reflects the tension that exists between the functions of the Secretary of Defence and that of the Chief of the Defence Force.[36] According to the Democratic Alliance (DA) representative in Parliament, there is "tension between the Minister of Defence and Chief of the SANDF, specifically over the power, duties and areas of responsibility of the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the SANDF".[37]

The tension is not because officers do not accept civil supremacy, but due to the perception (among officers and civilians alike) that "political leaders are not all that knowledgeable on military matters". Across the spectrum, military officers, journalists, academics and politicians stated that politicians do not understand the challenges the SANDF has faced since 1994. Statements include, "there is too much expectation of the SANDF and this is placing the military in an unfair position. The politicians think that when the military says it needs more time, that they are stalling or unwilling. Politicians speak out before the military has been consulted and this is a source of great tension for commanders."[38] "Politicians promise things that the military cannot deliver. They are over-enthusiastic about the abilities of the military".[39] "Politicians have no idea of the role of the military" and show a "lack of real interest in finding out what is going on".[40]

While the Department of Defence holds regular information briefings with the Parliamentary Portfolio committees to inform, advise and to direct operations, there is an apparent lack of credible information to make informed decisions on military matters. Many express the view that the military should be more involved in constructive dialogue with civil society.[41] Although officers did not support the right of members "to criticize government or the even parent society", they supported the view that "the military should advocate military policies that it believes are in the best interest of the country". However, a new policy directive on media liaison issued by the Minister of Defence, Mosiuoa Lekota, in July 2000, has limited the "advocacy" role of commanders. In effect, this policy centralised all communications with the media, virtually denying commanders the opportunity to communicate directly with the media on any matter unless it passed through the Office of the Minister of Defence.[42]

This situation is considered to have created renewed and unnecessary tension between the military and the media.[43] Consequently, the media has tended to focus on sensational issues – sex scandals, racial tensions, the conflict with the trade unions and disciplinary problems, rather than the positive contribution the SANDF is making. Therefore, it is not surprising that officers considered the media critical of the military, that public opinion of the military was not very good and that the public viewed their profession negatively. The lack of credible information to the public, the negative publicity and growing distance between civil society and the military invariably impacts on the morale of the forces, as well as recruitment and retention.

For many in civil society, the SANDF is a faceless organisation and it is apparent that the public needs more information on how the SANDF operates, on the challenges of transformation, the problems the SANDF faces, how the defence budget is spent and the operations the SANDF is involved in.[44] According to Kent and Malan, the SANDF does not have a proactive public information strategy and has chosen to suppress information, rather than providing open and timely information on military matters.[45] Academics confirm that, "there is not enough information on explaining the role and function of the military. People sit with snippets of information and there is no informed or mature debate on military issues".[46]

One military journalist felt that as a result of this, the military has become "isolated from society and that in order to bridge the gap, the military should raise its profile, be accountable, be transparent and increase communication with the media". Mr David Dlali, member of the ruling ANC, claimed, "the military is not well understood by civil-society that this can be blamed on both the public representatives (members of parliament) and the communications sections of the military".[47] Another journalist[48] expressed the view that the restrictions placed on the SANDF by the Minister of Defence on communication with the media, has "hampered the flow of information to the press". Across the board military journalists, military officers and military academics stated that the relations with the media are worse now than ever before and that the military there is a dire need for a more open, critical debate on military issues. This has contributed to the growing "information gap" on military affairs.[49]

In conclusion, it is apparent that students do not attach the same value to military service as officers. They were nowhere near as patriotic, loyal to the country, or prepared to serve in the military out of national security concerns. Few,

students "felt that good citizenship means serving in the military" and these views are supported in terms of their attitude towards conscription. Nonetheless, most were proud of those who serve in the South African armed forces, although they did not think the SANDF was attracting the best recruits. These attitudes are symptomatic of a growing apathy towards military, brought about by the absence of any direct threat, contact, and information on the military.

Conclusions

What does this mean in terms of the civil-military gap for South Africa? As regards military culture, although military personnel are clearly more patriotic and place a high premium on traditional military values, they display the same level of self-determination as civilians. Judging from the responses to the questions relating to the level of individualism, it is clear that the youth of today, both military and civilian are becoming more individualistic and assertive. To some extent this is antithetical to traditional military culture, which requires unswerving discipline, loyalty and obedience to the chain of command. Together with a growing rights based culture within society, this has compelled the armed forces to balance the needs of the individual versus those of the organisation. This brings us back to the classical Huntington-Janowitz debate on where is the optimal middle ground. What one sees is an increasing congruence of civil and military values, where the military is being obliged to accept this, but would prefer a "gap" to enable it to instil the values it regards as essential to military effectiveness.

The changed international and domestic environment has also placed pressure on the SANDF in terms of other political, social and moral imperatives. There appears to be a mismatch vis-à-vis what the military is trained for, what civil society wants from the military and what the politicians regard as national and foreign policy priorities. With fewer people having any direct contact with the military, this could place a strain on civil-military relations, especially where this relates to funding and public support for the military. With the end of conscription and a growing lack of contact between civil society and the military, an understanding of the challenges facing the armed forces become less respected and valued by broader society. The implication is an overstretched military, increasingly alienated from society and less capable of fulfilling its mandate. While it is accepted that these tensions will exist within a democratic society, the concern lies more within the realm of civil-military relations.

In South Africa, the civil-military gap is exacerbated by a lack of critical debate and growing apathy towards the military. This affects informed decision-

making and civil control of the military. The question can rightly be asked "how are ministers to control the armed forces when they (usually) lack the necessary knowledge and experience to do so effectively?"[50] The former chair of the Portfolio Committee on Defence, Thandi Modise, stated, "There is nothing as dangerous to democracy as an ignorant MP, let us keep on learning".[51] In this regard, definite tension exists between civilian decision makers, politicians and commanders on military affairs, based on the lack of basic military expertise.[52]

The lack of understanding of the military also impacts on recruitment to the armed forces and willingness of those to serve their country. Who joins the armed forces and their reasons for joining is important to all societies as it has significant implications for the character and stability of the political system. The fact that some states are directly governed by military regimes drawn from the officer corps, while others actively strive to ensure that the armed forces remain subordinate to the armed forces, indicates that who joins the forces is of central importance to society. The finding that respondents in this study showed little interest in military matters and military service, points to some concern in terms of the future leadership of the SANDF.

Although this study has identified specific tensions between the military and civil-society, the exact implications of the widening civil-military gap in South Africa, is a subject for further research and debate. Clearly, there is matter for concern. Should the factors contributing to this "gap" be left unchecked, it can affect not only the functioning and civil control of the armed forces, but national interest and future security, however this is defined.

References and footnotes

[1] The authors wish to thank Maj Castro Khwela for his contribution towards the initial research for this project.

[2] Richard D. Hooker (Jr), Soldiers of the State: Reconsidering American Civil-Military Relations, *Parameters*, XXXIII/4, Winter 2003-04, p. 5.

[3] Peter D. Feaver *et al*, The Gap between Military and Civilian in the United States in Perspective, in Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (ed), *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, MIT Press: Cambridge, 2001, p. 2.

[4] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass, 1957.

[5] Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Free Press: New York, 1960.

[6] Peter Feaver, The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz and the Question of Civilian Control, *Armed Forces and Society*, 23/2, Winter 1996, pp. 149-151.

[7] Charles Moskos, From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organisation, *Armed*

Forces and Society, 4/1, November 1977, p. 42.

[8] Henning Sorensen, New Perspectives on the Military Profession: The I/O Model and Esprit de Corps Re-evaluated, *Armed Forces and Society*, 20/4, Summer 1994, pp. 601-602.

[9] Lindsay Cohn, The Evolution of the Civil-Military 'Gap' Debate. Paper prepared for the TISS project on the Gap between the Military and Civilian Society, http://www.poli_duke.edu/civlmil/cohn_literature_review.pdf.

[10] Volker C. Franke, Duty, Honor, the Country: The Social Identity of West Point Cadets, *Armed Forces and Society*, 26/2, Winter 2000, p. 176.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] Lindsay Cohn, The Evolution of the Civil-Military 'Gap' Debate, *op cit*.

[13] See *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26/2, June 2003, pp. 1-63.

[14] Lindy Heinecken and Richard Gueli, The Cultural Gap between the Military and the Parent Society in South Africa. Paper presented at the International Sociological Association, RC 01, on Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution, hosted by the Middle East Technical University and the Turkish Military Academy, Ankara, 7-9 July 2004.

[15] Demographic profile of respondents to the structured interview were (6) male (2) female of whom 6 where white and 2 were black.

[16] The three universities were chosen for different historic reasons. While all the universities are now fully racially integrated, the University of Cape Town is a historically white English university. The University of Stellenbosch, is historically white-Afrikaans and also houses the Faculty of Military Science of the South African Military Academy. Thus, it has 'ties' with the military. The University of the Western Cape is historically black. All three universities are located in the Western Cape.

[17] Peter D. Feaver *et al*, The Gap between Military and Civilian in the United States in Perspective, in Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (ed), *op cit*., p 3.

[18] Lindy Heinecken, Contrasting Military Minds: Is there a Difference in the Attitudes of Officers Towards MOOTW?, in Guiseppe Caforio (ed), *The Flexible Officer: Professional Education and Military Operations Other Than War: A Cross-national Analysis*, Rome: Artistic and Publishing, 2001, p. 133.

[19] Peter D. Feaver, The Civil-Military Gap in Comparative Perspective, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26/2, June 2003, p. 3.

[20] Lindy Heinecken, Securing South Africa's Future: Putting Women in the Frontline, *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, XX11/2, November 2000, pp. 62-90.

[21] Senzo Ngubane and Hussein Solomon, Southern Africa's New Security Agenda, *Africa Insight*, 34/1, 2002, pp. 58-64.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] Department of Defence, *Strategic Business Plan FY2004/04 to FY2006/07*, Department of Defence, Pretoria, 2004, p. 5.

[24] *Code of Conduct for Uniformed Members of the South African National Defence Force*, http://www.mil.za/Articles&Papers/CodeofConduct/English.htm, 09 June 2004.

[25] *Interview* with Col Johan van der Walt, SANDF Joint Operations, Pretoria, 11 July 2003.

[26] Gerhard Kümmel, The Winds of Change: The Transition from Armed Forces for Peace to New Missions for the Bundeswehr and its Impact on Civil Military Relations, *The Journal for Strategic Studies*, 26/2, June 2002, pp. 7-28; and Pascal Vennesson, Civil-Military Gap in France: Is there a Gap?, *The Journal for Strategic Studies*, 26/2, June 2002, pp. 43-63.

[27] For example, David R. Segal and Ronald B. Tiggle, Attitudes of Citizen Soldiers towards Military Missions in the Post-Cold War World, *Armed Forces and Society*, 23, Spring 1997, pp. 373-390; Deborah Avant and James Lebovic, U.S. Military Attitudes towards Post-Cold War Missions, *Armed Forces and Society*, 27, Fall 2000, pp. 37-56.

[28] The *White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa*, May 1996

[29] Department of Defence, *White Paper on Defence and Defence Review*, April 1998.

[30] They are: poverty eradication; placing African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; halting the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and accelerating the empowerment of women.

[31] South African Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2003-2004*, http://www.mil.za/Articles&Papers/AnnualReports/annualreport2003_2004/AnnualReport04.pdf

[32] Interviews with a range of opinion makers indicate that while most acknowledge the importance of peace operations in Africa, that the scare resources should rather be spent on dealing with domestic security concerns.

[33] *South African Race Relations Survey 2002/2003*, South African Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg, 2003, p. 458.

[34] Gavin Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's Democracy: Defence, Development and Security in Transition*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1997, pp. 60-61.

[35] Code of Conduct for Uniformed Members of the South African National Defence Force, *op cit.*, p. 1.

[36] Republic of South Africa, Defence Act, 42 of 2002, pp. 16-20.

[37] *Interview* with Mr Hendrik C. Schmidt, Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament, 22 September 2003.

[38] *Interview* with Senior Military Officer, Pretoria, 11 July 2003.

[39] *Interview* with Mr Mark Malan, Head: Peace Missions Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 9 July 2003.

[40] *Interview* with a journalist from the *Weekly Mail and Guardian* who preferred to remain anonymous, Cape Town, 15 September 2003.

[41] *Interview* with Mr Ian Liebenberg, Lecturer: Department of Sociology, University of South Africa, Saldanha, 5 September 2003.

[42] Lt Col Abel Esterhuyse, The South African Armed Forces and the Media: A Difficult Marriage. Paper delivered at the XXIXth International Congress of History in Bucharest, Romania, 10-16 August 2003.

[43] Venessa Kent and Mark Malan, Decisions, Decisions: South Africa's Foray into Regional Peace Operations, *Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper*, 72, April 2003, p. 9.

[44] Department of Defence, *Annual Report for the Financial Year 2001/2002*, *op cit*, p. 34.

[45] Venessa Kent and Mark Malan, *op cit*., p. 9.

[46] *Interview* with Mr Ian Liebenberg, *op cit*.

[47] *Interview* with Mr David M. Dlali, African National Congress Member of Parliament, Cape Town, 22 September 2003.

[48] *Interview* with Ms Erica Gibson, Military Journalist: *Beeld*, Pretoria, 14 July 2003.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Douglas L. Bland, A United Theory of Civil-Military Relations, *Armed Forces and Society*, 26/1, 1999, p. 13.

[51] Thandi T. Modise, Parliamentary Oversight of the South African Department of Defence; 1994 to 2003, in Le Roux, L., Rupiya, M. and Ngoma, N. (eds), *Guarding the Guardians*, Institute for Security Studies: Pretoria, 2004, p. 53.

[52] *Interview with* Mr Mark Malan, op cit.