

**Shifting White SADF Veteran Identities from Apartheid to Contemporary
South Africa**

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Abstract

The ideologies and structures of the apartheid state have received extensive academic attention, but the legacies of the militarisation of white South African men – a group that exists at a unique intersection of apartheid privilege and exploitation – have not been sufficiently addressed. Even as beneficiaries of apartheid, white men were militarised through structures of coercion and the mobilisation of identity constructions that resulted in the widespread submission to conscription and support for apartheid militarism. This thesis explores the relationship between those militarised identities and the historical processes of apartheid through a consideration of a broad range of white SADF veteran narratives from the Missing Voices Oral History Project archive. This consideration of the role of identity mobilisation in apartheid can shed light on the effect of historical processes of militarisation on white men in South Africa, as well as address the persistence of values and behaviours that may present barriers to the social transformation of South Africa towards a true constitutional democracy. The thesis explores identity in SADF veteran narratives through the application of social constructionism in order to determine the effect of coercive structures and identity mobilisation on individuals, and to gauge the persistence militarised identities after the social and political structures underpinning them had become defunct. The identity content of the narratives is contextualised in relation to structures of coercion employed by the apartheid state and the SADF alongside a consideration of the effect of political transition on veterans. The legacy of the historical environment and the impact of political transition on SADF veterans' constructed identities is investigated in relation to these veterans' own visions of their roles in post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, this thesis endeavours to contribute to the expansion of the field of historical and identity study by considering the construction and renegotiation of military identities that maintained, benefited from, and were exploited by the apartheid state.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CF	Citizen Force
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFLA	Defence Force Ladies Association
DMV	Department of Military Veterans
DRP	Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes
MK	umKhonto we Sizwe
MVA	Military Veterans Act
NP	National Party
NS	National Service
PF	Permanent Force
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAAF	South African Air Force
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SDU	Self-Defence Unit
TRC	The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	Union Defence Force
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Council of Churches
WHAM	Winning Hearts And Minds

Introduction

In 1967, compulsory conscription of white South African males was written into the South African Defence Act.¹ For over two decades, the South African Defence Force (SADF) relied on the conscription of white men to meet its manpower needs in waging war on apartheid's opponents and neighbours. To meet this demand, nearly all aspects of white South African life during apartheid were assimilated into processes of militarisation, resulting in the vast majority of white South African boys registering for conscription at age 16 and reporting for intake – that is, submitting to compulsory military service upon callup. While the various historical relationships between the National Party (NP), the SADF, and the processes of apartheid are matters of extensive academic consideration, the consequences of the effective militarisation of white South Africa on individual white South African males who served in apartheid South Africa's military has not received similar levels of attention. This, despite apartheid veterans representing a particularly rich focus group for understanding the impacts of apartheid. They exist at a historical intersection of privilege and exploitation, as they were simultaneously the primary beneficiaries of apartheid, and its main force for maintaining the status quo. Acquiescence to the demands made of white men by the NP for the maintenance of apartheid through military service was in part based on identity formation, of which processes of militarisation was key.

With political transition from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s the justifications for South African militarism and the need and support for white soldiers, as well as the privileges associated with their military service, dissipated. At this point, SADF veterans lost their political and social support structures, and the motivations that had justified their military service. Moreover, they experienced a re-casting as apartheid villains – a reversal of the heroic representations fostered by the apartheid state – with associated impacts on identities. The structural shifts occurring with the end of apartheid have received academic consideration, but the manner in which individual SADF veterans have experienced and negotiated political transition – and beyond – has received less attention. In fact, the legacies of the extensive militarisation of white South Africans, and how these legacies present potential barriers to transformation, represent an under-studied field of apartheid history. This thesis endeavours to contribute to the expansion of this field of study by considering the construction, and renegotiation, of the military identities that were exploited by, benefited from,

¹ Defence Amendment Act, No. 85 of 1967

and maintained apartheid – that is, SADF veteran identities. This research furthermore seeks to determine how those military identities have been shaped by the political transition and the roles envisioned by white veterans themselves in the new South Africa.

While reference has been made to SADF veterans, it must be noted that in this thesis the focus is on white South African SADF veterans from various branches of service, predominantly the army. The interview archive to be analysed includes Permanent Force (PF), National Service (NS), Citizen Force (CF), South African Air Force (SAAF), and intelligence operators. Maintaining the specific distinction between service role – i.e. PF, NS, or CF – has limited value in the overall analysis of the interviews as the narratives are not overly concerned with the day-to-day experience of service and in most cases narratives from PF members are indistinguishable from NS or CF narratives. Furthermore, the likelihood of an interview participant having served in two or even all three roles is high. It must also be noted that not all SADF veterans were white or South African. The SADF incorporated black soldiers into its ranks through placement in more specialised battalions (the now-infamous 32 Battalion being an example of this). Men labelled as ‘Coloured’ under apartheid racial categorisation could also serve in the SADF as part of the South African Cape Corps Service Battalion. During its various regional conflicts, the SADF also drew on manpower sourced from its neighbours, allowing ex-Rhodesian soldiers to integrate into the SADF and making use of recruits from the ranks of the liberation armies from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola (31 Battalion consisting mainly of San people from southern Angola and northern Namibia). As will be established, the SADF operated and was perceived as an arm of the apartheid state, and as such, remains a white institution despite its exploitation of black soldiers and African liberation movements in its task of maintaining the white colonial *cordon sanitaire* against internal African liberation. The complexities of black and coloured SADF personnel and their various identity and social relationships with the SADF fall outside the scope of this thesis.

Context of the Research

The potential for this area of study is highlighted by the work that has already been done in exploring the effect of militarisation on white South Africans. It received some attention in Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan’s *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa*, which is concerned with the processes of militarism as an ideology and militarisation as a social process, and the military as a social institution. The consideration of the position of SADF veterans is also present in Sasha Gear’s seminal *Wishing Us Away: Challenges facing ex-combatants in the ‘new’ South Africa*, which

relies on interviews to gauge the extent to which apartheid conflicts still impact the lives of veterans. Gary Baines's prolific research on the topic of SADF veterans' positions within apartheid conflicts further expanded the study of militarism's effect in South Africa by exploring veterans' silences and narratives, as well as the shifts in South African culture and society in which veterans operate. Finally, Theresa Edlmann's multidisciplinary PhD, focusing on the psychosocial legacies of conscription, considers the narration of identities in relation to historical context, and served as a fundamental catalyst for my research due to its integration of identity and historical research. The texts singled out here represent the historical conceptual foundation of this thesis, which is concerned with the identities moulded by and formed during experiences of militarisation. However, the historicised identity-focused approach employed in this thesis goes beyond the narrative-analysis approaches found in the foundational work identified here. That is, this thesis focuses on the behavioural consequences of the historical processes of militarisation, the veterans' management of their moral positionings through narratives and the implications of these positionings.

To this end, this thesis presents an analysis of the SADF veterans section of the University of Witwatersrand Missing Voices Oral History Project, which represents the source material for addressing the thesis questions. Beyond the narrative analysis and in order to address the questions of behavioural consequences, social constructionism and its supporting concepts are employed to analyse the persistence of historically constructed identity positions over time. Social constructionism demands the historicization of identity, due to the need to account not only for the contexts within which identities form and the consideration of structures that may influence the nature and content of identities, but also for the *use* of identity and identity carrying narratives. Through the application of social constructionism, the historical contexts, identity components, narratives, and the strategic and purposeful use of identity in SADF veterans' narratives can be accounted for or meaningfully discussed. The historicization of identity resulting from social constructionism contributes to the understanding of the lasting impacts of apartheid by drawing out the motivations for historical actions and the influences and structures that contributed to those motivations. Furthermore, the persistence of historically motivated behaviours may be drawn out from the analyses of the identity constructions and the arguments with which they are associated. Overall, then, social constructionism contributes to and understanding of apartheid history and the ideal of transformation by considering which identity elements from apartheid are still present, and the extent to which they contribute to or hamper social and cultural transformation.

This thesis thus intends to historicise the SADF veteran identity, starting with an understanding of how the identity was formed and fostered through the militarisation of societal structures. The militarisation of South African societal structures was pervasive, as can be seen in the exploitation of the schooling system, organised religion, and mainstream media for the purposes of mobilising white South Africans in the support of military service. This also had the effect of presenting military solutions to challenges to NP hegemony and the system of apartheid as the only viable solution. In addition to the various constructions of threats to white South African society in the form of Communism and Black African Nationalism, constructions of gender in particular were employed to further the aims of militarisation. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis will provide an overview of the various structures of coercion that formed part of the historical context of the militarised state and the SADF veteran identity. The focus on structures of coercion does not, however, preclude considerations of individual agency. Rather, the focus on structures serves the purpose of placing the historical context of the socialisation of white South African men into perspective.

As the legacies created by the militarisation of white South Africa did not dissipate with political transition, the role of SADF veterans since transition must also be considered in order to historicise the SADF veteran identity. Given that South African society is still characterised by extremes of violence, an understanding of how militarism was insinuated into identities may aid in reversing these norms. One key failure of the political transition was the lack of formal demilitarisation aimed at addressing norms of violence. Furthermore, the veteran management context in South Africa is particularly fractured, given the lack of formal processes for managing veterans either during the political transition or during the attempts to transform the SADF. A consideration of the veteran management context of South Africa also relates to questions of transforming South Africa towards a more just society after decades of violence and oppression, a process in which demilitarisation is key. Demilitarisation here also includes the emphasis of non-violent resolution to challenges and the pursuit of justice as opposed to the systemic use of coercion and violence that characterised apartheid. The institutional culture of the SADF and its veterans has been the focus of national attention at times, from the inclusion of veterans at the TRC to the debates surrounding the establishment of the Department of Military Veterans (DMV). The limited engagement with conscripts both during the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Hearing on Compulsory Military Service will be considered in order to analyse how SADF conscripts and veterans were framed. This would serve as an indicator of how SADF veterans were positioned in terms of responsibility and culpability for apartheid-era human rights violations and provide some

context for veterans' perceptions of the TRC processes. Furthermore, the treatment of SADF veterans by the DMV in terms of the Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011 with Addendums constitutes a measure of how SADF veterans are officially viewed by government. This presents another sphere of representation and a source of comparison for veteran narratives in a new political context. Both the TRC and DMV's treatment of SADF veterans are contextualised through a consideration of Disarmament, Demilitarisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes with the paradigm of demilitarisation of post-conflict societies and to measure the ways in which they have contributed or presented barriers to transformation.

As such, this research historicise the SADF veteran identity by considering the mechanisms through which submission to conscription was achieved and questions the extent to which facets imbued by these mechanisms persist among SADF veterans in the post-apartheid political and social contexts. The historicisation of SADF veteran identities can contribute to the understanding of how militarisation functions both at the structural and personal levels. Furthermore, it may also contribute to the understanding of the role militarised identities play in the persistence of defunct worldviews and behaviours that present barriers to transformation. This will be achieved through a social constructionist analysis of SADF veteran narratives of their military histories, experiences, and the interpretations of these experiences in the form of identity constructs. Social constructionism provides access to these events and processes by considering how identity content is used by individuals in a given context. Given the mobilisation of identities in support of militarism, gendered support of apartheid and national support of racism, identity is particularly significant in the study of apartheid history. This context is not unique to South Africa, but it represents a field of study that deserves a greater deal of attention, particularly due to the importance of identity politics in post-apartheid South Africa.

Scope of the Thesis

This research focuses on the potential identity impacts of the systematic militarisation of white South Africans during apartheid and seeks to determine which facets of apartheid-era military identities have survived transition and how they operate. In order to address this focus, the thesis is organised around four central questions:

- How did the militarisation of apartheid society contribute to the development of SADF veteran identities?
- How did processes of political transition impact upon SADF veteran identities?
- How have SADF veteran identities been reconstructed in contemporary South Africa?
- What are the relationships between SADF veteran identities and the position of veterans, their perceptions of their roles, and their interpretations of the contemporary social and political milieu in South Africa?

In order to answer these questions, the thesis presents a historicisation of SADF veteran identities and a social constructionist analysis of veteran identity narratives from the Missing Voices Oral History Project. The archive from which the SADF veteran narratives were drawn is intended to gather the “experiences, perceptions and stories” from a range of individuals from South Africa’s apartheid conflicts.² The Missing Voices Oral History Project includes interviews with ex-members from a wide range of groups involved in apartheid conflicts. This thesis is concerned with the interviews with former members of the statutory forces of apartheid South Africa (i.e. permanent force, citizen force, and national servicemen). The interviews themselves, conducted by Mike Cadman from 2007-2008, are open-ended and result in a rich and varied range of narratives about South Africa’s past conflicts and the interviewees’ perceptions of their roles therein. As such, they represent the interpretations of history and personal experiences of South African militarism and the underlying perceptions and values of those historical contexts. The narratives do not merely recount experiences but are infused with retrospective values, behavioural judgements, and reinterpretations of roles, making them repositories of identity content. They also go far beyond descriptions of processes and begin to shed light on the impacts of political policies and decisions that maintained and perpetuated apartheid and the consequences of processes of militarisation.

Thesis Chapters

Chapter 1 addresses and outlines the identity theory that will be used to analyse the narratives of SADF veterans, with a particular focus on social constructionism as the thesis’ main theoretical approach to identity. Kath Woodward’s identity research is used to establish the key elements of identities and the identification processes that have been discerned in research concerned purely

² Missing Voices Oral History Project 2004-2012 landing page, accessed at <http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?inventory/U/collections&c=A3079/R/> on 08/11/2018.

with identities. Woodward's work includes an overview of the broader field of identity research regarding the generation, negotiation, and management of identities. However, her psychological concern with identity is too abstract outside of controlled environments and dedicated, structured interview approaches, despite recognising the importance of historical contexts. In the case of this thesis, which seeks to add to the texturing of history through a focus on identity, the social constructionist approaches of Kenneth Gergen and Vivian Burr present a more relevant set of tools for historicising identities. Gergen in particular discusses the position of individual facets of psychology or identity in relation to historical contexts, positioning the mind as historically constituted and thus subject to history. Furthermore, Gergen's research includes considerations of the politics of identity and the implications thereof, while Burr's work contributes considerations of meanings generated through the processes of identity. In addition to this discussion of social constructionism, Chapter 1 outlines the concepts of positioning and performativity, which assist in the analysis of the purposes and strategic deployment of identities. Chapter 1 also includes a survey of existing SADF veteran identity research in order to situate the research within the field of inquiry regarding South African militarism and militarisation, its processes and consequences.

My treatment of the historicisation of the SADF veteran identity begins in Chapter 2, which provides an exploration of the key systemic structures of apartheid that contributed to the militarisation of white South Africans. Aletta Norval, Thomas Moriarty, and Deborah Posel's analyses of the discourse and rhetoric of apartheid establish the context in which the arguments of apartheid functioned and how they related to and supported militarisation. Drawing on the extensive body of research concerning the relationships between the SADF and the apartheid government, this chapter will further detail apartheid militarism in order to better frame SADF veteran identities. However, the focus remains on the processes of militarisation described in Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan's *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*. Subsections on specifically relevant spaces in which forces of militarisation operated include special considerations of militarisation and schooling, the mobilisation of gender in service of militarism, and the relationship between the church and state. This chapter establishes the historical context that produced SADF soldiers and the identities surrounding the roles of defender and protector that white South African males were expected to assume.

Chapter 3 turns the focus to the historical events that informed the experiences of SADF veterans during and after the major points of political transition from apartheid towards a representative

constitutional democracy. As a result of the lack of a coherent plan for the demilitarisation of South Africa during political transition, consideration of the post-apartheid veteran management context requires a consideration of the continuities of those events and processes that have affected veterans. The institutional culture of the SADF and its transformation into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is considered. This aids in contextualising individuals' experiences of military service itself by looking at the behaviour of the organisation in which they served. Noting the lack of coherent structures for managing veterans, World Bank and United Nations Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) models are considered in order to extract elements of demilitarisation that may have been applicable to SADF veterans. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reconciliatory efforts, as well as the more recent developments with the establishment of the Department of Military Veterans and the ratification of the Military Veterans Act, are contextualised within in this DDR framework. How these national developments impact SADF veterans in terms of their symbolic representation and policy applicability are also discussed.

Chapter 4 represents the core analysis work that addresses the thesis questions. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the context that a social constructionist analysis requires in order to ground an analytical interpretation of narratives. In other words, they historicise the SADF identities, allowing for the comparison of the historical content of the narratives from the Missing Voices Oral Project to the context of narratives. The purpose is not to establish the accuracy or veracity of narratives, but rather to access the subjective, purposeful, and strategic deployment of narratives and therefore grant access to the identity arguments being made by the interview participants. Their self-representations, representations of others, re-telling of experiences, and narratives of renegotiation all contribute to the understanding of the impact of apartheid processes on individuals. Narratives of current developments provide further points for comparison in terms of the transformation of identity values and the meaning of historical actions.

Chapter 1: Towards an Understanding of SADF Veterans' Identities

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the lasting impact of apartheid on individuals by focusing on South African Defence Force (SADF) veterans through a consideration of identity constructions and positionings and how they reflect veterans' views on the past and present. Furthermore, the consideration of identity constructions and positionings could also shed light on persisting behaviours and social consequences of apartheid that are at odds with contemporary ideals of society and politics. Before the literature reviews of apartheid and contemporary scholarship regarding SADF veterans, the theoretical dimensions of identity as it relates to this thesis requires elaboration. This will provide a thread connecting the apartheid SADF veteran context to the post-apartheid veteran management context towards the analysis of the University of Witwatersrand's Missing Voices Oral History Project interview transcript archive. Reflections upon the intersection of history and identity will provide a historical texturing in terms of how the known histories of apartheid policy and events relate to individuals and the roles that individuals played in recent South African history, either in bringing about events or in the maintenance of status quos. This chapter will outline the theory and terminology used in this thesis to draw out elements of identity and its relations to history, arguing that identities reflect historical context, which makes them historical artefacts. Kath Woodward and Margaret Wetherell's work on identity will be used to establish a framework for the discussion of identity, followed by an elucidation of Kenneth Gergen and Vivian Burr's social constructionism theories, which facilitate the contextualisation of identities in history. Alongside these key theories, understandings of the maintenance of identities, cultural identities, and the practical considerations of identities will also be employed to explore the relationships between identity and historical context. As an example of the usefulness of identity as a reflection of historical contexts Sonja Narunsky-Laden's investigation of identity formation in post-apartheid South African commercial media will be considered.

Michael Ignatieff states that identity, particularly identities in crisis, has become a useful explanatory concept for exploring unorthodox conflicts in the global context, specifically mentioning conflicts in

Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Ireland.¹ This thesis argues that identities were similarly mobilised in South Africa to perpetuate regional and internal conflicts during apartheid, or as Theresa Edlmann argues, to perpetuate perceptions of threat and related constructions of gender and race in support of the apartheid regime. It is my intention to explore the question of the continued significance of identities and how they relate to the history of extensive identity mobilisation in support of apartheid. If, as Kath Woodward argues, identity is the meeting point of the social and psychological, identity offers insights into how individuals relate to social contexts.² Accordingly, this thesis argues that identities can reflect history and historical shifts as they are expressed in social contexts, and shed light on the nature of historical and contemporary contexts. In particular this concerns shifts from apartheid to a constitutional democracy and its social and cultural implications. This chapter will establish how I define and employ identity theory in the establishment of context in Chapters 2 and 3, and the analysis of the interview transcript archives in Chapter 4.

The Relevance of Identity and Social Constructionism Theory to Understand SADF Veteran Identities

This thesis remains concerned with the effects of apartheid beyond the institutional and policy levels that are described in Chapters 2 and 3. The choice of focus on SADF veterans and the potential impact of their experiences in the military and South Africa during apartheid will provide some understanding of the persisting social facets of the historical period. Making identity the focal point this investigation allows for the contextualisation of multiple levels of experience that span historical periods, from an individual's origins to perceptions of selves over time, and perceptions of formative experiences that built towards options available for development and reorientation. The social constructionist approach emphasises the importance of context and the internal identity relationships, shifting veteran identities towards being a focal point around which other identities and their implications are organised and understood. The 'who-we-are' question posed by Woodward as the point of departure for inquiries into identity remains confined by structure and reflects the perceived strictures in determining what is possible, impossible, or ideal. The fundamental constructions of sameness and difference in identity are also associated with the potential for the renegotiation of positions subject to context, whether that means dealing with

¹ M. Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1993, cited in K. Woodward (ed.), *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, The Open University, Routledge, London, 2nd Edition, 2004, p.24.

² K. Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p.vii.

personal traumas, approaches to political engagement, or confronting the difficult prospect of shifting moral norms.

Viewing identities as historical processes leads me to explore the relationships between experiences and their constructed meanings. The constructions of sameness and difference employed by young white South African men approaching National Service resulted in part from those educational, political, economic, and spiritual structures in their environments. Pressures (in all their forms, be it family or symbolic context) to submit to conscription and the perceptions of the transformative powers (as a rite of passage) of military training and service (and perhaps the transfer or cementing of national social values) also occurred within formative periods of their lives. Tracing the persistence of the militarist masculine symbolic context in itself, as expressed in the present with its own modifications and renegotiations, presents an opportunity to gain insight into which elements of apartheid South Africa have survived the socio-political shifts since the 1990s. Individuals are posited as repositories of political, social, and other identities and related meanings. This is not to assume that all elements of the personal are constituted as political, but that contemporary identities are vehicles of history, especially in the case of apartheid militarism, the processes of militarisation to which they were subjected, and conscription in particular, which has been marked by an inability of white South Africans to confront their complicities in the apartheid system. This is especially true, as research will show, of the role of the military in contributing to apartheid's longevity.

Identity: Approaches and Assumptions

Woodward's understanding of identity provides a useful point of departure for this thesis' approach to identity. Before I engage with the complexities of social constructionism and the refinement of other related theoretical terms employed, such as positioning, I will discuss Woodward's placement of identity at the intersection between the psychological and the social. This placement requires one to integrate various contexts (social, political, economic, ethnic, etc.) in the analysis and discussion of identity.³ Woodward argues that in order to understand identities, the historical contexts of managing differences and sameness, and their social and symbolic realisations, is key.⁴ A

³ Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, p.vii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.x.

fundamental feature of identity is difference, whether real, perceived, or constructed, and it is a subject's context that provides resources for identity differentiation, or the distinctions between 'us' and 'them' that constitute identities. Distinctions between 'us' and 'them' are most apparent during conflict states, including both overt armed conflict as well as other forms of conflict, such as economic, social, or memory conflicts.⁵ However, the heterogeneity of individuals' identities needs to be understood in relation to the subject's distinguishing features, so as to allow for the inclusion and exclusion (generation of 'us' and 'them') of groups through shared symbols and boundaries.⁶ This emphasises the relevance of individual identities, identity groups, and the relationships between member and group. In relating identity to context, consideration expands from a singular identity focus, such as gender, ethnic, or class identity, to the understanding that individuals have many fluid *identities* with relationships between internal identities and external contexts that may draw out or suppress one or many of the interrelated identities. This thesis posits that the identity approach to history may serve to uncover how historical contexts influence the production of social and political behaviours through identity formation.

Using identity historically has consequences for how causes and responsibilities for social and political behaviours are assigned or positioned. The identification process requires relative levels of engagement by individuals in order to align and position themselves personally and socially. Reinforcing Woodward's position that identity lies at the intersection of the psychological and social is Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, which draws together the psychological (or 'personal', to use Althusser's terminology) and the social. The process of identification, or personal interpellation, refers to the process by which people are "recruited into the subject position [of an identity group, e.g. cultural, economic, racial, etc], by recognising themselves [as part of that group]".⁷ This involves 'hailing' individuals, i.e. the process by which individuals recognise and engage with markers of identity through markers of sameness or difference, towards which the targets of hailing then identify positively or negatively.⁸ Through the processes of interpellation and hailing, subjects recognise themselves in a group and initial hailing is then followed by personal attempts to more closely align with the identity, where the psychological make-up of the individual influences the modes and extent of alignment to the social context.⁹

⁵ Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, pp.viii-ix.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.ix.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.83.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.83.

⁹ L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, New Left Books, London, 1971 cited in Woodward, *Questioning Identity*, p.19 and expanded upon in Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, pp.83-84.

Althusser's work draws a link between Woodward's positioning of identity at the intersection of psychological and social with a focus on structure. John Turner, Michael Hogg, Penelope Oakes, Stephen Reicher, and Margaret Wetherell's self-categorisation theory shifts the emphasis towards the psychological responses to hailing. According to J. Gove and S. Watt, Self-categorisation is a three step process during which the following takes place: 1) the subject recognises social categories and membership of social categories, 2) the Self positions as part of (or not part of) perceived social categories, and 3) the Self adopts appropriate identities to integrate more strongly into the desired social categories.¹⁰ Whether we employ Althusser's interpellation, which emphasises the power of structures, or Turner et al.'s self-categorisation which emphasises individuals' psychology, the process of identification relies on exploiting existing stereotypes and the ability of structures to generate unequal and biased relationships between constructions of 'us' and 'them'. However, Woodward, reflecting the same findings on stereotyping and bias, asserts that existing structures do not preclude the generation of new social movements or positions.¹¹ Social groups and their attached identities are thus not necessarily static over time. Furthermore, while groups and identities may persist in name or through other symbols, the identity and behavioural content may drastically change. Finally, *where* individuals find relatable identity resources, as well as the elements included in their identities in a given context, is thus not entirely structure-driven. The fluidity of identities therefore requires further considerations of the assignment of causes and responsibilities for the behaviours produced or influenced by identities.

However, as Woodward is careful to point out, identity does have its limitations in reflecting historical contexts. Drawing on Erving Goffman's work on the performativity of identity, Woodward stresses the potential for negotiation and re-representation of identity in social encounters.¹² Multiple selves¹³ arise in multiple performative spaces, where experience is (re)encoded to serve contextual demands. For example, SADF veterans engage in performativity in their negotiations of the social and political transitions that came with the end of apartheid, as will be discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. The multiple selves and their performative instances are positioned as both part

¹⁰ J. Gove and S. Watt, 'Identity and Gender' in K. Woodward (ed.), *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, The Open University, Routledge, London, 2nd Edition, 2004, p.47.

¹¹ K. Woodward, 'Questions of Identity' in K. Woodward (ed.), *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, The Open University, Routledge, London, 2nd Edition, 2004, p.34.

¹² Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, p.10.

¹³ Woodward defines Self here as "a self who takes account of the social situation ... and develops from and responds to those social situations" including psychological and social selves. See Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, p.10.

of, and simultaneously separate from, shared moral orders.¹⁴ Due to the multiplicity of identities and their performative nature, any research on identity in historical and contemporary contexts must take care in labelling performances of identities as *necessarily* reflecting more stable internal and socially shared moral orders. The practical implication for this thesis is that while historical identities may be identified, it does not necessarily follow that the veteran identities have persisted or remained central among other identities. Noting how positions are *related* would prevent the overemphasis on the veteran identities as central in cases where they might be superseded by other identity concerns. However, this does not invalidate the focus on residual militarised identities, as elements of identities may persist even if the core identities are superseded. Contexts may draw out identities, positionings, and the related performative aspects of those identities that otherwise may not present as powerfully in general daily encounters. The context-dependency of identities certainly presents a challenge to interpreting the meaning of a given identity.

Social Constructionism

Abstract identity theory does not, however, draw the relationships between identities necessary to address the thesis questions concerning veteran identities over time. To this end, the social constructionist approach to understanding identity is useful to bring together expressions of identity and surrounding contexts (both contemporary and historical), to make sense of identity *in* historical contexts. Using social constructionism in the context of history does generate some challenges that need to be addressed, such as the limitations of subjectivity and the tensions between individual agency and structures. This section will negotiate the challenges generated when employing social constructionism in a historical study by drawing on key concepts of social constructionism from Kenneth Gergen and Vivian Burr. Gergen's work provides insights into the relationships between psychology and history, while Burr focuses on the relationships between society, identity and context.

Social constructionism, according to Gergen, challenges (or even seeks to "eliminate")¹⁵ more traditional approaches to understanding the world, such as empiricism, foundationalism, and

¹⁴ Woodward includes Goffman's performativity of identity in this view. Shared moral orders here also refers to internal (i.e. psychologically) and socially shared views of behaviour. See Woodward, *Understanding Identity*, pp.9-11.

¹⁵ K. J. Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, London, SAGE Publications, 2001, p.4.

realism, among others. It does this by placing claims to knowledge (truth, objectivity, insight) within what is termed 'communities of meaning making'.¹⁶ This results in claims to knowledge being situated in relationships and the processes that constitute them. The theory rejects traditional claims to knowledge as "uncontaminated by culture, history, and ideology".¹⁷ Gergen states that social constructionism has mostly been used in the discipline of psychology. However, he characterises the discipline, in its attempt to gain fixed knowledge of individuals beyond time and culture, as using social constructionism to generalise. Instead, Gergen argues that social constructionism itself is a theoretical approach that positions the psychological as subject to particular historical conditions. The mind is thus "historically constituted" and the discourses produced by individuals are subject to historical contexts.¹⁸ The thesis questions reverse this position by arguing that history can also be constituted as subject to the mind, as is seen in the conflicts over the validity and ownership of histories and historical narratives (e.g. the memory conflict surrounding Cuito Cuanavale). Thus, this is an attempt to gain knowledge of history by considering the construction of known historical events in the form of identity positions to gain access to the underlying factors influencing historical processes beyond the record and its human impacts. Gergen refers to this consideration of the historical contexts beyond the record that influence, pressure, limit, and otherwise affect decision-making, and produce the behaviours of individuals within their specific contexts, as historical texturing.¹⁹ I argue that the historical texturing the social constructionist approach can provide will shed more light on the persistence of the various problems facing post-1994 South African society, especially the legacies of militarism and social inequality. Furthermore, it will potentially contribute towards understanding the role identities play in making the ills of apartheid so resilient.

In addition to arguing for the intersection of psychology and history (albeit with a focus on psychology), Gergen stresses the importance of identity politics and positioning identity within the social milieu. Of Gergen's conclusions on the potential uses and development of social constructionism, there are two points that are useful in the application of the theory to historical study. First, the ability of social constructionism to account for and move beyond identity politics towards underlying *meanings*, and second, the flexibility to account for technological contexts of

¹⁶ Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, pp.2-4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.85-87, 89.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.85. The supposed incompatibility of realism and constructionism is also challenged by historical texturing, which argues that realism and constructionism are mutually supportive interpretive directions – see Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, pp.15-16.

political and moral identity positions. With regard to identity politics, Gergen argues that a relational discourse would ideally result in a shift away from looking at individuals in opposition (the “1 vs. you”) towards a relational discourse-based understanding of meaning making (a “we”), where modes of speaking reflect and invite changes to discourse.²⁰ The implication is that a relational approach seeks to find situations that result in shared acts of meaning-producing or relating dialogue rather than falling into the pitfalls of individualism (and individualising), such as having to navigate concepts of individual intent, blame, and rights.²¹ The focus in social constructionism shifts towards understanding situations and the components that result in an event by considering the individuals involved alongside their relational positions. My analysis of the interview transcript archive in Chapter 4 will strive to identify the situations and components that contributed to submission to apartheid militarisation.

Gergen’s inclusion of the technological context builds on this relational and discursive foundation. The technological contexts of political and moral identity positions Gergen refers to are those mechanisms of sociation,²² such as veteran groups, associations or other structures that can both carry and potentially cultivate identities, and how they constrain or foster identity communities maintained through associations of identity content and values. This refers both to social and literal technologies, or in other words, the technological limitations of and the potential for individuals to generate and mediate their own communities.²³ Much like the shift towards relational politics, Gergen argues that the consideration of technologically mediated contexts results in a shift away from “attempts to lodge moral action in independent minds”, and towards communities, real or imagined.²⁴ As with relational politics, the question becomes how situations, and the meaning-making of related discursive relationships, result in social actions by including the technological contexts that contribute to polarised and rigidified political and moral positions.²⁵ The links between social constructionism, history, and my concerns in the thesis become apparent in light of Gergen’s two conclusions. Firstly, that identity can provide access to underlying meanings constructed around experience, and secondly, that social constructionism can account for technological contexts.

²⁰ Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, pp.169-179.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.176, 179.

²² Gergen’s work emphasises the role of structures, but does not preclude the role of individuals or the relationships between the structures and individuals.

²³ Gergen’s use of the term technology is not only literal, but also includes the implications of technologies on social contexts (or communities). See Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, pp.191-193.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.191.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.193.

SADF veteran identities have been addressed in existing research, particularly in Baines's work which considers the role of memory in relation to identities. In *South Africa's 'Border War': Contested Narratives and Conflicting Memories*, Baines argues for the mutually constitutive nature of memory and identity with reference to the mnemonic community²⁶ to which SADF veterans belong.²⁷ SADF veterans are also characterised as a 'family of remembrance', highlighting the centrality of shared memory in the formation of identity groups, "defined" by shared experiences and expressed through symbolic means.²⁸ Memory as a point of inquiry is conspicuous by its absence in the identity theory literature included in this chapter, with Woodward, Wetherell, and Burr²⁹ barely mentioning memory as a point for consideration. How is memory accounted for in social constructionism then? Only Gergen addresses memory and only insofar as to position memory as subject to culture³⁰ and community³¹, neither point being at odds with Baines's treatment of memory. Narrative is, however, central to both the social constructionism I am applying to the interview transcript archive and the overall question of the role of memory in relation to identity. However, the focus in social constructionism is on the purposes and meanings of narratives delivered by the interviewees and how those narratives reflect on the interviewees personally and their identity groups. The extent to which discussions of the ownership of history, in the form of mnemonic battles (or memory conflicts), present in the interview transcripts will be considered, but only insofar as the scope of the thesis questions allow, i.e. in what manner they are constructed and how they reflect on the interviewees' identities and identity groups.

This thesis questions how *temporal* relationships are borne out of historical and contemporary experiences, and how they engage with conflicting narratives, meanings, and cultural positionings to construct, renegotiate, and mediate the contexts that inform social action. These engagements reflect the contents of their constructions and in turn allow research to address the questions of identity constructions and shifts over time. Therefore, this thesis treats identity, and the concomitant psychological, as historically constituted and situated. Technological advancement resulting in the decentralisation of information and culture (away from gatekeepers) has, furthermore, created new opportunities for the construction of identities, and illustrates the

²⁶ Baines defines mnemonic communities as "groups that share collective memories" – see G. Baines, *South Africa's 'Border War': Contested Narratives and Conflicting Memories*, Bloomsbury, London, New York, 2014, p.4.

²⁷ Baines, *South Africa's 'Border War'*, pp.4-5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.175.

²⁹ These include multiple publications by these authors.

³⁰ Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, p.88.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.134.

connection between identity options and the technological context. The South African state can no longer monopolise and exploit all forms of media for identity control as strongly as it historically could. For this reason, how veterans use or relate to media technologies such as social media platforms will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis with reference to their use and the meanings they potentially carry in the transcript analysis. The technological context of SADF veterans has also presented in Baines's research on memory and identity.

Social constructionism also has some implications for theories of knowledge. Vivien Burr maintains Gergen's position that social constructionism seeks to challenge traditional forms of knowledge, but does not go as far as dismissing traditional forms of knowledge entirely. Rather, Burr seeks to draw value from multiple approaches. She contends that knowledge produced within the paradigm of social constructionism is derived from context and that shared understandings and meanings are generated through social process, interactions, and engagement.³² Burr also extends performativity beyond individuals to a relationship between groups as something *done* together.³³ Finally, she connects discourse with prevailing social organisation and the maintenance of social status quos.³⁴ The implications Gergen and Burr have for the approach applied to the veteran discourses is best illustrated by way of example. Some SADF veterans claim that service in the SADF helped prevent a communist takeover in South Africa and contributed to the relatively peaceful political transition in South Africa. The claim itself has been rejected in academic and general public spheres, but does present as a trope in soldier-author writing.³⁵ This construction reframes both the historical experience of military service and the meaning of that service, arguing for recognition of the supposed contribution national service had made to the peaceful political transition in South Africa. Furthermore, despite the general rejection of the claim, it persists in and for the veteran community's benefit, albeit a mnemonic community that also includes many who do not share this belief. The claim also forms the basis for the veteran community's assertion of contemporary relevance. The experience and identity of service in the SADF is thus imbued with positive effects, both historically and in the present. Considering this claim through the lens of social constructionism emphasises the communities of meaning-making associated with reframing national service – and thus SADF veteran identities – positively in a new socio-political context. The reconstruction of identities illustrated in this example thus reflects the attempt to reclaim the positive aspects of the

³² V. Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, Routledge, London, 1995, pp.3-4.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.

³⁵ G. Baines., *South Africa's 'Border War': Contested Narratives and Conflicting Memories*, Bloomsbury, London, New York, 2014, p.30.

historical identity and oppose conflicting negative perceptions of SADF veterans, reconstituting SADF veterans as heroes, rather than the villains, of apartheid.

Social constructionism frequently employs the term 'positioning', which in the literature surveyed broadly refers to instances of identity constructs and the elements they comprise of in a given context or at a given point in time (as far as the contents of an identity can be determined). When employed in social constructionism however, positioning theory has developed to trace the implications of constructed positions. Positioning theory specifically focuses on "local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting".³⁶ Harré and van Langenhove developed a composite definition of positioning as a "complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibility of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual as are sustained by the cluster".³⁷ Positioning specifically invokes issues of behaviour (political and social), which cements the relevance of the study of identities, constructions, and the positioning attached to them, especially if some of their elements are rooted in a contested past. Furthermore, positioning theory assumes that expressions of identity, including both publicly manifested expressions and publicly presented personas,³⁸ and identity constructions are deliberate, and thus imply strategic goals and purposes.³⁹ A practical example of the use of positionings can be found in Foster et al., where they make use of this concept to refer to instances of how individuals involved in South Africa's violent history have been constructed and have constructed themselves. Foster et al., however, focus largely on the elements of identities rather than the implications of shifts and repositionings.⁴⁰ There is a subtle distinction to be drawn in this thesis between identity constructions and positionings. Identity constructions are those *expressions* of embodied worldviews and values, while positionings tend more towards the *constructions* of values (whether through overt statement or performance) intended to exert some force in context. For example, the positioning SADF veterans as contributors to the relatively

³⁶ R. Harré and L. van Langenhove (eds.), *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Oxford, 1999, p.1.

³⁷ Harré and van Langenhove, *Positioning Theory*, p.1. The technical definition does add additional emphasis on the structural and especially the assignment of expected behaviours of groups on others, e.g. placing the expectation of security on men in militaristic patriarchal societies such as South Africa, which may be related to the pressure and anxiety of 'keeping the family safe' which is a common worry expressed by veterans – see Gear, *Wishing Us Away*.

³⁸ Harré and van Langenhove, *Positioning Theory*, p.7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.24-25.

⁴⁰ Foster et. al's work on veteran identities in South Africa will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis, but the different uses of the concept of positionings bears mention here to indicate that there is variation in how it is employed.

peaceful political transition in South Africa is an attempt to exert a positive force in context. Identities, constructions, and discourses together present as a force with which individuals exert relative power over their environments and attempt to control perceptions to reach some desirable end, whether that is to find a place in new social orders, within the contexts of debating commemoration and memorialisation, or merely for the sake of self-validation and justification.

Additional Theoretical Considerations of Identity Theory and Social Constructionism

James Côté and Charles Levine argue that a situation has arisen in contemporary society where individuals are “continually confronted with high levels of choice over fundamental matters of personal meaning” – in other words, challenges to and of identities.⁴¹ Côté and Levine’s study of identity management relates to the challenges faced by individuals whose identities developed and were rooted in a defunct social and political order. The key element raised by Côté and Levine is the matter of the *maintenance* of identity, which they argue is primarily determined by the validation of identities.⁴² Issues of validation, in the form of recognition, is a matter that has been raised by SADF veterans in various forms, such as the debate around memorialisation at Freedom Park and the claim that the SADF contributed to the peaceful political transition of South Africa. The interweaving of validation with other processes of construction of service in the SADF also illustrates how these veteran identities hinge, in part, on recognition by broader South African society. The extent to which validation of SADF veteran identities is related to other identities becomes a useful consideration in addressing the thesis questions related to perceived social roles of veterans and the degree of impact military experiences have had on veterans since political transition.

Côté and Levine’s framework for identity extends across multiple levels of identity formation, and they have attempted to account for the uneven process of how identities respond to structural change within their culture-identity framework (including the social, personal, and ego). The impact of the cultural context, they argue, is limited as it is not a determining factor of identity, but merely one source of symbolic vehicles of meaning (beliefs, rituals, and social values).⁴³ Anomalies and outliers during the constant process of contextual, cultural, and identity shifts are explained through

⁴¹ J.E. Côté and C.G. Levine, *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture: A Social Psychological Synthesis*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, Mahwah, 2002, p.1.

⁴² Côté and Levine, *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture*, p.6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.122-123.

what they refer to as “cultural lag”, or the persistence of previously dominant markers and patterns of behaviour in certain subcultures affecting the domains of gender, class, religion, ethnicity, and race as both sources of and spaces within which behaviour can be located.⁴⁴ The concept of cultural lag is related to the thesis question in two ways: firstly, as a source of identity trouble as obsolete identities are no longer validated, and secondly, to caution against the generalisation of identity expressions when they may only present as a result of context. The first is an ongoing concern of the thesis in drawing historical knowledge from identity expression over time, but the second complicates the potential of drawing generalisable conclusions from the study of identities. The unmanaged way in which the overt norms of social, cultural, and political militarisation faded from public view after the end of apartheid left military identity untethered in the new socio-political landscape of South Africa, disconnected from those relationships to citizenship, race, religious and political ideology, and gender, that it had occupied before. Therefore, the interview transcript analysis will consider the retention of markers of identity and the potential for the creation of networks of understanding in order to attempt to position those markers and expressions of behaviour historically.

Identity and SADF Veterans in Existing Research

Theories of identity, including social constructionism, have been employed in the analysis of as well as representations of SADF veteran narratives. Analyses of identity in existing research have taken the form of studies of identity politics, the workings of identities in groups, systemic formalisations of identities, and some forays into the concept of cultural identities and how they might be expressed. A selection of some of these studies will be presented here in order to illustrate the body of work to which this thesis seeks to contribute. Kevin Hetherington’s work on identity politics and Hedy Brown’s comments on group membership and its impact on individuals partly address questions of identity as a mobilising force, as well as the relationships between individuals and structure that illustrate theoretical claims in action. Questions of the systemic formalisation of identities are approached here obliquely through Sonja Narunsky-Laden’s work on identity formation in post-apartheid South Africa through commercial media. Commercial media was a primary vehicle for Afrikaner National identity building, addressing the broad range of desirable apartheid race, gender, and political identities supportive of its local and regional (militarist) policies. As such, mainstream media provides a lens for examining processes of identity formation in rapidly

⁴⁴ Côté and Levine, *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture*, p.124.

changing contexts such as the end of apartheid. Considerations of cultural identities add another layer to historical texturing and potentially provide deeper insight into the shared SADF veteran identity.

Identity Politics

Hetherington characterises identity spaces as “heterogeneous, folded, paradoxical and crumpled space[s] in which a distinct singular position is not possible”.⁴⁵ As a result, for Hetherington, identities exist in multiple locations and in multiple formations of performativity depending on space.⁴⁶ This is not a novel position, as indicated in the earlier part of this chapter, but what Hetherington’s focus contributes to our understanding is the element of perceived or real placement of identities within a society and how that affects performativity of identities (exaggeration, suppression, form of representation, etc.), which can be expressed in terms of the choice to maintain marginal or marginalised identities.⁴⁷ The relevance of marginality to SADF veteran identities raises the question of why an identity, which is perceived as marginalised is maintained despite its lack of functional advantages. Hetherington’s view on identity politics is helpful and also links identities to broader social and even global contextual developments. He posits that the politics of identity are indicative of wider social and/or systemic processes and are connotative of the non-overt issues of class, gender, and ethnicity, as well as associated lifestyle and identity choices.⁴⁸ A key consideration in this view of identity politics is that, during the subject’s search for contextual relevance, new issues of identity do not necessarily override other historical or contemporary parallel issues, such as political action, mobilisation, group membership and organisation, and so forth.⁴⁹ The consideration of components, or issues, that Hetherington raises emphasises the extent of differentiation that can be generated by identity positions, especially in the South African context where significant political change occurred alongside relatively limited social and economic change for black South Africans. How veteran identities are assembled,⁵⁰ both individually and by groups, also generates meaning in the process of constructing the Self and Other in light of the *other* contextual components, such as ethnicity, race and gender constructions, and so forth. However, the

⁴⁵ K. Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics*, SAGE Publications, London, 1998, p.23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.28-32.

⁴⁹ Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity*, p.38.

⁵⁰ Hetherington refers to identity ‘assemblage’ as how activities (expressions, behaviours, lifestyles) are delineated, grouped, and theorised about. See Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity*, pp.37-39.

embedded nature of meanings (including values, perceptions, stereotyping, etc.) and their politics makes them particularly difficult to access, which is where the study of narratives and media becomes important.

While underpinning the theories presented in this chapter, the impact of group membership itself has not been directly addressed. The making of Self and Other inherently generates groupings in identity formation, as outlined by Woodward, Gergen, and others, but this factor is never dealt with at length. Hedy Brown, on the other hand, presents a collation of experimental group research that is useful to this thesis' position on identity. Brown's research indicates the extent to which the group impacts identity-related individual behaviour. While the work focuses primarily on broader social psychology, the effect of group membership on identity in particular is briefly covered. Drawing primarily on Henri Tajfel and John Turner's extensive social identity theory, Brown finds that the theory consistently suggests the power of group identity *over* personal identity.⁵¹ Group identity was found to affect self-esteem, stereotyping (of Self and Other), and the valuation of in-group and out-group members. As a result, Brown concluded that personal identity gave way and/or adjusted to collectively defined social group attributes.⁵² This certainly places the loci of identities in groups rather than individuals, in contrast to the identity theories discussed in the first part of this chapter, which posit a more balanced relationship between personal and group identities.

Although this thesis aims to take a balanced approach to identity, Brown's use of social identity theory does situate issues of depersonalisation, stereotyping, and the effects of group affiliation more centrally in the consideration of identities. These elements of social identity theory could contribute to the understanding of why individuals have been shown to suppress personal identities to adjust to or affiliate with social or structural identities, as conscripts often do. Brown draws on Tajfel and Turner's notion of referent informational influences to describe this phenomenon. According to Tajfel and Turner, referent informational influences are those ideal identity markers of an identity group which members strive to embody.⁵³ However, the power of referent informational influences seems overstated in that it makes no allowance for the retention of the sense of identities, thoughts, and behaviours that existed before exposure, or facets that survive adjustment towards the ideal identity representations. Furthermore, neither the ability of individuals to perform

⁵¹ H. Brown, 'Themes in Experimental Research on Groups' in M. Wetherell (ed.), *Identities, Groups and Social Issues*, SAGE Publications, London, 1996, p.33.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.33-34.

⁵³ See Brown, 'Themes in Experimental Research on Groups', p.34.

an identity successfully without entirely subscribing and internalising said identity nor the influence of identity spaces (such as suggested by Brown) are addressed. Nevertheless, the elements of depersonalisation and stereotyping remain relevant to considerations of identity as a mechanism for historical study – if qualified by the flexibility of identities established by the other theories of identity presented in this chapter. Finally, social identity theory also raises the question of the nature of the group in question. With the general theories of identity and social constructionism, groups are represented as collections of similarly arranged components, whereas social identity theory suggests that some groups become more than the sum of their parts, providing access to the connotative constructions, i.e. the underlying meanings associated with identity group membership.

Cultural Identities

Related to the considerations of the impact of groups on identities is the question of cultural identities and their relationships to individuals' identities. Some overlap may already exist between cultural identity and identity politics, two concepts that Lawrence Grossberg states have at times been equated in the spheres of feminism, anti-racism, and anti-colonial critique.⁵⁴ Grossberg positions cultural identity (and cultural politics) as a useful mechanism to organise specific identities among other formations of power. In other words, Grossberg suggests that cultural identity research move beyond anti-colonial struggles and struggles against oppression more broadly towards transformation and relations of power.⁵⁵ The potential of identity to play a role in transformation is of particular import to this thesis, given its central concern with the consequences of apartheid. The feeling of rejection of military identities expressed by participants in Sasha Gear's *Wishing Us Away* and the rejection of veteran narratives found by Karen Batley illustrate the conflict between militarised individual identities and broader cultural and ethnic identities.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the desire of some SADF veterans to communicate their military experiences has at times, and to varying degrees, been ignored or outright rejected by broader white society.⁵⁷ The reason for this rejection

⁵⁴ L. Grossberg, 'Identity and Cultural Studies: Is That All There Is?', in S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, SAGE Publications, London, 1996, p.87. Grossberg specifically notes a tendency to equate cultural studies and the concept of culture more generally and identity theory and politics in postcolonial theory and critical race theory. Grossberg cautions that the centrality of identity politics within social movements and struggles should also not be dismissed, as they can be central to mobilisation. See Grossberg, 'Identity and Cultural Studies', p.88.

⁵⁵ Grossberg, 'Identity and Cultural Studies', p.88.

⁵⁶ Gear, *Wishing Us Away* will be discussed in a later chapter. Batley's broader study, 'Documents of Life' fall outside the scope of this thesis but contributes to the landscape of veteran identity considerations.

⁵⁷ See Batley, 'Documents of Life'.

may be the result of an attempt by white South African society to distance itself from its military history and identities, and to disassociate the cultural identity further from its historical assemblage without having to confront the difficult questions of complicity and responsibility that the presence of SADF veterans may make difficult to ignore. The lack of confrontation with issues of complicity in apartheid presents, in my view, a barrier to the transformation of behaviours that could potentially address historical inequalities. Veteran identities do not allow for such distancing, and the levels of disassociation present in the interview archive will illustrate how those who still maintain strong attachments to veteran identities negotiate the burden of responsibility for apartheid injustices, which is seemingly imposed upon them.

Mediating Identity: Contemporary Media and Identity Discourse

The desire of white South Africans to distance themselves from apartheid inequality and injustice has been documented in existing studies of identity in mainstream South African media since political transition. These studies provide an opportunity to relate the theoretical points presented in this chapter to post-apartheid mainstream media. In their overview of media in the last two decades, Hadland et al. found two “opposing” views of identity in South African media studies: 1) extensive identity shifts towards fluidity, change, and hybridity versus 2) a maintained focus on political identities, between agency and structure.⁵⁸ This view reflects the study of identity content in media as presenting dualisms between the persistence of historical constructions, on the one hand, and the acknowledgement of historical constructions and those attempts to move beyond them, on the other. However, Hadland et al. provide little reason why these two forces necessarily create such a strong dualism. The identity theories outlined thus far indicate the dominance of parallel, context-dependent identities rather than the either/or zero-sum identities found in Hadland et al’s overview. The extent of tension between identities – new, renegotiated, and still transforming – in social constructionism is better conceptualised or treated as a continuum, where dualism is *possible* rather than the norm. While an extensive overview of identity in South African media falls outside the scope of this thesis, the relational nature of identities requires broader consideration of those ‘others’ in opposition to which ‘selves’ are constructed in mainstream South African media.

⁵⁸ A. Hadland, E. Louw, S. Sesanti, and H. Wasserman, ‘Introduction’, in A. Hadland, E. Louw, S. Sesanti, and H. Wasserman (eds.), *Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media: Selected Seminar Papers*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2008, pp.1-3.

Wiida Fourie's investigation of Afrikaner identity, as expressed in Afrikaner interest newspaper *Beeld*, will be used as a starting point. *Beeld* was perceived as a mouthpiece for Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans during apartheid and after political transition, and it embodied the Afrikaner Christian Nationalism that characterised apartheid.⁵⁹ Fourie immediately takes the position that understanding identity as constructions of Self “in terms of the Other” necessitates relational understanding.⁶⁰ Fourie argues that while white selves have in part adjusted to the reality of the post-1994 context, “no fundamental review of their typification of the Other (black South Africans) took place”.⁶¹ This leads Fourie to conclude that white Afrikaners in particular had undergone no radical questioning of white Afrikaner identity beyond the separation of an undefined Afrikaner character derived from Afrikaner Christian nationalism, which is positioned as having freed Afrikaners from the “sin of apartheid”.⁶² Simultaneously, Fourie found that white Afrikaners’ construction of the other displays little evidence of revising the typification of black Africans as inherently racially inferior.⁶³ Identity positions were thus not fundamentally shifted, merely renegotiated in relation to the Others alongside the rejection of some identity content, arguably Christian Nationalism and apartheid military identities. Fourie is not alone in drawing this conclusion, with Sonja Narunsky-Laden and Stella Viljoen finding a similar lack of identity transformation in other media spheres.

Narunsky-Laden approaches the issue of identity formation in the post-apartheid context more generally. She attempts to find a framework for understanding identity formation in mainstream media that goes beyond the options available from apartheid, by including lived experience, Self, and personhood in her framework.⁶⁴ However, Narunsky-Laden finds that race and re-racialisation “linger” in a continued context of racialised policies such as black empowerment, affirmative action, and the like, which threaten to re-essentialise race and ethnicity.⁶⁵ South Africans’ attempts to ‘learn to belong’ through now-consumerist mainstream media may draw again on racialised apartheid discourses that contain the same prejudices and essentialisations of ‘other’ formalised by apartheid.

⁵⁹ Fourie, ‘Afrikaner identity’, p.239. This is a generalisation Fourie establishes as a result of findings from the *Beeld* newspapers which is seen as an Afrikaans-speaking white South African interest publication.

⁶⁰ W. Fourie, ‘Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa: The Self in terms of the Other’, in A. Hadland, E. Louw, S. Sesanti, and H. Wasserman (eds.), *Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media: Selected Seminar Papers*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2008, p.239.

⁶¹ Fourie, ‘Afrikaner identity’, p.239, 240.

⁶² Fourie, ‘Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa’, pp.280-281.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.281-282.

⁶⁴ S. Narunsky-Laden, ‘Identity in post-apartheid South Africa: ‘Learning to belong’ through the (commercial) media’, in A. Hadland, E. Louw, S. Sesanti, and H. Wasserman (eds.), *Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media: Selected Seminar Papers*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2008, pp.140-141.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.142.

Viljoen's consideration of gender and masculinity in men's lifestyle magazines in the post-apartheid context indicates the overlapping nature of personal, cultural, and political spheres of identity, and the tensions between historical and the contemporary constructions and renegotiations alluded to by Narunsky-Laden. Despite the influx of globalised media values that exert pressure on South African gender norms, the challenges to hegemonic masculinity are still fundamentally linked to apartheid identity constructions. The ideal target identity in the media studied by Viljoen maintained as its masculine ideal: the white South African male spanning multiple behavioural stereotypes. These ideals were also found to be marketed towards black middle-class South Africans, leading to the labelling of the *white* South African male as the ideal. Stereotypes here include 'laddish good fun', aspirational, religious (Christian), and ethical ideals.⁶⁶ Simultaneously, however, the white South African male perceives a great deal of threat in political and economic spheres, deepening perceptions of economic and social crises.⁶⁷ What is evident across Fourie, Narunsky-Laden, and Viljoen's work is the presence of remnants of different forms of apartheid identities throughout media. It is clear that identity shifts as a result of fundamental changes to historical contexts, as is the case in South Africa, where economic change has been much slower than political and policy changes. It is also clear that this shift generates an uneven distribution of pressure to renegotiate identity contents and positions that rely on much-changed contexts. The potential for identity studies to measure transformation indicates the relevance of tracing SADF veteran identities to determine the extent to which shifting contexts have impacted upon those identities, value systems, and behaviours.

Conclusion

Identity theory offers a method to analyse the persistence of identities and their relationships to historical knowledge over the periods of conscription and NS during the 1980s. More specifically, the lens of social constructionism offers a means by which to understand the challenges of changing patterns of perception and behaviour. However, the use of identity theory in itself presents challenges. The mobilisation of social and political identities in support of a militaristic state presents a problem in dealing with the question of how veteran identities relate to other, more visible

⁶⁶ S. Viljoen, 'Masculine ideals in post-apartheid South Africa: The rise of men's glossies', in A. Hadland, E. Louw, S. Sesanti, and H. Wasserman (eds.), *Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media: Selected Seminar Papers*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2008, pp.335-336.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.319. The sources of the perception of threat to white South African males are the systems of affirmative action and the economic realities that have seen white men face retrenchment, exacerbating perceptions of threat, crises, and feelings of marginalisation.

identities such as, for example, ethnic group membership, gender identities and roles, and the positioning of historically inculcated attitudes towards race, gender, or violence. Considering this understanding of the multiplicity of identities, their interdependence on each other, and the relationships between identities and structures – in addition to the potential complication that identity components (e.g. masculinities) may be shared across identities – attempting to isolate identity elements and attribute them to specific identities may prove both challenging and of questionable worth. A further challenge with overlapping identity features between SADF veteran identities and other (e.g. racial or class-based) identities raises important questions in this thesis: how are the perceptions of a greater burden of responsibility and culpability for apartheid, expressed by some of the interviewees in the archive, negotiated in a context where these interviewees argue that other beneficiaries of apartheid do not have to face similar pressure? And, furthermore, why do these interviewees then persist in maintaining veteran identities if they present such a burden? I argue that considerations of these singled-out identities, alongside the manners in which they are renegotiated or justified and maintained, would contribute to a better understanding of South African history. Furthermore, it could contribute toward an understanding of how vast historical processes impact those individuals who simultaneously experience and help create them.

Additional complications were raised with social constructionism and contextual performativity, which emphasise subjective understandings of experience. The performative aspects of an identity may persist even when its underlying content or rationale has changed, or vice versa, making referential or symbolic elements of an identity dynamic and subject to context. Alongside those social constructions are also the subjects' own attempts at positioning their identities and renegotiating their perceptions and perspectives of the world to maintain a sense of safety and stability within and between identities out of a sense of self-preservation. The influence of context on the situation-dependent constructions and positionings of central or connotative identities may also have divergent effects on individuals' responses. This presents in instances where the individual is merely maintaining more central identity positions, but also in cases where the identity expression is a behavioural relic (or instances of cultural lag) in isolated contexts. The distinction between identity constructions and positions – that is, between reflections of worldviews or values and the use of value formations to exert force in context – raises the question of whether an expression reflects a locus of identity, a case of identity elements being mobilised for personal or group advantage, or merely an instance of behavioural relics or cultural lag.

The layered nature of identity presented here is confirmed through the study of identities in media, which presents this same conflicted and uneven distribution of identity shifts posited by identity theory. The uneven contemporary renegotiation and use of identity in mobilising economic, social, and cultural behaviours, and the persistent relics of identities rooted in historical contexts, coexist achronologically. As Fourie argues in her conclusion, the convenient renegotiation of Self among white Afrikaners, as expressed in Afrikaner-interest media, occurred in parallel with the maintenance of the historical racist construction of the black African Other. Viljoen's analysis of masculinity also found the presence of historical norms and relics that persist in renegotiations of gender, while Narunsky-Laden's analysis of models for renegotiating identity warns of the ever-present potential for re-racialising and re-essentialising of others along historical, that is apartheid, lines. My consideration of identities thus moves away from the immediate concern with contemporary perceptions of Self and Other, useful constructions of values and worldviews, towards considerations of dynamic identity positionings during identity conflicts as the result of contextual shifts. Identities are fundamentally accretive in nature, as accumulated expressions of historical structures and their behavioural consequences.

This historicisation of identity is fundamental to my thesis, as the contemporary South African socio-political landscape is dominated by identity politics and contestations. Whether it is expressed in student protests, questions of whether white South Africans deserve the right to speak on matters of national importance, or perceptions of governance, identity politics plays a significant role in socio-political events. Without a serious consideration of the elements that make up these identities and the underlying value of the meanings and origins of each element, the disconnect between identity groups will only be maintained or widened. As this chapter has argued, identities are historically contextualised constructions, and as such they should be studied within their historical context. They need to be related to changes in structures, systems, and processes through time. In light of this position, there is a danger that the focus on SADF veteran identities may become muddled in the general chaos of identities in the making. However, there is a distinct specificity around SADF veteran identities that can help maintain focus while acknowledging the influence of other identity elements. As mentioned, the perception of a greater degree of responsibility and culpability has presented in the interview archive. However, veterans are inextricably linked to apartheid, in a way that cannot be easily disassociated from their historical context in the same way that other white Afrikaners have, for example, shed their Christian Nationalist identities. SADF veteran identities can thus be treated as a form of case study from which to generalise the crises of other South African identities that do still contain elements of prejudices sanctioned by apartheid.

Through an overview of structures of militarism and coercion in South Africa during apartheid, in Chapter 2, and the state management of veterans in post-apartheid South Africa in Chapter 3, these elements will be delineated and contextualised.

Chapter 2: Structures of Militarisation and Coercion in South Africa During Apartheid

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what systemic structures of apartheid contributed to the militarisation of white South Africans over the course of apartheid. This exploration of some of the foremost coercive structures promoting militarism will provide a point of departure for the consideration of the impact of militarisation. As the thesis progresses, this impact will be related to identity constructions and the historicisation of these constructions. In order to examine SADF veteran identity constructions over time, the ideological underpinnings and legitimising ideologies on which white South African political and civil society was built need to be discussed. The manifestations of these ideologies are found in the various social spheres of white South Africa that contributed to the maintenance of apartheid politics or, in other words, National Party rule. Aletta Norval argues that three major myths constituted white apartheid South Africa's foundational 'common sense', a phrase denoting a unifying identity or the points of identification discussed in Chapter 1. These three myths were Calvinist Christian Nationalism, Culturalist Afrikaner Nationalism, and Scientific Racism.¹ The Dutch Reformed Churches played a significant role in formulating and disseminating an apartheid morality in their construction of Calvinist Christian Nationalism, which includes race, culture, and gender. Fundamental to this Calvinist Christian Nationalism is the appeal to "blood, language, and culture",² and so Calvinist Christian Nationalism works with Culturalist Afrikaner Nationalism, which expanded on Dutch Reformed theology. In particular, Culturalist Afrikaner Nationalism emphasised two points: the separation of racial groups and the threat to Afrikaner culture. These points established the ideas of nation, and the meaning-making of Afrikaner history, which highlighted gendered "duty of service" and sacrifice to the nation.³ Completing the three fundamental myths is Scientific Racism, which reinforced the Calvinist Christian and Culturalist Afrikaner myths of superiority and purity.⁴ Norval stresses that these policies were not systematically implemented with NP victory in 1948, but rather that they remained at the heart of apartheid policy, thinking, and practice.⁵

¹ A.J. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, Verso, London, 1996, pp.58, 62. The term 'myth' is employed here as per Norval's definition, which refers to the attempts by the 'average' (i.e. not the intellectual or political stakeholders in the myths) individual to reconstruct new understandings of situations as objectively given states in reality – See Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid*, pp.66-67.

² Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, pp.69-71.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.80-81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.88-89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.101-102.

Building upon Norval's characterisation of these apartheid myths, this chapter argues that both the Calvinist Christian and Culturalist Afrikaner myths supplied the concepts of threat and the need to defend against those perceived threats that underpinned apartheid militarism. Furthermore, the chapter argues that the concepts of threat, defence, and the duty of *military* service relates military power to the social and cultural spheres of everyday life in white apartheid South Africa, which served to perpetuate the militaristic status quo and maintain apartheid partly through the mobilisation of identity. As will be illustrated using existing scholarly work, everyday spaces (schooling, organised religion, media representations of politics and so forth) served as structures of coercion that prepared white South Africans,⁶ both practically and psychologically, for military service.

This coercion was furthered by the rhetorical environment of apartheid South Africa, which served to reinforce the underlying myths of the apartheid state. Thomas Moriarty's analysis of South Africa's apartheid rhetoric examines the constructions of Self and Other employed by the NP to generate supportive (to their politics at least) political consciousness and behaviour. As an example, Moriarty draws on the rhetorical construction of Self where the NP imbued its security forces and political positions with positive connotations through their representation as rational, just, dedicated to freedom, and open to peaceful negotiation with political opponents (in those cases where political opponents were recognised).⁷ Deborah Posel's analysis of state-controlled popular media supports Moriarty's position, indicating similar positive constructions and self-representations in mainstream media. However, Posel expands upon Moriarty's focus on political representation through a consideration of the social dimensions associated with political orientation, which included the concepts of the constructed national duties and social obligations of white South African citizens.⁸ Rhetoric found in mainstream media remained largely static throughout the periods Moriarty and Posel covered in their analyses. While the rhetorical constructions were not met without criticism, the 1987 whites-only election indicated overwhelming support of government, which Moriarty argues illustrates majority white South Africa's support of NP political

⁶ White South Africans here refers to not only the young men who were conscripted or joined the SADF, but also the role models, family members, peers, and leaders in white South Africa who supported and benefited from the system.

⁷ T.A. Moriarty, *Finding the Words: A Rhetorical History of South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*, Praeger, Westport, Conn., 2003, pp.9-10.

⁸ D. Posel, 'A 'battlefield of perceptions': state discourses on political violence, 1985-1988' in J. Cock and L. Nathan (eds.), *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*, David Philip Publishers, Cape Town, 1989, p.262.

behaviours as reasonable and justifiable.⁹ This indicates the relative success of rhetoric and identity mobilisation in convincing majority white South Africa of apartheid's foundational myths.

However, despite these pressures and structures of coercion, it is important to recognise resistance to and criticism of the militarised state. This thesis maintains that, even in this environment, conscripts' submission to conscription and enthusiasm for, or identification with military service or its underlying ideologies, are not to be assumed. Daniel Conway found that failure to report for duty rose sharply between 1975 and 1985, indicating a growing resistance to conscription that he attributes to the political and security crises of the apartheid state, which were exacerbated by the social costs of waging a war by drawing predominantly on the white population group.¹⁰ Noting resistance to conscription and the pervasive nature of the institutional, military, and social contexts of conscription has a two part purpose: firstly, to caution against reducing conscripts' submission to National Service (NS) to blind support for the apartheid regime, and secondly, to recognise that structures exerted varying degrees of pressure on conscripts and elicited various responses. Ultimately, however, reporting for NS contributed to the maintenance of the apartheid regime, the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa (as ruled by the 1967 United Nations General Assembly¹¹), and the destabilisation of South Africa's other neighbours. Jacklyn Cock's characterisation of apartheid South Africa emphasises the centrality of militarism, through the military institution, the ideology of militarism, and the social process of militarisation more so than the discourse-focused analyses.¹² This will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter. Before engaging with the social aspects of militarism, the role of the SADF in apartheid policy will be considered to establish the context of its coercive power in apartheid South Africa, followed by a brief outline of militarisation before engaging with specific sites of coercion.

⁹ Moriarty, *Finding the Words*, p.35.

¹⁰ D. Conway, 'Somewhere on the Border - of Credibility': The Cultural Construction and Contestation of 'the Border' in White South African Society' in Baines, G., and Vale, P. (eds.), *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on Southern Africa's Late-Cold War Conflicts*, Claremont, University of South Africa Press, 2008, p.81.

¹¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations General Assembly 7th Plenary Meeting, 20 September, 1986 accessed on 05/01/2015 at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/spec/aress14-1.htm>

¹² J. Cock, 'Introduction' in Cock, J., and Nathan, L., (eds.), *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*, David Philip Publisher, Cape Town, 1989, p.2.

The SADF and its Relationship with the NP and Apartheid Policy

SADF policy development was fundamentally linked to the NP's rise to power and South Africa's secession from the British Commonwealth after the 1960 public referendum. This section will argue that the SADF's involvement in politics and civil society made the SADF key to the perpetuation of apartheid. The restructuring of the armed forces in the 1950s and the SADF's consistent support of NP policy throughout NP rule of South Africa will also be discussed in support of this argument.

The SADF emerged from the transformation and modernisation of the Union Defence Force (UDF) after NP electoral victory in 1948. The new defence policy required the armed forces to develop their capacity to defend against external aggression and to specifically prevent potential unrest within the borders of South Africa.¹³ Part of the transformation and modernisation of the UDF was an overt rejection of culturally and structurally British military approaches, such as their defensive policy and unit organisation. In terms of institutional culture, defence structures were indigenised by adopting elements of the new dominant Afrikaner political culture. These included historical terminology, attitudes, and the military structures of the Boer republics, such as the Commandos.¹⁴ In addition to this dismantling of structures perceived of as British was what Ian van der Waag refers to as the 'Afrikanerisation' of the SADF, where personnel with imperial military identities were replaced by men with Dutch, Nationalist, or ideologically committed identities.¹⁵ In terms of policy, Rodney Warwick states that during this period of reorganisation, the SADF merely reflected the NP's social, racial, and foreign policies. As a result, the SADF was made "responsible for the protection of the white community as one national entity, protecting its privileges and security, and it therefore operated closely within government racial policy".¹⁶ Van der Waag and Warwick's understanding of the shifts occurring within the South African military reflects institutional culture as well, but the study remains vague on the topic of identity content and composition.

¹³ I. van der Waag, 'Military Culture and the South African Armed Forces: A historical Perspective' in F. Vreÿ, A. Esterhuyse, and T. Mandrup (eds.), *On Military Culture: Theory, Practice and African Armed Forces*, UCT Press, Claremont, 2014, p.184.

¹⁴ Van der Waag, 'Military Culture and the South African Armed Forces', p.190.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.190-191.

¹⁶ R. Warwick, *White South Africa and Defence 1960-1968: Militarization, Threat Perceptions and Counter Strategies*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2009, p.33.

The position of the SADF as an arm of apartheid is further supported by the integration of the SADF into political decision-making in the changing global and southern African regional contexts. This is especially true in the wake of the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal, which prompted an escalation of South Africa's military involvement in South-West Africa and Angola. The argument for increased involvement was premised predominantly on the *perceived* total onslaught against the political, diplomatic, economic, social, psychological, and security interests of white South Africa and its regional position. The Total Strategy response of comprehensive military, psychological, political, economic, and diplomatic strategy developed during the mid to late 1970s to counter threats in 'all spheres of life' – that is, white South African life.¹⁷ Leopold Scholz argues that the promotion of Hearts and Minds Total Strategy operations, which integrated both social and military facets, necessitated political and military cooperation to the point where separating the spheres became impractical.¹⁸ The scale of Total Strategy required greater reliance on national servicemen as a primary source of power for the defence of South Africa.¹⁹ Mark Swilling and Mark Philips found that, in the 1980s, the interchange between the military and political spheres was multidirectional, with the SADF contributing to the militarisation of white South African political society which, in turn, emphasised political reliance on military solutions with deeper civil support for those solutions. Swilling and Philips characterise this interchange as a political-business-security alliance that supported the NP's goals of maintaining the white minority status quo. This alliance increasingly transformed the security establishment (i.e. intelligence, police, and military) into institutional apparatuses through which the NP exerted political power.²⁰

Perceptions, whether of threats or the likely appeal of political ideologies, are critical to understanding the decision-making of members of society, as well as the identity constructions these decisions help build. The SADF, as an arm of the apartheid state, actively engaged in constructing perceptions of itself, and in supporting those perceptions that the NP wished to perpetuate. Warwick states that, starting in the late 1950s, the SADF became viewed fairly negatively as a "sheltered employment institution",²¹ which positions the SADF at least partly as a social institution from its inception. The SADF became an instrument of the ruling party, making it

¹⁷ L. Scholz, *The SADF in the Border War 1966-1989*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2013, p.10.

¹⁸ Scholz, *The SADF in the Border War 1966-1989*, p.39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

²⁰ M. Swilling and M. Phillips, 'State power in the 1980s: from 'total strategy' to 'counter revolutionary warfare' in J. Cock and L. Nathan (eds.), *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*, David Philip Publisher, Cape Town, 1989, pp.135-137.

²¹ Warwick, *White South Africa and Defence*, p.33.

part of the white nation-building project initiated by the NP.²² With the shift towards counter-revolutionary strategy in NP policies, the government placed demands on the SADF to understand civil society as a military sphere of operation. The regularity with which the SADF was deployed internally in service of national political stability during times of political unrest illustrates the crossover between the military and other security spheres. Warwick argues that the NP used displays of military prowess by the SADF, in the form of mock operations and military parades for entertainment, as both an attempt to rehabilitate the image of the SADF and to draw together the broader white South African community (Afrikaans and English).²³ The strength of the SADF's image as a capable military force was related symbolically to South Africa's republican future. Through the simultaneous production of public fear and anxiety (with the threat of African nationalism and communism, and its dissemination through mainstream media as examples) offset by the projection of military power, military institutions like the SADF were more positively insinuated into white South Africa.²⁴ The strong connection between the SADF and NP, and the survival of the regime, adds to the perception of the extensive politicisation of the armed forces, imbuing SADF cultures and behaviours with political meaning. To echo Scholz, viewing the armed forces and the political structure as separate becomes impractical in the context of defence strategy and the use of military power to achieve political goals.²⁵

The 1980s marked multiple shifts in defence strategy in South Africa, both internally and regionally. Counter-insurgency and the WHAM (Winning Hearts And Minds) approach became the focus of security policies as the NP increasingly failed to manage political or social challenges to its power, constituting, as Aletta Norval characterises it, a crisis to NP hegemony.²⁶ Reestablishment of what the NP called 'law and order' in township and urban conflict areas was achieved through the deployment of security forces and special forces groups rather than its reactionary political reforms or limited transformational policies.²⁷ During this time, the SADF under Minister of Defence Gen. Magnus Malan was deployed to maintain the security of the NP (in the guise of the government) through internal deployment and through involvement in programmes aimed at creating social conditions to reduce internal *political* resistance.²⁸ The SADF, alongside the South African Police (SAP), became viewed as an aggressive force within townships. They were perceived as having the

²² Warwick, *White South Africa and Defence*, p.34.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.51-52.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.54-55.

²⁵ L. Scholz, *The SADF in the Border War 1966-1989*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2013, p.39.

²⁶ Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, p.219.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.243.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.251.

sole purpose of addressing state security, and therefore as a direct enemy of the black people (not only black South Africans).²⁹ Thus, in addition to – or perhaps despite of – the position afforded the SADF as a result of NP politics and policy, the SADF had also lost the 'battle of perception,' to borrow Posel's terminology, by being seen as the repressive military arm of the NP. It is not surprising, then, that SADF soldiers became synonymous with apartheid repression more generally, or that the policy developed for the South African National Defence Force specifically included mechanisms for distancing itself and its personnel from the culture and behaviour of the SADF.³⁰ The changes in the NP's policy and shifts in its construction of the SADF from 1948 onward thus not only created an armed force that it could use for the party's, as opposed to the nation's, defence, but also laid the groundwork for a militarised white identity that would persist beyond the fall of apartheid.³¹

Militarisation and Apartheid South Africa

This section presents an overview of those elements of militarised apartheid South Africa that contributed to the formation and inculcation of a militarised identity. In other words, it seeks to establish what structures were involved in transforming white South Africa into a largely compliant source of military personnel that the NP government and SADF could draw upon during the 1980s. Jacklyn Cock's overview of the gradual militarisation of white South African society serves as a useful point of departure, as it provides a broad structure that helps to explore conscripts' perceptions of their immediate world, which will be fleshed out with a broader range of sources. Cock's structure focuses on analysing structures of coercion in the social, political and economic spheres. While this thesis focuses on the social sphere – those systems of socialisation, the formation of personal and cultural identities, and the social perceptions and behaviours engendered by these identities – all three spheres must be considered in order to understand the coercive power of militarised apartheid. On an economic level, the SADF was integrated into the private sector of the economy through its links to the privately-owned armaments industry and the state-owned enterprise of Armscor, and through extremely high defence expenditure, which supported the industries

²⁹ L. Nathan, 'Troops in the Townships, 1984-1987' in J. Cock and L. Nathan (eds.), *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*, David Philip Publisher, Cape Town, 1989, p.69.

³⁰ An example of this is the specific addition of a clause that *requires* SANDF soldiers to adopt the 'obligation to disobey manifestly illegal orders into its core relation to the Constitution' – see L. Nathan, 'Forging the Post-Apartheid Military Culture in South Africa' in F. Vreÿ, A. Esterhuysen, and T. Mandrup (eds.), *On Military Culture: Theory, Practice and African Armed Forces*, UCT Press, Claremont, 2014.

³¹ The lack of management of SADF personnel and veterans from the apartheid security establishment context during political transition is considered in Chapter 3.

necessary for the conflicts in which the SADF was involved.³² On the political level, military power served as a coercive instrument that was used to protect white minority rule against challenges by liberation movements, and to suppress both internal and external political and paramilitary resistance. Furthermore, direct and indirect military power was exerted through occupations (both short-lived military incursions into Angola and other neighbouring states and the longer-term occupation of Namibia), clandestine operations, and material and tactical support, which formed part of political policies of regional destabilisation. These factors illustrate the entanglement of the military and political spheres in apartheid South Africa.³³ The SADF was not only used as a political tool against the enemies of white minority rule, but was also central to state decision-making. As will be shown below, military personnel populated government institutions and social spheres.³⁴

In the social sphere, white South Africans exhibited a largely internalised support of militarisation and apartheid South Africa. This, Gary Baines argues, was partially achieved through the fostering of a closed socialisation environment. For example, Baines suggests that conscripts' investment in the idea of African nationalist and communist total onslaught in part results from this closed socialisation environment, which was maintained through segregation and state control over mainstream media (as the primary vehicle for state ideology).³⁵ The extensive militarisation of education, gender, and religion formed part of this closed socialisation environment, since alternatives could be limited in these spheres. Militarism was further entrenched in white South African society through a system of indoctrination, privilege, and the glorification of state-sanctioned violence in the form of military operations and materiel. The use of state violence was promoted as a legitimate response to political problems in the media through the glorification of the SAP and SADF, and the vilification of opponents.³⁶ Consumerism was also used to foster the spread of militarism through the promotion of war toys, games, films, and the constant displays of armed strength, which made militarisation part of everyday social life.³⁷ It permeated schooling, both public and private, through the *veldschool*, cadet, and Youth Preparedness programmes.³⁸ The creation of a set of values supporting militarisation was further reinforced by the privileging of soldiers in white

³² Cock, 'Introduction', p.5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.8.

³⁵ G. Baines, 'Fictive Kinship: The National Service Generation and Veteran Networks' in Baines, G., *South Africa's 'Border War': Contested Narratives and Conflicting Memories*, Bloomsbury, London, New York, 2014, p.176.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.11.

society, which glamourised and protected them against litigation.³⁹ Coercive and supportive structural elements alone do not fully account for an individual's decision to submit to or resist conscription. The closed socialisation environment and potential structural sources for white South Africa's broadly internalised support of apartheid requires further examination, starting with the militarisation of education.

Militarisation and Schooling

White education in South Africa during apartheid played a formative role in instilling the values of militarism and in creating a militarised environment by reinforcing the underlying myths of apartheid. Gavin Evans writes that white schooling not only fulfilled the role of preparing white youth for the rigour of military life, but also created an ethos that taught white youth to accept military goals "without challenge".⁴⁰ In other words, it taught them not merely to accept military goals and the use of violence as a reasonable response to political challenge or threat, but also to "accept the military's objectives as their own".⁴¹ Militarisation formed part of the curriculum itself, with subjects such as history being infused with strong threads of nationalism and justification for conflicts. Furthermore, scholars were specifically prepared for national service and the military was included as part of career planning for boys (e.g. enlisting in the permanent force).⁴² The process of education was exploited on two levels: in school and through extra-curricular activities closely tied to school. Evans argues that the purpose of school cadet, veldschool, and Youth Preparedness programmes was to influence the consciousness of white pupils in order to create acceptance of the 'national priorities' of the militarised South African state.⁴³ Programmes included practical courses such as shooting, drill, saluting, the use of radios, and intelligence training.⁴⁴ The practical, decontextualised elements of the programmes were placed early in the syllabus, to teach youth practical skills that were not obviously associated with their intended future uses. Musketry, rifle-range procedure, and band training – staples in cadets, veldschool, and Youth Preparedness programmes – were presented as sports, and performance in those activities was emphasised

³⁹ Baines, 'Fictive Kinship', p.12.

⁴⁰ G. Evans, 'Classrooms of war: The militarisation of white South African schooling' in Cock, J., and Nathan, L., (eds.), *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*, David Philip Publisher, Cape Town, 1989, p.284.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.284.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.291.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.283.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.286.

through inter-school and regional competitions.⁴⁵ The effect of this was to normalise militarism in social, everyday spheres.

Further into the programme, the curriculum included creating an awareness of the ideological and strategic aims of the 'enemy' alongside continued training in practical skills to highlight the 'real' and 'immediate' threats posed to 'peaceful co-existence and prosperity' in South Africa. Emphasis fell on how those practical skills could protect white South Africa from those threats.⁴⁶ Finally, from grade 10 onwards,⁴⁷ the programmes focused on the SADF itself and included training and information concerning the necessity and meaning of National Service (NS), which served to further entrench ideas of protection, responsibility, enemies, and 'threat'.⁴⁸ This is also when the relationship between National Service and 'manhood' was emphasised,⁴⁹ a relationship that will be explored in a later section dealing with the instances found in the interview transcripts. The desire to convert the citizen into a soldier is clear in the gradual increase in the intensity of militarisation in the schooling context, from ideological curricular content and career development to the practical preparation for military service through extracurricular programmes. In other words, the national school system was unquestionably used in the production of military personnel, not only to prepare youths for NS, but also to establish the security sector as an attractive option for professional careers reinforced with concepts of citizenship, masculinity, social responsibility, and defending the nation against perceived threat.

Although there was a high degree of variation of militarisation in schooling, and its impact upon students cannot be definitively determined, there is evidence to suggest that it did impact students. As example, Evans cites a state of increased levels of fear, wariness, and racism among students related to the levels of militarisation present.⁵⁰ Teachers also played a role in these programmes by teaching their subject syllabuses in such a way as to reinforce nationalist and white supremacist ideology. Two-week periods of compulsory civic duty, patriotism, and 'moral preparedness' classes were taught at schools in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape provinces.⁵¹ Male teachers in particular actively participated in cadet programmes due to the benefits they provided, including

⁴⁵ Evans, 'Classrooms of War', p.286.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.286.

⁴⁷ Due to changes in the school system this would correspond to the apartheid-era Standard 8 (10th school year), now referred to as Grade 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.287.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.287.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.291.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.288.

exemption from SADF camps subsequent to fulfilment of national service.⁵² Male teachers were further integrated into Youth Preparedness civil defence initiatives in the training and organisation of civil-military alert systems, which involved training for, and participation in, the building of bomb shelters and conducting bomb-scare and terrorist attack drills at white schools.⁵³ Therefore, some teachers who were in positions of leadership, and who acted as role models, embodied the militaristic ideals and furthered the ideologies that established national service and militarism as a norm for white South Africans from a very young age. Parallel to these pressures was the construction of gender and its relationship to national service, as well as its impact upon the militarisation of schooling in white South Africa.

Gender Constructs in Service of Militarism

Gender, in respect of the constructions of masculinities and femininities, was central to the maintenance of the myths of apartheid and the space known as the 'border'. The roles associated with gender constructs and related gender roles contributed to young white men's compliance with national service. Conscription and the militarised values associated with National Service became a 'rite of passage' for white South African men: it was considered to be a requirement for identification as a 'man', and granted access to the full range of privileges afforded to white men by apartheid. This is evident in, for example, the requirement of completing NS before being able to access financial support and employment opportunities, as well as the social status conferred by becoming a 'man' once NS is complete. National service was also constructed as a marker of masculinity through the creation of the *troepie* and *grensvegter* symbols, which embodied "the ultimate performance of military hegemonic masculinity".⁵⁴ Through these symbols and its status as a 'rite of passage', the experience of conscription legitimated 'manhood' in white South African society. In addition to the mainstream (i.e. state-controlled) media vector, where the *troepie* and *grensvegter* symbols dominated the representation of ideal men/soldiers, women were also encouraged by state-controlled associations and media to manipulate men into military service in two primary ways. Firstly, through their (women's) reinforcement of the link between masculinity and militarism, and secondly, by establishing a gendered power hierarchy through what Jacklyn Cock

⁵² Evans, 'Classrooms of War', p.288.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.289.

⁵⁴ Conway, 'Somewhere on the Border', p.78. *Troepie* (troop) refers to the soldier in the army fulfilling his NS obligations. *Grensvegter* (border warrior) is the soldier who served in combat in the border operational zones and is placed above the mere *troepie* in the hierarchy. Both formed part of the constructions of masculinity which assumed military service.

refers to as 'indirect recruitment'.⁵⁵ These aspects will be discussed in more detail in this section, but here they serve to illustrate how conscription created a direct intersection between the personal, economic, social, and political spheres for the individual involved. Indirect recruitment suggests that women in the conscripts' families and social circles potentially exerted pressure on the conscript, on top of the societal pressures exerted through the mainstream media and schooling. These intersections illustrate the depth of militarisation in white South African society, in that *gender itself* had become militarised.

To understand this militarisation of gender, research concerning the construction of white South African masculinity and femininity in the context of a militarised state and society must be examined. However, it must first be noted that while I am discussing trends, caution should be exercised in reading trends as generalisations. The constructions of masculinities are too subjective and dependent on complex, case-specific factors ranging from the immediate social to the structural or, in other words, the degree of force exerted by membership of organisations and institutions, especially state institutions. These subjective experiences complicate the study of how the constructions of masculinities impacted individuals faced with conscription, but the myths of apartheid and apartheid constructions of masculinities establish a particularly strong relationship between militarisation, specifically, and perceptions of genders and masculinities.

Daniel Conway argues that apartheid militarism centred on gender norms and associated constructions of masculinity and femininity.⁵⁶ Since conscription required white men to be willing to submit to national service, the process of conscription involved both the militarisation of the society in which they were socialised and the militarisation of gender identities (which does result in Conway's argument being qualified by the inclusion of socialisation and other forms and uses of gender identity). The gendering of national service as an essential 'duty' of each white *man* was achieved in part by endowing the experience with a transformative power (the rite of passage), and this transformation included both white men and white women. Military service was not merely a duty to be performed, but a duty only able to be performed by *men*: it was the crucible that would transform the white male from an inexperienced adolescent into a 'man'.⁵⁷ As outlined above, the combined militarised aspects of schooling (the veldschool, cadet, and Youth Preparedness

⁵⁵ J. Cock, 'Manpower and militarisation: women and the SADF' in Cock, J., and Nathan, L. (eds.), *War and Society: The militarisation of South Africa*, David Philip Publishers, Cape Town, 1989, p.55.

⁵⁶ Conway, 'Somewhere on the Border - of Credibility', p.75.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.77.

programmes) and the popular imagery in media constructions of conscripts constituted the groundwork for the rite of passage provided by NS. Together, the militarised aspects of schooling and the media representation of the border reinforced militarised masculine ideals, exerting coercive pressure on young men that extended from the school environment into the military environment.

Non-conformity or resistance to militarised masculinities was not without consequence in either context. Non-conforming male students were stigmatised and ostracised by peers. The association between performing militarised masculinity that started in school would continue during NS with the gendering of performance. For example, recruits were labelled as “faggots, homos, or *moffies*” [sic] if they did not meet required standards or if they did not embody expected masculine behaviours (such as competitiveness, aggression, dominance, and so forth).⁵⁸ Theresa Edlmann goes further to state that conscription created an environment that conflated masculinity and race. White South African men were conscripted by virtue of their being white and male, a situation that both privileged them within the apartheid system while simultaneously discriminating against them through exposing them to the disruptions, dangers, and traumas of national service.⁵⁹ This statement positing conscription as a form of discrimination holds technically true, but sits ill at ease when considering the aforementioned privileges that fulfilling national service afforded young white South African men, materially as well as socially. However, the links created between race, masculinity, and social and political constructions did contribute to compliance with conscription and NS by making nonconformity extremely challenging, leading to more extreme abuse and even ostracisation.⁶⁰

The gendered nature of militarised white South African culture is also evident in the separation of genders through constructions of dichotomous masculinities and femininities. These constructions assigned rigid roles and expectations to gender groups, which established and sustained a gendered power hierarchy dependent on men’s execution of masculine ideals. Heterosexual 'men' inhabited a position of power over women as their protectors and defenders in a system that excluded women

⁵⁸ J. Cock, *Women, the Military and Militarisation: Some questions raised by the South African Case*, Paper presented at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Seminar No.7, 24 September 1992 accessed at <http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php/publications/1571-women-the-military-and-militarisation-some-questions-raised-by-the-south-african-case.html> on 27/08/2015.

⁵⁹ T. Edlmann, 'Division in the (Inner) Ranks: The Psychosocial Legacies of the Border Wars', *South African Historical Journal*, Vol.64, No.2, June 2012, p.260.

⁶⁰ Edlmann, 'Division in the (Inner) Ranks', pp.260-261.

from the roles that constituted the ultimate performance of militarised masculine identity. As Edlmann argues, the construction of masculinity therefore perpetuated and safeguarded gendered power.⁶¹ However, the separation of gender roles within the militarised white South African culture did not exclude women from contributing to militarisation or militarism; it merely excluded them from the roles that empowered masculinity. Instead, women were deployed within military structures to fulfil direct support roles, further passively supporting the militarised masculinity and the centrality of masculine power. Cock lists these roles as including nursing, intelligence work, and cartography, in addition to the indirect ideological and material support of conscripts from within the SADF and externally through support groups.⁶² Women were also integrated into commando units in rural areas, where they received training in the use of weapons and as communications support. However, despite their inclusion in military structures, albeit more informal structures in the case of commandos or in roles that were not involved in direct combat, women were predominantly positioned as the 'protected and defended'.⁶³

That is not to say that the SADF disregarded the power of the indirect ideological support provided by women. In fact, as Cock argues, the SADF exploited their presence and activity as a 'resource' to boost and maintain the men's morale. Women were further used as a source of pressure that could influence men to submit to conscription and fulfil their masculine duty.⁶⁴ Moreover, women were *directly* 'deployed' to support men. They served as partners for conscripts, with visits from girls and their mothers to units, and the SADF established programmes aimed at reaching the woman "and try[ing] through her to work on the man".⁶⁵ Outside of the immediate military training context, other programmes such as the Ride Safe initiative and the *Forces Favourites* broadcasts encouraged positive gendered support of conscription and militarisation. This shows that the SADF's attempts to create coercive social pressure on young white South African men used constructions of masculinity and femininity through both formal and informal structures. Schooling and media both carried the state-sponsored militarism and its constructions of gender, which would prepare young men for national service by providing skill-training and social and psychological motivation and support.

⁶¹ T. Edlmann, *Negotiating Historical Continuities in Contested Terrain: A narrative-based reflection on the post-apartheid psychological legacies of conscription into the South African Defence Force*, Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2014, pp.85-86.

⁶² Cock, 'Women and the SADF', p.51.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.54-55.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.55.

The importance attached to the role of women by the SADF, especially the wives of permanent force members, is illustrated by one such programme - the Defence Force Ladies Association (DFLA). DFLA training emphasised the ideological legitimation and emotional support that women had the 'responsibility' of providing.⁶⁶ Women were expected to have knowledge of communism and the threat it posed, to practice meticulous grooming (the DFLA is not clear on what this entails), to maintain an optimistic attitude, to practice expected behaviours embodying ideal national values, to be domestically competent, to correspond with the men regularly, to be able to operate independently while husbands were deployed, and to be supportive of 'their men' at all times.⁶⁷ DFLA women were expected to be role models, providing legitimation and support for men inside the military, and to be examples for other women to follow. Consequently, the DFLA established an ideal of femininity in the militarised apartheid context. The SADF DFLA's terminology here is noteworthy: 'responsibility' not only emphasises the importance of the roles women were expected to fulfil, but also implies a negative state of the *failure* when those roles are not fulfilled, especially with respect to those 'responsibilities' outlined above.

The fact that the DFLA encouraged women to fulfil roles not characterised as traditionally feminine illustrates that the most important role attributed to women was to provide men with another source of ideological legitimation and emotional support. The DFLA also served to minimise any interference that wives may cause in men's military roles. In other words, the main objective was to make women support militarisation. Sasha Gear presents an example of how this worked when she argues that SADF military discourse equated invulnerability with masculinity, contributing to the stigmatisation of psychological stress or discomfort in both national and domestic contexts. The national stigmatisation could influence social relationships, as women were also inculcated in militarised perceptions of masculinity.⁶⁸ The SADF's overt interest in, and careful construction of, gender roles manufactured a rigorous system of identity checks that became so entrenched as to be self-regulating. Some women may have acted as a line of defence against 'deviant' behaviours through their support of militarism, which served to validate the performance of militarism (through military service) or quell doubts among both men and women. On the other hand, some men may have checked their own behaviour to better fit expectations of masculinity to gain the social, economic and political benefits provided by its construction. The research included here does not fully address this question of the self-regulatory consequences of such extensive support structures

⁶⁶ Cock, 'Women and the SADF', p.56

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.56-57.

⁶⁸ S. Gear, 'Wishing Us Away: Challenges facing ex-combatants in the 'new' South Africa', *Violence and Transition Series*, Vol.8, 2002, p.105.

surrounding the militarisation of genders within society. However, it is clear that these structures were reinforced through media and the exploitation of rigidly constructed gender roles to supply the SADF with the necessary manpower, through both direct and indirect recruitment.

Michael Drewett suggests that the NP constructed gender roles directed at preserving the apartheid system, which were then disseminated through state-owned mainstream media and adopted into popular culture.⁶⁹ As illustrated above, the gender role constructions perpetuated in white South Africa were based on a gender dichotomy that directly supported militarisation. On the one hand, it attributed specific, useful (to state discourse) stereotypes to men, including aggression and the man's role as protector of women, that constituted an 'ideal masculine male' in white South African society.⁷⁰ On the other hand, women were relegated to more 'genteel' roles that required support of, and admiration for, the ideal male.⁷¹ Dylan Craig's research illustrates the depth of the integration of militarism and the normalisation of military service in entertainment media. He argues that apartheid political and ideological concerns were emphasised through combinations of gender and race constructs (among others) in the border war film genre to further 'state-invoked ideological manipulation'.⁷² This ideal of militarised masculinity provided by the SADF was largely accepted and willingly embraced by white South Africans, to the extent that conscription was regarded by some as a 'service' offered to white men in order to reach the ideal masculinity. Acceptance, characterisation as a 'service' to society (albeit a small subset of South African society), and the fetishisation of the constructed male gender identity, together became intrinsic to white South African male identity.⁷³ Drewett bases these observations on Cock and Conway's analyses of gender, but extends his analysis into the popular culture manifestations of the gendered nature of white South African society, which endorsed related positions of militarism and conscription as a gateway to achieving gender expectations and role fulfilment. The analysis provided here explains how gender was used by the NP state in an attempt to convince the white South African public to support its internal and regional policies in order to perpetuate the apartheid state. Just as schooling was used as a structure of militarism and coercion, so gender was directly employed to construct identity positions that helped maintain the state's power.

⁶⁹ M. Drewett, 'The Construction and Subversion of Gender Stereotypes in Popular Culture Representations of the Border War' in Baines, G., and Vale, P. (eds.), *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on Southern Africa's Late-Cold War Conflicts*, Claremont, University of South Africa Press, 2008, p.94.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁷² D. Craig, 'Screening the Border War, 1971-88', *Kleio*, Vol.36, No.1, 2004, p.43.

⁷³ Drewett, 'Construction and Subversion', p.96.

The Church and the Militarised State

The NP state also attempted to exploit the sphere of religion to perpetuate apartheid-supporting ideologies. As listed above, the closed socialisation environment also includes religion as a factor in fostering the mindsets of white South Africans, as it made them more amenable to the idea of conscription and militarism. Religion, however, presents a more complex issue than considerations of schooling, gender or media. Christian churches cannot be characterised purely as conduits for apartheid ideology, as they did provide communities and individuals with spiritual guidance as well as moral and ethical leadership that mixed apartheid ideology *with* Christian doctrine. The associations between Christian churches, both English and Afrikaans, are also complex, and little research considering these relationships in the apartheid context exists. Nonetheless, existing research does strongly suggest that organised religion did play a role in maintaining Afrikaner Christian nationalism, and the militarism it depended on for survival. It is safe to say that a clear relationship existed between Christian churches and the apartheid state. The clearest of these relationships was formed with the Dutch Reformed Churches (the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk*, and *Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* - Dutch Reformed Churches henceforth). The Dutch Reformed Churches overtly positioned themselves as servants to the Afrikaner Christian nationalist state with its withdrawal from the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1960 as a result of the criticism of institutionalised racism contained in the Cottesloe Resolutions.⁷⁴ Kenneth Carstens criticised South African churches (both Afrikaans and English language churches) for their behaviour, which he characterised as more political than other 'nonpolitical' organisations, in supporting apartheid public policy and perpetuating the prevailing status quo within congregations.⁷⁵ Jennifer Nelson's analysis further argues that churches, in particular the Dutch Reformed Churches, became fully committed to apartheid, to the point of labelling them 'impediments to political reform' well into the 1990s.⁷⁶

The involvement of churches in apartheid further supports this chapter's argument that state of militarisation in South Africa during apartheid was pervasive. The Dutch Reformed Churches'

⁷⁴ The withdrawal also illustrates how the state used media to represent events to its benefit, with Afrikaans publications criticising the Resolutions instructing pastors to 'keep out of politics' whereas English newspapers indicated general support for the Resolutions.

⁷⁵ K.N. Carstens, 'The Churches in South Africa' in Robertson, I., and Whitten, P. (eds.), *Race and Politics in South Africa*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, NJ., 1978, p.89.

⁷⁶ J. Nelson, 'The Role the Dutch Reformed Church Played in the Rise and Fall of Apartheid', *Journal of Hate Studies*, Vol.2, No.1, 2003, pp.67-68.

expression of institutional support of apartheid extended into their own Sunday school systems. Furthermore, they were heavily involved in Christian National Education, producing material "[telling] young people that the Bible required absolute loyalty to their country and its leaders and that compulsory military service was a privilege for all white male civilians".⁷⁷ While some church leaders resisted apartheid, the institutional weight of white Christian churches' support rested decidedly with the apartheid state and its policies of racism and militarism. The failure of churches to resist the evident injustices of apartheid cannot be addressed within the scope of this thesis, but the role of organised religion in mass coercion is clear, despite the dearth of research in this area. The church's close involvement supports this chapter's analysis of apartheid militarisation as permeating all spheres of white South African society, from basic education through to the most intimate of domestic spheres. As Cock argues, and this chapter shows, SADF training merely reinforced existing ideologies that were carefully constructed and disseminated before NS took place.⁷⁸ This indicates that militarism in South Africa did not flow from the armed forces to general society, but that apartheid armed forces were *extensions* of existing societal militarism fostered through the social, political and economic spheres to support the apartheid state. This critical point necessitates that SADF veteran experiences be analysed within the understanding of broader white apartheid social contexts if we are to understand how they (re)constructed facets of their identities, such as gender, race and so forth, in post-apartheid South Africa.

Conclusion

This chapter sets out some of the major structures of coercion in the apartheid context that provided the SADF with the manpower to sustain its regional and internal conflicts in the defence of the Calvinist Christian Culturalist Racist Afrikaner state. In this relationship, the SADF did not merely take direction from politicians, but became directly involved in suppressing opposition (social and political) to the apartheid project. The foundational myths and supporting rhetoric disseminated through state-controlled mainstream media promoted militaristic responses to political challenges and constructed threats. The insidious nature of preparatory elements in schooling, both in national curriculums and organised religious educational contexts, prepared conscripts well before registration and actual call-up, meaning the opportunity for alternatives to military service was severely limited. Even in supposedly apolitical spheres, such as religion, the organisations either fully

⁷⁷ Nelson, 'The Role the Dutch Reformed Church Played', p.70.

⁷⁸ Cock, 'Women and the SADF', p.55.

– as is the case of the Dutch Reformed Churches – or tacitly supported the socio-political status quo of unjust racial segregation and oppression. Constructions of gender, and the manner in which these constructions formed part of concepts of citizenship, duty, religion, and militarism, illustrate the levels of integration of these spheres. Despite delineating discrete sites of coercion within this chapter, it is the position of this thesis that the levels of integration *between* these spheres represent the only 'total onslaught' experienced by white South Africa during apartheid. Schools were, to varying degrees, used to provide preliminary military training and political ideological training alongside formal education. Churches provided support and encouragement beyond the spiritual, and proclaimed a duty to submit to the political leadership of the country and fulfil military responsibilities, while providing apartheid and its militarisation with legitimacy. The overlap and integrated nature of the spheres strengthen the characterisation of the closed socialisation environment and the later (in terms of the white South African male's life) communal white male conscript serviceman identity.⁷⁹ It is this context that produced SADF soldiers and their concomitant identities, and it is in this context that these identities morphed in relation to the militarised social context that sustained apartheid's regional and internal conflicts.

⁷⁹ See G.Baines, *South Africa's 'Border War': Contested Narratives and Conflicting Memories*.

Chapter 3: State Management of SADF Veterans in Post-Apartheid South

Africa

This chapter is concerned with the official state treatment of veterans and ex-combatants since political transition, with a focus on the implications of veteran management for SADF veterans and the range of meanings attributed to the treatment experienced. Considering the extensive apartheid militarisation of politics and civil society, the transitional period will be approached by analysing South Africa's post-apartheid attempts at demilitarisation, which will be measured against international models for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). To this end, the chapter will outline the SADF's institutional culture in relation to apartheid, which aids in establishing the context of South African attempts at demilitarisation. Furthermore, it will explore the treatment of SADF personnel by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); the issues of moral ambiguity raised by the TRC's findings and the author's position on the relationships between SADF veterans and questions of blame and responsibility for apartheid to address the immediate transitional context which veterans had to negotiate. The more recent ratification of the Military Veterans Act and subsequent establishment of the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) constitute the official post-transitional state veteran management context, and will be explored by examining the Act, its execution and its viability as an attempt at DDR. The tension between the policy ideals and the practical realisation of policy complicates contemporary veteran management, and this complication requires some consideration if modern veteran identities are to be fully contextualised for analysis in Chapter 4. The political contestation emanating from the definition of veteran groups by the DMV will be examined, as this links the analysis of veteran management to considerations of militarised identities in Chapter 4.

SADF Institutional Culture

The relationship between the SADF and politics in apartheid South Africa has been discussed in Chapter 2, but the values and behaviours of the SADF itself, as a political, civil, or military institution, requires further exploration. Before a discussion of the theoretical dimensions of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR), some sense of SADF institutional culture needs to be established to relate the World Bank (WB) and United Nations (UN) DDR models. However, this task is challenging, given the policies of secrecy maintained by the SADF regarding its structures and the

various secrecy acts that bound its personnel. Furthermore, specific investigations of SADF institutional culture are scarce. Therefore, this section will reference considerations of the technical aspects of SADF military cultures drawn from its strategic and tactical policy alongside officer attitudes in relation to race, gender, language, and privilege.

Abel Esterhuysen provides a start with what he identifies as the most important factors shaping South African military culture, from the SADF to the SANDF. He prefaces his discussion of the technical aspects of SADF cultural considerations with the claim that military institutions are “products of their time ... influenced by identity politics, the political structure *within which they had to function*, the underlying political outlooks of the reigning political elite and the prevailing views on military professionalism”.¹ While Esterhuysen’s position does not take into account that the SADF had itself become a key political and civil institution and arm of apartheid that was actively involved in shaping the civil policies of the NP, he does present a working definition of military culture. As defined by Esterhuysen, military culture comprises “values, customs, traditions and their underpinnings that, over time, have created a shared institutional ethos [providing] a common framework for those in uniform and common expectations regarding standards of behaviour, discipline, teamwork, loyalty, selfless duty, and the customs that support those elements”, making military culture a reflection of the society that the military serves.² According to Esterhuysen and as discussed in Chapter 2, the foundation of SADF institutional culture was the Afrikanerisation of the SADF, which compromised its political neutrality. However, culturally and despite the Afrikanerisation, the SADF still drew from both British military regimentalism and Afrikaner frontierism in the organisation of its units.³

South Africa's defence policy and doctrine reflected the increasingly exaggerated threats of the *swart* and *rooi gevaar* in the context of decolonisation and independence movements across the continent. This resulted in an intensification of militarism and an increased sense of isolation, hostility, and fear that eventually shaped the SADF's institutional culture.⁴ With its importance established and bolstered during Botha’s terms in office, the SADF’s institutional culture was also marked by increased meritocracy (as a result of making the SADF part of the white nation-building

¹ A. Esterhuysen, ‘Comparing Apples with Pears: The Pre-1994 and Post-1994 South African Military Cultures’ *Journal for Contemporary History*, Vol.37, No.2, December 2012, p.224. My emphasis.

² Esterhuysen, ‘Comparing Apples with Pears’, p.225. This broad definition of institutional culture is largely mirrored by subsequent authors in this section.

³ *Ibid.*, p.227.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.226-227.

structure) and the growth of a relatively professional officer corps.⁵ With the appointment of Magnus Malan as Minister of Defence in 1980, the SADF became an even stronger political entity that acted as an extension of the apartheid government, while simultaneously moving away from civilian oversight, conducting operations outside of public and parliamentary approval.⁶ The purpose of this outline is not to repeat the overview presented of the SADF in Chapter 2 but to draw out the *values* of the SADF as an institution. While Esterhuysen does not directly address the aspects of institutional culture the SADF embodied, some elements from SADF doctrine and its orientation (or self-perception) as a 'Western' military force shed light on its resultant institutional culture.

According to Esterhuysen, the SADF's counterinsurgency doctrine tactically included a sense of 'aggressive offensiveness', characterised by counter-insurgency and Total Strategy, and a 'caring defensiveness', which was expressed through WHAM.⁷ Under this doctrine, the SADF's orientation was directed towards tactical and operational considerations. Combined with its self-perception as a Western force that focused on superior training, discipline, technology, financing for war, and functional autonomy, the SADF sought to create a force dedicated to the "total defeat, destruction and annihilation of the enemy".⁸ Esterhuysen lists the aspects of threat, the fear cultivated in white society and the SADF's self-perception as a Western military force as the "ingredients of the defining essence of the SADF's cultural ethos, which defined its basic values and behaviour".⁹ These values and behaviours are not explicitly outlined, but some elements can be inferred from this overview. From an operational standpoint, it appears that the SADF valued technical proficiency and professionalism, which should thus have defined the ideal SADF personnel. Combined with the political nature of the SADF as an institution and the militarisation of civil society, Esterhuysen argues that the SADF had an "ingrained sense of political loyalty to the state".¹⁰ Whether Esterhuysen's structural claim implies that SADF personnel individually had an ingrained sense of political loyalty is not clear, but Baines argues for a strong sense of institutional loyalty among SADF veterans evinced by the SADF's hierarchy and leadership.¹¹ This institutional loyalty, then, was another value that the SADF sought to inculcate in its members. However, despite the SADF's political loyalty to the state,

⁵ Esterhuysen, 'Comparing Apples and Pears', pp.226-227.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.228.

⁷ WHAM referring to the 'Winning Hearts and Minds' civil outreach programmes initiated by the SADF in its occupied territories

⁸ Esterhuysen, 'Comparing Apples and Pears', pp.229-230.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.230.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.230.

¹¹ See Baines, 'SADF soldiers' silences: institutional, consensual and strategic', *Acta Academica*, Vol.47, No.1, 2015.

Esterhuysen also states that the technical subordination of the military to civil political authority created a culture that “barred SADF soldiers from any partisan political activity”.¹² This indicates an institutional culture that, despite its own undeniable political bias, actively stripped its members of political agency.

The question of the divide between what constitutes military personnel and politicians is raised in Rocky Williams’ overview of the SANDF’s creation. He outlines a shift that occurred during the transformational period of the SANDF during the late 1990s that saw then-commander of the SANDF, Gen. George Meiring, and a host of what he terms ‘old guard’ officers resign or retire. Williams argues that the resignation of the old guard resulted in the rise to prominence of a constitutionally-minded officer corps comprised of both ex-SADF and umKhonto we Sizwe (MK) members that not only supported the democratic transition, but also the transformation of the defence sector in terms of organisation efficiency, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and a reoriented defence policy.¹³ What this shift also affected was the reorientation of the SANDF towards defensive policy and strategy, as opposed to the ‘aggressive offensiveness’ that marked the SADF’s institutional culture.¹⁴ This suggests that the ideals of transformation had been hampered by those old-guard officers who, having only resigned towards the end of the 1990s, were active for a period after the intended start of the SADF’s transformation. This ‘old guard’, with their ties to the Botha cabinet, had remained entrenched in the political, strategic (referring to the counter-insurgency and Total Strategy), and cultural mindsets that positioned military institutions as partners to the NP.¹⁵ The extent to which the remaining SADF personnel hampered the transformational goals of the SANDF is not addressed by Williams. However, there is a lack of information as to the effectivity of attempts at transformation in terms of the written policy and the structural reorganisation of the SANDF. Available studies concerning the SANDF focus on demographic representation in the SANDF since the integration of statutory and non-statutory forces rather than elements of institutional culture, such as attitudes and behaviour.

Concluding this overview of SADF institutional culture is Noel Scott’s characterisation of the SADF as a force oriented towards exacting systemic violence in civil society at the behest of the NP. Scott

¹² Esterhuysen, ‘Comparing Apples and Pears’, p.228.

¹³ R. Williams, ‘Integration or Absorption? The creation of the South African National Defence Force, 1993 to 1999’, *African Security Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, 2002, p.23.

¹⁴ Williams, ‘Integration or Absorption?’, p.24.

¹⁵ Williams’ outline of the events leading to Gen. Meiring’s resignation strongly suggests the military leaders’ assumption of having authority within political structures. See Williams, ‘Integration or Absorption?’, pp.22-24.

focuses on the leadership and management levels of the SADF and identifies a violent and brutal institutional culture.¹⁶ This characterisation reflects the culture of impunity¹⁷ attached to the behaviour of SADF personnel which, in turn, illustrates how higher-level institutional behaviours filtered down to the operational and individual levels of conduct. The effect of higher-level institutional culture on rank-and-file personnel is not directly addressed in the literature included thus far, but there are studies and questionnaires addressing the transformational challenges to the SANDF that indicate some cultural trends. Lindy Heineken conducted a questionnaire-based study of SANDF officers' attitudes towards integration and other challenges (race, language, gender) to transformation in 1996. While Heineken proposed to identify challenges to transformation in the forms of integration and representivity, the questionnaire specifically focused on questions surrounding integration, which falls outside the scope of this thesis. However, Heineken's study did reveal a statistical trend that suggests white officers remained prejudiced against integrating statutory forces in terms of cooperation, affirmative action, and competency.¹⁸ In terms of gender, white officers were also most opposed to women serving in combat roles. Sinval Kahn and Valery Louw characterised this trend as a persisting hegemonic male culture that restricted the progress of women and minorities in the SADF.¹⁹ Similarly, suggestions to adopt English as the operational language of the SANDF resulted in an 'uproar', mainly from Afrikaans speakers who expressed frustration at the perceived "lack of respect" for their language in the SANDF, despite Afrikaans remaining the dominant language in the SANDF at the time.²⁰ This certainly reflects the perceptions of race (in terms of competence), gendered militarism, and language politics (in terms of perceptions of threat and marginalisation) that have been outlined in Chapter 2, but does not clarify whether these were issues attributable to the legacy of SADF institutional culture specifically or white South African culture more generally.

¹⁶ N. Scott, 'From the SADF to the SANDF: Safeguarding South Africa for a better life for all?', *Violence and Transition Series*, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Vol.7, 2002, p.2.

¹⁷ This phrase here draws on Edlmann's approach to impunity, defined as "a personal and group-based assumption of the power to act in one's own interests without regard for the consequences – or for the perspectives and needs of other people and groups who might have different views", see T. Edlmann, *Negotiating Historical Continuities in Contested Terrain: A narrative-based reflection on the post-apartheid psychological legacies of conscription into the South African Defence Force*, Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2014, p.28.

¹⁸ L. Heineken, 'The Challenges of Transformation: SANDF Officers' Attitudes Towards Integration, Affirmative Action, Women in Combat and Language Usage', *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, Vol.28, No.2, 1998, pp.223-226.

¹⁹ Heineken, 'SANDF Officers' Attitudes', pp.227-228 and S.B. Kahn and V.N. Louw, 'A leadership approach to the transformation of institutional culture: A case of the South African National Defence Force', *Administratio Publica*, Vol.21, No.4, December 2013.

²⁰ Heineken, 'SANDF Officers' Attitudes', pp.229-230.

The extent to which institutional culture and the militarisation of white South African society impacted individuals remains vague. This is an area where the interview transcript analysis can contribute to the understanding of how SADF institutional culture impacted personnel, as the interviewees' own characterisations of their time within the SADF shed light on perceptions of culture and identity. However, the constructions and positionings of SADF veterans has not remained static since the political transition and the veteran management context needs to be considered to account for these shifts. Since South Africa had no formalised programmes to address and dismantle the consequences of apartheid militarism on white South African men, I will refer to literature on demilitarisation, specifically Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, to address this specific shortcoming. However, that is not to say that the defence sector itself did not undergo extensive transformation during South Africa's political transition. Security sector reform addressed some elements of the position of the military internally (in terms of society, politics, and economics) and regionally (the posture of the South African military and its involvement in the region). For example, such issues as downsizing the security sector and demographic representation were addressed, in addition to the provision of alternatives for military personnel, which ranged from the provision of voluntary severance packages to PF members, offers of civilian skill training through the Service Corps, and the reorientation of the SANDF as a defensive rather than aggressive military, among others. However, the limits of transformation in the SANDF is evident in the demographic data contained in the literature above. Security sector reform and its political dimensions fall outside the scope of this thesis.

Demilitarisation, DDR, and SADF Veterans

Through their involvement in post-conflict countries, both the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations (UN) have developed models for managing the transition of societies from militarised or conflict contexts towards free-market economically integrated civil societies that address the abovementioned shortcomings of attempts at demilitarisation after apartheid. Models for managing transition are typified by their economic content, a concern that does not particularly apply to SADF veterans, but bears mention. To this end, perceptions and constructions of SADF veterans in relation to how they could foster or hamper integration as a result of their symbolic power in terms of demilitarisation and national reorientation deserves consideration. WB models tend to focus on social issues related to labour and economic integration. UN models expanded on WB models by attempting to address social concerns alongside political and ethnic dimensions of post-conflict

contexts. WB models, while developed with African conflicts in mind and within the Cold War context,²¹ did not include South Africa in particular and the local context provides some considerations not accounted for. For instance, although the transition in South Africa was not achieved through military victory or violent force, this did not prevent the extensive militarisation of civil society in post-apartheid South Africa. In response to this particular problem of extensive militarisation of society, the UN developed its models for demilitarisation in tandem with programmes for national recovery,²² which is most relevant to the extreme inequalities facing South Africa. This section will consider in what ways WB and UN models can be related to the South African context and SADF veterans in particular, as well as considering the missed potential for drawing white SADF veterans into new nation-building projects and reconstruction.

However, before attempts at demilitarisation in South Africa can be discussed, an understanding of the terms used by the WB, the UN and research concerning demilitarisation is required. Models for managing the transition of a militarised society are usually concerned with three factors: the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants. The United Nations provides broad definitions of the concepts of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration that this section will draw upon. According to Nicole Ball and Luc van de Goor, disarmament refers simply to the reduction of weapons in a society, while demobilisation refers to the formal and controlled reduction of combatants to exercise conflict reduction and control.²³ Reintegration is most relevant to addressing the issues of concern in this thesis (specifically demilitarisation) and refers to the processes through which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and civilian employment.²⁴ Reintegration does not necessarily mean physical relocation, but could in itself also include symbolic or ideological reorientation, aspects relevant to SADF veterans who are associated with apartheid. The processes of DDR are expected to lead, in parallel with plans for national recovery and/or redistribution, towards demilitarisation. However, this is where the DDR literature fails to explicitly engage with demilitarisation. Joao Gomes Porto, Chris Alden, and Imogen Parsons regards

²¹ N.J. Colletta, 'Demilitarization, Demobilization, and the Social and Economic Integration of Ex-Combatants: Lessons from the World Bank Africa Experience', USAID Conference Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Reintegration in Post-conflict Societies, World Bank, October 1997, p.2, accessed at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnacd087.pdf

²² S. Meek and M. Malan, 'Identifying lessons from DDR experiences in Africa: workshop report', *Institute for Security Studies Monographs*, No.106, October 2004, p.1.

²³ See N.Ball and L. van de Goor, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Mapping Issues, Dilemmas and Guiding Principles*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael, Conflict Research Unit, August, 2006, p.15, and I. Douglas, C. Gleichmann, M. Odenwald, K. Steenken, and A. Wilkinson, *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration: A Practical Field and Classroom Guide*, GTZ, NODEFIC, PPC, SNDC, Frankfurt, 2004, p.2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

demilitarisation as a narrative that emphasizes “the more technical aspects of restructuring armed and security forces rather than more critical reflections and counter narratives of the reasons for and purpose of a structurally legitimized use of coercion and violence in our societies”.²⁵ The purpose of DDR, that is to achieve demilitarisation, is to work towards “a society which emphasizes the non-violent resolution of conflicts and personal and social justice”.²⁶ Furthermore, Porto et al. characterise demilitarisation as not merely the control of the powers of coercion and violence, but also as the “transformation of minds and by extension of relationships at a social and political level” by grappling with identities, frameworks, and symbols that underlie past wars and violence.²⁷ The purpose of this section is to review in what ways the partial DDR processes that have occurred in South Africa following the end of apartheid have contributed to its goals of demilitarisation.

Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes (DRP) constituted the WB's initial involvement in attempts at demilitarisation. In his review of WB DRPs, Nat Colletta, manager of the Post-Conflict Unit of the World Bank, identified the elements of successful programmes.²⁸ WB programmes focus on two factors: 1) achieving relative economic integration of ex-combatants, a group identified as highly vulnerable to economic and social marginalisation and exploitation during periods of transition; and 2) reorganising post-conflict societies into the WB ideal of stable, free-market economies. The essential elements for achieving this ideal are identified by Colletta as demobilisation, including disarmament; orientation programmes for ex-combatants towards civil society, a concept not explored or exemplified in the review; a reinsertion phase, which refers to a short period where ex-combatants are provided with cash or in-kind payments for subsistence; and, finally, social and economic reintegration, which involves access to productive assets, training, employment opportunities, information and counselling services.²⁹ Contextual requirements include real political commitment to national reconciliation, and the restructuring of the political and economic landscape to promote peace by addressing the sources of conflict.³⁰ Colletta's other recommendations are primarily technical (in the form of descriptions of how to deliver assistance and the structures necessary, etc) and these mechanisms are unrelated to the thesis concerns. However, he does list the management of the stigmatisation of ex-combatants as one of the key

²⁵ J.G. Porto, C. Alden, and I. Parsons, *From Soldiers to Citizens: Demilitarization of Conflict and Society*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire, 2007, p.13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.13-14.

²⁷ Porto et. al., *From Soldiers to Citizens*, p.147.

²⁸ The WB refers to DDR as Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes, but this thesis will use the more common DDR terminology when referring to the overall concept.

²⁹ Colletta, ‘Demilitarization, Demobilization, and Integration’, p.2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2.

social dimensions contributing to the success of WB DRPs.³¹ While the economic privileges enjoyed by white South Africans reduce the applicability of demobilisation, reinsertion, and the reintegration phases of WB DRPs to SADF veterans, the relevance of social and perceptual dimensions of managing societies in transition is undeniable.

UN DDR models deviate from WB DRP models in their emphasis on the social and symbolic elements of post-conflict national and social recovery. Considered in the South African context, this distinction can clarify the position of SADF veterans in the context of DDR. Sarah Meek and Mark Malan produced a report on UN DDR experiences in Africa covering the late 1980s to mid-1990s period. Their report emphasises integration of national and social recovery alongside the specific need for parallel DDR programmes that achieve DDR aims while simultaneously integrating veterans into national recovery programmes.³² Rejecting the generalist approach allows for the recognition that ex-combatants face different challenges along a continuum of demobilisation, demilitarisation, and reintegration that includes social as well as economic integration. This approach thus allows for a more tailored process that can respond to needs and address challenges across the spectrum.³³ Furthermore, in addition to the need to gain an understanding of the historical causes of conflicts, Meek and Malan found that the UN programmes make the key recommendation that investigations of human rights abuses be included in national recovery and DDR programmes in order to attempt to expose war criminals and pursue justice.³⁴ This recommendation is most relevant to the thesis' concerns with national recovery, the need to manage veterans from opposite sides of the conflicts, and the need to redress apartheid injustices.

Considered within this framework of DDR ideals, SADF veterans achieved economic and social integration and success, but not post-transition social or political integration. Both WB and UN DDR models stress the importance of symbolic and reconciliatory elements to the success of managing post-conflict societies. Little reference is made to SADF veterans in reviews of WB and UN DDR programmes, apart from limited discussions of special forces veterans. Gwinyayi Dzinesa argues that more 'unorthodox' SADF veterans (that is, counterinsurgency units such as 32 Battalion and *Koevoet*) became 'niche-sources' of mercenaries with a negative impact on regional stability.³⁵ Whether this is

³¹ Colletta, 'Demilitarization, Demobilization, and Integration', p.6.

³² Meek and Malan, 'Identifying lessons from DDR experiences in Africa', pp.VIII, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.VII, 23.

³⁵ G. Dzinesa, 'The Role of Ex-combatants and Veterans in Violence in Transitional Societies', Concept Paper, *Violence and Transition Project Roundtable*, Johannesburg, 7-9 May, 2008, pp.8-9.

as a result of the fact that these SADF veterans were not willing to integrate into the SANDF or, alternatively, that there were challenges to integration, or whether their skills were in demand by private military companies, is not clarified and the discussion falls outside the scope of this thesis. Guy Lamb notes that there has been relative success in the social, economic, and civilian integration among white Special Forces veterans based on employment and socioeconomic status. Lamb further notes that SADF veterans are generally not confronted with the same level of economic deprivation faced by liberation forces' ex-combatants.³⁶ However, given the significance ascribed to *social* aspects of DDR, it remains a matter of concern that SADF veterans were never subjected to any formal DDR process during apartheid or after. Even during apartheid, there was a glaring lack of formal demobilisation and demilitarisation for SADF veterans. Post-discharge, SADF personnel received little assistance in terms of psychological support, and there was an expectation of repeated camp duty call-ups after NS. For this reason, it cannot be assumed that SADF veterans have been demilitarised.

Furthermore, no provision was made for the management of residual military identities and their lasting impact on veterans, or whether these identities need be accommodated. SADF veterans were discharged into a privileged social and economic context based on their gender, race, and fulfilment of NS. Dzinesa and Jasmina Brankovic note that ex-combatants in a post-conflict society expected to reap the benefits of fulfilling of military service. Dzinesa and Brankovic concurrently link unfulfilled expectations to the persistence of military identities and roles, both for individuals and in communities.³⁷ As established in Chapter 1, NS as a rite of passage provided white South African men with access to social, cultural, and economic capital and privileges during apartheid. However, the perspective of NS as linked only to the benefits of service does not account for the impact of military service, training, indoctrination, and combat on the individual soldiers. According to both WB and UN DDR models, material provisions alone cannot address the psychological and psychosocial legacies of military involvement, and also cannot demilitarise individuals. While relative material comfort may facilitate demobilisation and reintegration, Lamb concludes that demilitarisation, specifically, is more difficult to achieve due to the intangibility of its objectives.³⁸ Therefore, the rest of this chapter seeks to consider SADF veterans in terms of the relationships

³⁶ G. Lamb, 'From Military to Civilian Life: The case of retired Special Forces Operators', *Track Two*, Vol.12, No.1 & 2, September 2003, p.60.

³⁷ G. Dzinesa and J. Brankovic, *The Persistence of Military Identities among Ex-Combatants in South Africa*, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and Centre for Humanities Research (University of the Western Cape), Cape Town, 2013, pp.2-3.

³⁸ Lamb, 'From Military to Civilian Life', pp.59-60.

between reconciliation and the redress of injustice. The implications of political transition for perceptions of the new political dispensation are not addressed by Dzinesa and Brankovic or Lamb, but it is a point of interest for this thesis, especially as it was the political transition that stripped SADF veterans of symbolic benefits and privileges or, in other words, the benefits of their military service. To examine the appropriateness and applicability of DDR programmes to South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as it relates to SADF veterans in terms of seeking justice and contribution to reconciliation, will be considered in the context of DDR frameworks. Thereafter, DDR frameworks will be considered in the analysis of recent developments with the Military Veterans Act and its implementation through the DMV.

Reconciliatory Attempts in the Context of DDR and Demilitarisation: the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Implications of Moral Ambiguity

South Africa's transition from apartheid to a multi-racial democracy would certainly have benefited from some national and political education to foster demilitarisation and integration, and to address issues of responsibility and accountability in the wake of systemic injustice. While formal DDR programmes were never established, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC henceforth) did attempt to fulfil the recommended *symbolic* justice-seeking and reconciliatory aspects of DDR. As per its mandate, set out in the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995, the TRC was tasked with the investigation of, and production of “as complete a picture as possible” of gross violations of human rights.³⁹ In fulfilling this task, the TRC (mainly the Human Rights Violation Committee) raised the issue of perpetration and responsibility in its Final Report. This section will analyse the Report’s engagement with the SADF’s conduct as an institution.

Volume 2 of the TRC Final Report provides an overview of the context of apartheid conflicts in which gross violations of human rights occurred. In addition to outlining the social and political backgrounds of southern African conflicts involving apartheid South Africa, Volume 2 locates the majority of human rights violations outside of South Africa's borders.⁴⁰ This position draws an association between the SADF and violations that, by extension, includes SADF veterans (including

³⁹ Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 35 of 1995, available at <http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1995-034.pdf> accessed on 26/10/2016.

⁴⁰ TRC Final Report Volume 2, p.42, available at <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%202.pdf> accessed on 28/07/2015.

conscripts). While this thesis by no means claims that conscripts were not involved in gross violations of human rights, charging of the SADF with such may present a barrier to the reintegration of ex-SADF personnel into the post-apartheid South African society as a result of potential stigmatisation. The negative association of SADF personnel with the perpetration of gross violations of human rights also did not go unnoticed by SADF veterans, as both Lamb and Sasha Gear point out. Lamb found that, among retired Special Forces Operators, there was a perception that they had been negatively portrayed in the media. Gear reaches a similar conclusion regarding the negative portrayal of SADF veterans, which was perceived by her study participants as 'demonisation'.⁴¹ The perception that SADF veterans as perpetrators of human rights violations will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

While the TRC Report volumes take care to account for the structural factors that contributed to the militarisation of white South Africa, they place the brunt of the responsibility on the security sector. During the TRC proceedings, NS was directly addressed through the Special Hearing on Compulsory Military Service (Hearing henceforth), in which conscription was characterised as a central contextual factor contributing to the climate of militarisation that allowed for the gross violations of human rights committed during apartheid.⁴² Security force personnel were singled out as perpetrators without accounting for the complicity of white South African society in the process of militarisation and consequences thereof. While the 'Consequences of Gross Human Rights Violations on People's Lives' section of Volume Five associated the maintenance of white South African political and economic privileges with gross violations of human rights, the white community at large was distanced from these violations. Unfortunately, the balance of responsibility between SADF soldiers and higher military echelons was not addressed in the context of the Hearing, through no fault of the TRC, as invitations to higher-echelon ex-SADF and then-serving SANDF personnel to testify were declined.⁴³ The Final Report of the TRC lists the broad mobilisation of white youth, the role of state-owned media, and the militarisation of white males as primary factors contributing to the climate of militarisation that resulted in human rights violations.⁴⁴ However, these are broad *social* elements that, as shown in Chapter 2, required the support of the majority of white South Africans who bear responsibility for apartheid injustices. The Report's recommendations regarding SADF veterans call for the continued study of the "socially pervasive influence" of the NS system, as Annette Seegers

⁴¹ Gear, *Wishing Us Away*, 124.

⁴² TRC Final Report Volume 5, p.256-257, available at <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume5.pdf> accessed on 02/08/2015.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.222.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.157.

termed it,⁴⁵ but fails to adequately emphasise the critical importance of the demilitarisation of civil society to social reconciliation.

This failure to address the broad societal militarisation of white South Africa can be attributed in part to the Report's conflation of the perpetuation of systems of militarisation with the apartheid state. Since militarism had become ubiquitous in white South African society, the removal of state structures of militarisation did not address the need to remove *societal* structures of militarisation. In other words, it did not address militaristic behaviour and identities. The norm of militarisation, with supporting constructions of gender, race and economic relations, spanned multiple generations in South Africa. As such, the long term and thorough militarisation of South African society in its entirety cannot be limited to military personnel. Engagement with the legacy of militarisation should extend through nearly all levels of society. Unfortunately, the focus on lower-level SADF personnel as a result of the boycott of the Hearing by higher-echelon ex-SADF personnel limits the discussion of perpetrators. The singular focus on security organisations, without consideration of militarist behaviours and identities, also resulted in the privatisation of militarisation in the form of the private South African security industry and thus, partly, in the maintenance of militarism. For example, a form of militarist attitudes towards weapons and security, such as persisting beliefs in the need for weapons and privatised security in white South Africa as the *only* response to the failure of the state to provide security against criminals with little consideration of other approaches to combating crime (e.g. fighting poverty). Furthermore, in this context and despite the TRC's efforts, the lack of integrated and *inclusionary* DDR programmes addressing the social and political legacies of militarisation constitute a major oversight in the South African political transition.

Addressing the Moral Ambiguity of SADF Veterans

Given the pervasive nature of apartheid militarism, the moral ambiguities of military service in the apartheid security establishment requires consideration. As suggested in the previous section, the TRC's focus on lower-level SADF personnel attributed responsibility for the conduct of the security establishment primarily to soldiers, which leads to their characterisation as the prime perpetrators. To explore the moral ambiguities of SADF veterans, this section will use understandings of military

⁴⁵ TRC Final Report Volume 4, p.225-226, available at <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%204.pdf> accessed on 31/07/2015.

veterans as perpetrators. Don Foster, Paul Haupt, and Marésa de Beer's analysis and discussion of the development of the concept of 'perpetrator' in recent history applies the abstract conceptualisations of perpetration and responsibility to South Africa's transitional context. Their approach focuses on the ambiguities of perpetration, and seeks to understand the factors involved in the perpetration of gross violations of human rights unearthed during TRC fact finding processes.⁴⁶ The concepts employed by Foster et al. for analysing perpetrators, namely situationism, positionings, and the relational model, each add to the nuance of reading veterans in contexts of political transition and the pursuit of justice. Foster et al.'s work is useful to this thesis because it provides a framework for thinking about the implications of the unique South African situation, where groups were labelled as perpetrators but retributive justice was not pursued.

Foster et al. use the construction of perpetrators at the TRC as a point of departure for understanding this category. They characterise the TRC's construction of the perpetrator as shaped by "simple moral binaries, unambiguous right and wrong" that results in an oversimplification of complexities and ambiguities.⁴⁷ In their attempt to address the oversimplification of perpetrators, Foster et al. consider the implications of models for understanding the context within which violence occurs, including models that account for state-supportive, bidirectional, and lateral or horizontal violence. This complicates the understanding of perpetrators in relation to the TRC's binary of right and wrong in order to address the multi-sided (*not* equal-sided) nature of violence in South Africa during apartheid.⁴⁸ The first conceptualisation Foster et al. introduce is situationism, which asserts the considerable persuasive power of social situations over individuals by casting them as forces more powerful than dispositional tendencies.⁴⁹ Situationism partly privileges structure over agency, but also suggests that individual responses are largely flexible within the prevailing structures. While, as stated above, the TRC did account for the coercive nature of apartheid institutions and the effects of coercive structures in the mobilisation and militarisation of white youth, the issue may be the TRC's narrowing of focus. As explained, the Final Report focused on the militarisation of white males, and does not account for non-state sources of violence. The narrowing of situationist thinking to white males also hints at the conflation of militarisation and the apartheid state, which obfuscates the social and cultural legacies of militarisation.

⁴⁶ D. Foster, P. Haupt, and M. de Beer, *The Theatre of Violence: Narratives of Protagonists in the South African Conflict*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2005, p.VI.

⁴⁷ Foster et al., *The Theatre of Violence*, p.3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.60.

⁴⁹ Foster et al. cite scholarly arguments spanning six decades supporting situationism.

Foster et al. further criticise the dichotomy of perpetrators and victims in that it does not account for variation in degrees of involvement, or the contribution of other actors to perpetration.⁵⁰ In order to reflect the complexity of processes leading up to perpetration, and to start addressing issues of responsibility while simultaneously recognising the relative perceptions of events, individuals involved in perpetration are related to each other through positionings. These include subjective positionings of individuals' perceptions of the extent of their own agency and power, as well as the given structural pressures, such as culture or the SADF chain of command. Foster et al. expand on positioning by accounting for proximity, intent, and motivations for actions based on the individuals' subjective position in relation to structure. Furthermore, positionings need to account for perpetrators' and victims' perspectives of each other.⁵¹ Accordingly, positionings – whether of the victim, perpetrator, or facilitator of violence – are characterised by their mutability. Positions can be adopted, achieved, or ascribed. This differs from mere labelling of individuals involved in violence by recognising the ability of people to shift into different positions over time or as convenience dictates.⁵² The concept of positioning can also help contextualise how perceptions are constructed by individuals involved in violence, accounting for the myriad roles suggested by Foster et al. that would also include civil society in degrees of involvement and contributions to motivating, justifying, or supporting state violence.

Reflecting on situationism and positionings, Foster et al. shift the focus away from attempting to ascribe violence to individuals. Rather, the origins of violence are identified in the “constellation of relations between persons, groups, ideologies and juxtaposed positionings” emanating from the context (expressed by Foster et al. as a ‘toxic mix’ or ‘volatile mixture’, and the intertwining of multiple identities).⁵³ This relational model makes some key departures from dichotomous views of the victim/perpetrator relationship. Relevant considerations for this thesis include the step away from individualism and essentialism, emphasis on relations between groups, and, crucially, the recognition of shifting identity positions.⁵⁴ These departures from the rigid understandings of victim/perpetrator has an implication for this thesis in that the question of whether or not SADF veterans ought to be defined as perpetrators is rendered contingent upon circumstances. Instead of

⁵⁰ Foster et al., *The Theatre of Violence*, pp.63-64.

⁵¹ Foster et al. generated this generalised characterisation of positionings through combining Rom Harré and Luk van Lagenhove's *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of International Action* (1999) and Roy Baumeister's *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty* (1997) and other theses in the fields of positioning and the study of perpetrators to introduce the various elements of positioning into a coherent process.

⁵² Foster et al., *Theatre of Violence*, pp.63-65.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.66.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.66.

a rigid dichotomy, this thesis considers the situationist and relational aspects of positionings adopted by SADF veterans, and the social and moral ambiguities of both adopted and ascribed positions. Identity theory and how it relates to historical study were addressed in Chapter 1 of this thesis as a method of drawing out themes in South Africa's history of militarisation. The broadening of the concept of positionings in Chapter 3 will also re-cast the active and functional nature of positionings, as Foster et al. does use it to reflect more static positions than binarisms suggest. While Chapter 2 provides an overview of the apartheid situationist context of SADF veterans,⁵⁵ the next section reflects the management of SADF veterans by the Department of Military Veterans in the context of the Military Veterans Act 18, in order to explore the shifting situationist context of SADF veteran positionings after political transition.

State Management of Veterans: The Department of Military Veterans and the Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011 and Addendums

This section will outline the recent developments surrounding the passing of the Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011 (Military Veterans Act henceforth), the establishment of the Department of Military Veterans (DMV), and how these events have affected SADF veterans in terms of identity and social constructions. Very little occurred at the state or national level concerning veterans after the TRC hearings, the TRC Special Hearing on Compulsory Military Service, and the publication of Final Report volumes. That is, until debates surrounding the Military Veterans Bill, the passing of the Act, and the establishment of the DMV in 2009 arose. A brief overview of the Military Veterans Act and the 2014 addition of Military Veterans Benefits Regulations will serve as a starting point for this section's discussion of the state's management of veterans. Thereafter, DMV publications will be analysed to locate the SADF conscript veteran within the framework of more recent state thinking regarding veterans. Using the recommendations of DRPs and DDRs outlined earlier in this chapter, the Act and DMV will be examined as an institutionalisation of SA DDR 'commitments'.

The Act itself is a very brief document that is primarily concerned with establishing the bureaucracy of the DMV and the Military Veterans Appeal board, as well as broadly outlining some definitions, guiding principles relating to the relationship between the State and military veterans, and the

⁵⁵ Realisation of militarisation, rite of passage, access to privileges afforded to white South Africans by apartheid, etc.

benefits the Act would provide to registered veterans. The Act's definition of a 'military veteran' is inclusive of any South African citizen involved in any military organisation, statutory or non-statutory, in what it terms the "South African Liberation War" from 1960 to 1994.⁵⁶ Citizens who had served in the Union Defence Force before 1961 and in the new SANDF after 1994 are also included.⁵⁷ For the purposes of this section, the Act's inclusive use of the term veteran to describe both statutory and non-statutory forces will be used. As will be seen, this is not to say that the DMV itself *operates* with the same level of inclusion, despite inclusion being a cornerstone of its mandate. On paper, however, the Act outlines inclusionary principles recognised by the State and the objectives of the policy, including recognition and honouring of the sacrifices made by military veterans in service of or for their country; their role in the democratisation of South Africa; the provision of compensation to veterans entitled to disability grants (related to military activities); the recognition that military veterans who are suffering from physical or mental disability as a result of military service rendered deserve special consideration; and the obligation to identify and remedy (within reason) disparities, inequalities, and unfair discrimination with regard to benefits due to military veterans.⁵⁸

The Act and DMV have established the vision and structures of a veteran management system without any glaring shortcomings, at least when measured against DDR recommendations. In its attempt to remedy disparities and inequalities, the Act confers a set of benefits on military veterans. The list of benefits includes: providing compensation for disabling physical, psychological, and neuropsychiatric trauma and disease; the obligation to provide counselling and treatment for veterans suffering from serious mental illness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or related conditions; support in the form of education, training, skills development, employment placement facilitation, business opportunity facilitation and advice; subsidisation or provision of public transport, pension, healthcare, housing, and burial support; and, finally, the honouring and memorialising of fallen military veterans.⁵⁹ Apart from outlining procedures for the establishment of a department of military veteran affairs, which would form the backbone of the DMV's mission, the department was also tasked with the collection and curation of data and information regarding the following: the progress of state and private schemes and programmes concerning veterans, and the

⁵⁶ Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011, Cape Town: Government of the Republic of South Africa, p.4 available at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/documents/The%20Military%20Veterans%20Act%20of%202011.pdf> accessed on 16/06/2015.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵⁸ Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011., p.4. Note that the principles listed here exclude the bureaucratic principles outlined by the Act to ensure transparency and cooperation to meet the needs of military veterans.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

veterans themselves and what benefits they and their dependants qualify for and have access to.⁶⁰ Since its promulgation in 2011, it has only received an update in the form of the Military Veterans Benefits Regulations of 2014, which outlines definitions, requirements, criteria, and regulations determining the forms and value of compensation to be provided to applicants.⁶¹ Now that the basic tenets have been outlined, the extent to, and manner in which the DMV has fulfilled its obligations as set out by the Military Veterans Act will be considered next.

DMV activity can be traced through its website newsroom releases and its in-house publication, *Honour*, which deals with veteran issues. The DMV commenced with its vision of building a "dignified, unified, empowered and self-sufficient military veterans' community", which aimed to restore the dignity of veterans, and to express appreciation for the contribution of military veterans to freedom and their importance in the nation building project.⁶² The short-term strategic approach affecting veterans included the 'acceleration' of benefit delivery (benefits outlined in the Act), military veterans' heritage promotion, skills development and establishing communication strategies to include more military veterans.⁶³ Media publications accessed on the DMV website itself indicate that the implementation of short-term strategies commenced in late 2013, with the rollout of health care cards and medical screening for 4,800 veterans across South Africa.⁶⁴ The focus on healthcare provision continued through the end of 2013, with further health care card rollouts for 166 veterans in the North West Province, 1,756 veterans in the Gauteng Province and 212 veterans in Mpumalanga.⁶⁵ The inclusion of the numbers or rollouts here is to place the DMV's activities in context, considering that, by 2012, the DMV's veterans' database already included 57,000 beneficiaries qualifying for some form of benefit.⁶⁶ The budget speech delivered in May of 2017 by Deputy Minister Maphatsoe claimed that the number had increased to 15,000 veterans, indicating that the pace of healthcare rollout has remained limited.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011, p.8.

⁶¹ The Military Veterans Benefits Regulations of 2014, Government Gazette, Vol.584, No.37355, February 2014 available at www.dmv.gov.za/documents/MilitaryCV01.pdf

⁶² Strategic Plan 2012-2016, Department of Military Veterans of the Republic of South Africa available at www.dmv.gov.za/documents/Military_Veterans_SP_2012-2016.pdf accessed on 10/08/2015.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

⁶⁴ Announcement of the provision of health care cards to military veterans across the country, Department of Military Veterans at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/newsroom/advisories/10102013.htm>

⁶⁵ Media Advisories, Department of Military Veterans at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/newsroom/advisories.htm>

⁶⁶ Strategic Plan 2012-2016, p.14.

⁶⁷ Budget Vote19 as delivered by Deputy Minister K Maphatsoe, Department of Military Veterans, accessed on 09/08/2017 at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/wp/index.php/budget-vote19-as-delivered-by-deputy-minister-k-maphatsoe/>

Issues of other forms of healthcare provision, especially counselling, psychological, and neuropsychiatric assistance, have not received any mention in official DMV media statements. The only mention of the provision of counselling or psychological and neuropsychiatric assistance thus far on the DMV website and publications is from the 2013/2014 Annual Report, which summarises DMV activity from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. The Annual Report, in the Socio-Economic Support Services Programme section, indicates that in this period 507 veterans had access to counselling and treatment for PTSD.⁶⁸ What makes this worth mentioning here is that the 'delivery' number (here seemingly indicating the number of veterans who had made use of provided services, although the document remains unclear as to who exactly derived the benefits and which veterans' groups they belonged to) covered the period from 19 February 2014 to 31 March 2014. The relatively high number for such a short period could indicate a very immediate and serious need for counselling services and support for PTSD. As a result of the vague nature of the document, the number may only indicate the number of military veterans with access to (rather than veterans actually having made use of) these services, which in turn would indicate a significant failure on the part of the DMV to fulfil its mandate to provide such services over the span of two years, seeing that this provision was part of the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. No new numbers are available with regard to veterans listed in the database, which still means that less than 1% of registered veterans had access to counselling and support for PTSD.

Another obligation of the Act to which the DMV has been giving some attention is the honouring and memorialising of veterans, which it pursues through public speeches, commemorative events, and *Honour* publications. The first of these events was a ceremony commemorating the Maseru raids and the Basotho and MK operatives wounded or killed by SADF incursions into Lesotho, and the honouring of Nelson Mandela as the first Commander in Chief of MK and the first democratically elected president of South Africa. The ceremony entailed the acknowledgement of the sacrifice of military personnel and other casualties of the raids and a visit by MK veterans to Mandela's home.⁶⁹ Aside from this inaugural commemoration event, the DMV lists only the commemoration of the Little Rivonia Trial and a commemorative speech in honour of an MK casualty in January and

⁶⁸ 2013/2014 Annual Report, Department of Military Veterans, p.50, available at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/documents/Military%20Veterans%20AR%202014%20EBook.pdf> accessed on 11/08/2015.

⁶⁹ The Department of Military Veterans to pay homage to Tata Madiba and victims of Maseru Raids, Department of Military Veterans at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/newsroom/statements/09122013.htm>

September of 2014.⁷⁰ Other acts of 'commemoration' by the DMV include speeches honouring military veterans, including Chris Hani and two other MK military veterans in particular.⁷¹ In the few instances of commemoration, the focus has been purely on MK veterans and victories, to the exclusion of all other groups that could be defined as veterans. As this section will show, this trend can be traced throughout veteran management.

The in-house DMV publication *Honour* serves as another mouthpiece for state-recognised veteran concerns. *Honour* includes most of the DMV media releases and ministerial speeches alluded to above. Additional content includes a discussion of funding the DMV received from the national budget, as well as 'special features' as part of the DMV's obligation to commemorate and honour military veterans.⁷² *Honour* extols the achievements of the DMV, and this praise constitutes the bulk of the content of all issues thus far. The only exception is the September 2013 Special Edition, which provided an overview of the Council of Military Veterans Organisation Consultative Conference, where the DMV restated its mandates with no additional context or progress updates. One noteworthy aspect of *Honour*, given its role as a DMV mouthpiece and its claims to represent the interests of *all* veterans, is its focus on MK veterans. Only brief mentions are made of existence of other veterans' associations, such as the Azanian People's Liberation Army Military Veterans Association, South African Coloured Corps, and various other military veterans associations from the former homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei. However, this recognition of other veterans associations is only made in relation to the 1994 incorporation of non-statutory military personnel into the SANDF.⁷³ Another reference to other non-statutory forces (other than MK) was made at the 2015 Declaration of the Minister's Military Veterans' Indaba, where all veterans' contribution to the democratic transition in South Africa was acknowledged and, as per the Act, the challenges they face were reiterated.⁷⁴ At the time of writing, the DMV itself has not published an issue of *Honour* since its February/March 2014 issue. In addition, the publication's reach (number of copies printed, distribution and readership estimate) cannot be determined as the publishers (DMV Communications) could not be contacted. *Honour* provides a poor platform for communicating opportunities or providing information concerning DMV programmes (counselling and training in particular) and thus fails to foster the aims of DDR. In terms of recognition, then,

⁷⁰ Media Advisories, Department of Military Veterans at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/newsroom/advisories.htm>

⁷¹ Media Statements, Department of Military Veterans at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/newsroom/statements.htm>

⁷² 'Message from the editor', *Honour*, Vol.1, May/June 2013, DMV Communications, p.5.

⁷³ Profiling Women Military Veterans, Ms Ellen Molekane DDG in the Office of the Minister of Defence (MOD) and Military Veterans, *Honour*, Vol.2, July/August 2013, DMV Communications, p.12.

⁷⁴ Declaration of the Minister's Military Veterans' Indaba, Department of Military Veterans at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/blog/military-veterans-indaba-declaration.htm>

SADF veterans are not *specifically* marginalised in DMV considerations of veterans concerns and through commemorations. Rather, the DMV focus is merely confined to MK, to the detriment of all other veteran interest groups.

Based on the DMV's Strategic Plan 2012-2016, the 2013/2014 Annual Report and the content of *Honour*, there is little evidence that the DMV has fulfilled any of its obligations or goals since its establishment in 2009. The benefits outlined in the Act seemingly remain only on paper (apart from the handful of military veterans who have received medical cards, access to healthcare, or housing). This is supported by Lindy Heinecken and Henrietta Bwalya's 2013 study, which concluded that the Act raised the hopes and expectations of a significant group of military veterans who find themselves in a state of destitution. By the time of their writing, the expectations had not been met, despite the provisions outlined in the Act, which they argue could have implications for the political stability of South Africa (if ex-combatants become disillusioned with the slow speed or total lack of promised benefits rollout).⁷⁵ While a complete discussion of the role of military veterans in post-apartheid South Africa falls outside the scope of this thesis, the analysis here intends to show that while the Act and 2014 Benefits Regulations provide policy frameworks to meet the needs of veterans, the situation – as described by Heinecken and Bwalya – remains unchanged. Ex-combatants, MK in particular, were mobilised in 2008 by then vice-president Jacob Zuma for their political and symbolic support in his deposition of then president Thabo Mbeki. Despite this mobilisation and exploitation of ex-combatants as a power-base for political gain, there has been little practical change for the ex-combatants.⁷⁶ Lip service is paid to policy and strategic plans with very little commitment or real political will behind them, indicating a major failure of the implementation of DDR programmes. The media releases and sporadic publications of *Honour* are further evidence of this, as they contain reiterations of the DMV's mission statements ad nauseum, but have little progress to show for the four years that follow the ratification of the Act.

⁷⁵ Heinecken, L., and Bwalya, H., 'Compensating military veterans in South Africa', *African Security Review*, Vol.22, No.1, 2013, pp.43-44.

⁷⁶ G. Lamb, 'DDR 20 Years Later: Historical Review of the Long-Term Impact of Post-Independence DDR in Southern Africa', World Bank (Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program), Washington D.C., June 2013, p.12.

The DMV and SADF Veterans

The DMV's management of SADF veterans is difficult to gauge, as DMV publications fail to mention or even acknowledge SADF veteran interests or concerns. However, there have been some interaction between the DMV and SADF veterans. Those interactions may suggest the underlying perceptions of SADF veterans by the DMV and require some discussion. There is evidence to suggest that most white SADF veterans do not face the same economic challenges as black military veterans from liberation movements and the SADF.⁷⁷ NS did not come with the same educational and economic sacrifices that were made by those who joined liberation movements, and thus SADF conscript veterans may not qualify for some of the benefits conferred by the Act. Indeed, the Military Veterans Act 18 Military Veterans Benefits Regulations 2014 stipulate a range of means tests to determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis. A further required stipulation for accessing military veterans' benefits is being registered in the DMV's national military veterans database, a point that will be returned to shortly. Compensation is further contingent on establishing whether the injury, trauma, and/or disease is ongoing and can be linked to military activity.⁷⁸ The means tests and contingencies reflect both DDR recommendations for structures to carefully and accurately manage limited resources and the guiding principles of the DMV to provide support to those veterans experiencing the greatest need. However, the ideals are not as clearly reflected in relation to all veteran groups, including SADF veterans.

While the Act and Benefits Regulations are inclusive of all individuals considered veterans and fulfil the stipulated requirements (registration in DMV military veterans database), the interpretation of the Act's definition of veteran has been inconsistent and exclusionary of SADF veterans. The DMV attempted to remove the names of SADF national servicemen from the veterans database in 2014 by reinterpreting the definition to limit SADF conscripts' access to veterans benefits. In response to challenges to this attempt, DMV spokesperson Mbulelo Musi stated that only "permanent and professional soldiers" in the SADF and members of "MK and its associated organisations" could be classified as veterans and remain registered in the database. Furthermore, Musi stated that the DMV was focused on assisting the poorest of "MK veterans and other non-statutory forces", who were denied access to basic privileges under apartheid and in exile.⁷⁹ These comments should be read in

⁷⁷ Lamb, 'From Military to Civilian Life', pp.57.58.

⁷⁸ Military Veterans Benefits Regulations of 2014, p.4.

⁷⁹ Staff Writer, 'Former national servicemen to be removed from military veterans' database', defenceWeb, 11 February, 2014, available at

relation to Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Thabang Makwetla's statement that "the plight of former SADF conscripts who served two years could not compare with those that dedicated their lives to the armed liberation struggle".⁸⁰ As both Musi and Makwetla's comments suggest, the attempt to exclude national servicemen from the DMV military veterans database is related to the issue of access to benefits that database registration provides. However, given that the means tests and contingencies are already in place to concentrate limited resources where they are most required, this attempt to remove national servicemen can be interpreted as a mainly symbolic action. The South African Legion, a self-proclaimed non-sectarian apolitical veterans' interest organisation, has stated that they do provide limited assistance to roughly 200 "deserving" former national servicemen,⁸¹ indicating that there are some SADF veterans (albeit numerically insignificant in relative terms) who could technically qualify for Military Veterans Benefits, despite their historical privileges.

More recent developments relating to DMV policy include financial provision for a military veteran pension, the provision of education grants to veterans' dependents, and further Veterans Act and Benefits Regulation rollouts.⁸² In addition, the Defence and Military Veterans Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula established a Turnaround Team for the DMV to implement an 'operational rescue plan' to stabilise DMV operations and provide "quick-wins" in the areas of education, healthcare, heritage, memorialisation, and housing support.⁸³ The addition of military pensions to the DMV's list of responsibilities and special provisions of funds suggests that the DMV is becoming a gatekeeper of resources for ex-combatants in South Africa, and therefore, control of the access point can reasonably be expected to become a site of contention. Musi's statements that clearly favour the MK and the DMV's attempt to reinterpret the definition of veteran go against the principles of the Military Veterans Act and Benefits Regulations, as they argue for filtering access to support based on group membership rather than qualifying veterans' needs. The attempt to prevent former national

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33565:former-national-servicemen-to-be-removed-from-military-veterans-database&catid=111:sa-defence accessed on 12/10/2016.

⁸⁰ Makwetla, T., quoted in Baines, *South Africa's 'Border War'*, p.173.

⁸¹ Staff Writer, 'Former national servicemen to be removed'.

⁸² Staff Writer, 'Defence Force meets target for women representation', South African Government News Agency SANews.gov.za accessed on 26/10/2015 at <http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/defence-force-meets-target-women-representation> and Staff Writer, 'Provision of Education Support to Military Veterans and their dependants for 2017', Department of Military veterans, accessed on 09/08/2017 at <http://www.dmv.gov.za/wp/index.php/provision-of-education-support-to-military-veterans-and-their-dependants-for-2017/>

⁸³ Staff Writer, 'Team to turnaround Military Veterans Department', South African Government News Agency SANews.gov.za accessed on 26/10/2015 at <http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/team-turnaround-military-veterans-dept>

servicemen from accessing support based on their historical membership of the SADF is an overt discriminatory interpretation of policy. In light of both the perceptions and actual cases of ex-combatant forces, and MK veterans in particular, being privileged while other veterans, including SADF veterans, are discriminated against, it is not unreasonable that SADF veterans could experience feelings of political marginalisation and alienation.

Conclusion: The SADF and its Veterans in the Context of Political Transition

The challenge of managing SADF veterans during political transition, then, becomes a process of managing these perceptions in the immediate context of broader processes of national recovery and nation building. DDR, identified as central to the promotion of social and political stability in post-conflict societies by the WB and UN by reintegrating veterans into a new society (including symbolic or ideological reorientation), was thus not implemented to any sufficient degree in the immediate context of South Africa's transition. As discussed above, attempts at DDR-like programmes in SA failed on two counts: 1) policy frameworks, while matching DDR ideals, were not practically and inclusively executed, and 2) too little was required of white South Africans during the transition in terms of recognising and addressing their support for militarisation and the use of security forces to maintain the injustices of the apartheid state.

The TRC fulfilled some of the symbolic dimensions of DDRs and attributed gross violations of human rights to the responsible structures. Contextual structures are partly accounted for in its recognition of the process of the militarisation of youth and other elements contributing to the climate of militarism that allowed for the gross violations of human rights. However, the distancing of civil society from the responsibility for violations, which is almost exclusively ascribed to the security establishment including the SADF, results in the lower-echelon SADF personnel bearing the brunt of the responsibility. This does not recognise the degrees of involvement that exists in relation to responsibility for the oppression exercised during apartheid. In order to fully address the question of responsibility, supporting and enabling groups must also be addressed and implicated. That means, in light of the broad support of militarisation and security policy by white South Africa even as late as 1987, the question of culpability cannot be addressed by focusing purely on veterans. For this reason, the thesis will not attempt to determine whether SADF veterans are perpetrators. Rather, it will draw on Foster et al.'s conceptualisations of those involved in violence and the

discussions of responsibilities for addressing legacies of violence to explore veteran identities within a framework of positionings.

Analysis through Foster et al.'s situationism (contextual institutional, societal, and political pressures, among others), positionings, and the relational model will result in a more nuanced analysis of veteran identities. Rather than addressing a question of blame, it will focus on accounting for the ascription of positions (e.g. to blame, as responsible, as guilty) and the adoption of alternative positionings (e.g. victimhood, ignorance). The inclusion of *perspectives* is particularly significant in this thesis, as individuals' perspectives and reality (as far as any reality can be established) do not necessarily need to relate. This approach allows me to engage with interpretations of South Africa's transition from apartheid, the implications transitional events have for the meaning of identities and the potential impacts on social and political behaviours. It also illustrates the limitations of reducing systemic violence to actions performed by individuals rather than including the civil and political sources of support (and consequent responsibility) for violence.

The consideration of state management of veterans through the DMV as per the Military Veterans Act further illustrates the importance of perspective in the meaning-making process, as positionings and identities are reinterpreted and renegotiated. This applies both to how the DMV has attempted to reinterpret elements of the Military Veterans Act and to the perception of discrimination and marginalisation expressed by some SADF veterans. The attempt to remove the names of national servicemen from the DMV military veterans database challenges chronological interpretation of events, as expectations and perceptions include both the historical and the contemporary in terms of understanding the meanings of identities and the implications of historical action. The DMV has favoured MK through its memorialisation of only MK veterans and victories, the content of *Honour* recognising and memorialising predominantly the MK, and the recognition of challenges facing MK veterans with little mention of other liberation forces and non-statutory forces. This indicates that veterans' issues have become politicised and its exploitation by the ruling party is obvious in the cases of the Honour publication and the military veterans database.

Developments in the area of veteran management span the entirety of the transitional period included in this thesis. This chapter discussed some of the perceptual aspects of symbolic DDR at the TRC, elements of the official (i.e. state departments and veteran-related policy) management context and its ideals, and the realisation of the policies through the DMV, where perceptions have

challenged the implementation of policy ideals. If veterans' issues are characterised by symbolic and perceptual concerns, such as the DMV's assumption of SADF veterans' economic status or the veterans' own perceptions of marginalisation, the *meanings* of these assumptions and perceptions require attention. Merely stating the positions taken by the parties is insufficient if the underlying meanings cannot be accessed. It is for this reason that this thesis includes considerations of social constructionist identity theory in the analysis of the interview transcript archive. The following chapter will provide both a generalised overview of the interview transcript archive and specific illustrative examples of identity constructions and positionings. The concluding chapter will discuss how developments affecting SADF veterans present in the archive and relate the ideals of DDR, the veteran management context, and veterans' perceptions of their roles in contemporary society.

Chapter 4: SADF Veterans' Narratives in a State of Transition

This chapter will present an analysis of the Missing Voices interview transcript archive and discuss its contents in relation to the thesis questions regarding the persistence, nature, and purpose of SADF veteran identities. To that end, the contextual information presented in Chapters 2 and 3 serve as contextualisation for the transcript contents. As discussed in Chapter 2, the impact of exposure to the structures of militarisation and coercion constitutes the formative context of identities. As also established in Chapter 2, this impact was exercised through the pervasive presence of the military in everyday life, that is, in school, organised religion, and through news and entertainment media with associated constructions of citizenship, gender, and so forth. However, identities and their components are not directly addressed by the interviewees, despite some allusions to the interpretation of historical events and how those reflect upon the perception of veterans. Even major themes, such as gender, are not obviously raised as points of discussion. Rather, discussions of events since the democratic transition is more prevalent across the transcripts, and the encoding of opinions and perceptions of those events do hint at elements of identity, but rarely overtly. Indeed, a major theme of the majority of transcripts is that the interviewees construct their experiences as separate from historical events. They distance personal narratives from historical context, simultaneously indicating awareness of the injustices of apartheid while avoiding personal associations to them. This feature, that is, the construction of positionings that specifically disassociate personal experiences from negative historical events (disassociative positionings henceforth), will be a key point of consideration in the discussion of identity themes and the meaning of the narratives that are constructed in the transcripts.

As with all discussion of identity in this thesis, it must be asserted that none of these themes are universal, which is why the specific meanings of narratives that encode identities are important to add to historical texturing. To account for variation and the relational nature of identities, the potential meanings of the veterans' narratives will be discussed using the social constructionist identity theory presented in Chapter 1. The assumption remains that interviewee stories, positionings, and claims serve a purpose for the narrator and that these narratives reflect identity positions and ideals. The chapter will commence with an overview of the archive before turning to establishing a baseline continuum for approaches to the interviewees' positioning of military experiences. Specific themes and topics will be addressed after the analysis of five exemplary

transcripts. In short, this chapter seeks to present what is said, discuss what is meant, and relate what is expressed in the Missing Voices interview transcript archive, to historical reality.

The Missing Voices Archive

A key concern in Chapter 1 is the challenge of drawing out understandings of identity elements such as gender and race with their myriad relations, inconsistencies, and subconsciously associated behaviours. The interviewees in the archive present the same challenge. Constructing identity content will thus take the form of reading into the constructions of difference, key to identity formation and maintenance, presented in the interviewees' narratives. Narrative forms and content common to this archive will be outlined and discussed in the generation of major identity themes. The source of the narratives for analysis in this thesis is the Missing Voices Oral History Project of the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of Witwatersrand, which sought to collect the "personal experiences, perceptions, and stories" from South African veterans ranging from Self-Defence Unit (SDU) members, liberation movement members, the SADF, and other special units (e.g. 32 Battalion, Koevoet, the CF, and NS members).¹ The transcriptions included in this thesis are limited to a subsection of the Missing Voices Oral History that focuses only on former members of the Permanent Force (PF), National Servicemen, and the Citizen Force (CF). The interviews, conducted by Mike Cadman between 2007 to 2008 (before the establishment of the ratification of the Military Veterans Bill and establishment of the MVA), are semi-structured and open-ended, tending more towards conversations focusing on the topic of military service than systematic interviewing. This thesis focuses on the interviews with former permanent force members, citizen force members, and conscripts from both Afrikaans and English backgrounds. The interviews reflect the participants' level of engagement and willingness to relate experiences, with limited amounts of prompting and no limitations imposed on the interviewees regarding the content or direction of their narratives. The only consistent structural element of the interviews is where, at the start of each interview, interviewees are asked for a brief overview of their early family life and upbringing, and even these questions sometimes go unanswered. Other consistent questions concern entry into the military, the answers to which span specifics of family, education, and religious contexts. Apart from these opening questions, the interviewer does, inconsistently, prompt discussions of ideological contexts, social contexts, and personal positions on historical events. The interviews are thus varied and expansive, and it is the intent of this chapter to draw out commonalities and

¹ See <http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?inventory/U/collections&c=A3079/R/>

specifics of identity from the archive. One shortcoming of the archive itself is the lack of data collection as part of the interview process, and as such the transcriptions contain limited demographic and other technical information about the interviewees.

The Narrative Continuum

The retrospective narratives in the archive encode a greater amount of identity positioning than narratives about current events and understandings, and they build on the established normalised views of, and motivations for, entry into security forces. These retrospective narratives draw together the interviewees' individual historical contexts and contemporary developments regarding the perception of veterans. The positionings put forth by the interviewees also contain elements of identity in constructing the Self and Other and make vague references to value systems. Views of politics expressed by interviewees are, in part, mediated by historical militaristic value systems that are in conflict with the perceptions of betrayal expressed in the transcripts. The transcripts therefore echo sentiments found in the literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis. The positionings of veteran identities and other identities also provide perspective for determining persistence of veteran identities compared to other identities, such as professional, cultural, and so forth. The narratives are complex and replete with contradictions that can be indicative of identity troubles, identity crises, or identities in transition that all have relevance to the thesis questions concerning the nature and persistence of SADF veteran identities in post-1994 South Africa.

In order to present a coherent classification of the archive and topic of identity, I will make use of a continuum along which to place individual transcripts in terms of the interviewees' views on military service and their military experiences. This continuum stretches between positive and negative construction, and – as will become clear in the following section analysing five exemplary transcripts – is littered with related associations. However, this construction provides a straightforward structure that allows entry into the complexities of historical experiences and their implications for individuals and associated systems of value. One challenge with both the continuum and the transcripts themselves is the interviewees' lack of specificity in terms of whether narratives are expressions of historical or contemporary views. This relates to the question of persistence of identities over time and whether formative historical experiences – of which conscription is central in terms of formation of Self, Other, ideology, threat, values, and so forth – present barriers to addressing the legacies of apartheid more broadly, such as militarism, prejudice, systemic inequality,

and so forth. The five transcripts I will analyse in the following section were chosen because they exhibit more specificity than the others and include some of the most clear and articulate interviewees in the archive. These transcripts therefore establish clear reference points of positive, neutral, or negative, thereby creating the continuum that contributes more directly to an understanding of the interviewees' varied positionings. This section will outline the three representative narratives of SADF veteran identities – that is, positive, neutral, and negative – as expressed by five individual interviewees.

The first, Roelof Voster², constructs conscription, and military experience more broadly, most positively – that is, uncritically positively. The second, Peter Schofield, also presents a positive view of military service and militarism, but attaches less social meaning to it than Voster. Schofield's technician and professionalist approach is representative of segments of various other interviews, but is the most strongly expressed instance. Peter Williamson is more representative of the interviewees as a whole, maintaining a generally positive view of conscription while still being able to acknowledge some negative aspects of military service. Similarly, Richard Henry is representative of some aspects of the balanced view of conscription, but includes mention of the reconciliatory aspects of the legacies of apartheid conflicts and the tensions between positive personal experiences and the negative political and societal implications of military service. Finally, Dr. M's view on military service is, by far, the most negative and critical, presenting a rather atypical construction of military service during apartheid. Each of these five transcripts presents sets of values and identity-related constructions that contribute to the understanding of the varying impacts of service and the persisting implications thereof.

Positive Narratives

There are many narratives that are characterised by nostalgia for military service and NS in particular. Roelof Voster's retrospective view on his military experiences in the mid- to late-1980s is one such narrative that is infused with a sense of nostalgia and a range of positive values attributed to conscription. Voster regrets the end of NS as an experience for young men, which he views as a masculine rite of passage that helped them to find a sense of purpose in life. He relates this sense of

² There is an inconsistency with this transcript as the archive page lists the interviewee as "Roelof Vorster" but the document itself lists the name as "Roelof Voster". This specific transcript has also been referenced in other academic work as "Voster" which is why I have opted for it.

NS to his son, who at the time of the interview was in matric and seemingly lacked direction. Voster states that he is “jammer dat daar nie meer army is nie³ ... my lightie’s [son’s] in matric now. What’s he going to do next year? ... send him off to the army to go do something for a year or two”.⁴ He goes further to suggest that, once you go through NS, “you’re a man now. You’re amongst manne. *A man moet kan drink*”⁵, expressing the common understanding of NS as a rite of passage tied to masculinity and a culture strongly associated with the consumption of alcohol.⁶ This applies to both the SADF institutional culture and Voster’s experiences of white South African culture. Voster makes vague reference to ethical and moral considerations of military service when he outlines the three types of conscripts he encountered, namely the willing, the resisters, and the in-betweeners. He does not position resisters negatively, but rather indicates some dislike for the ‘in-betweeners’ who only submitted to conscription because they had no alternatives and therefore made life, according to Voster, “unbearable for themselves and everybody else” due to a lack of commitment.⁷ Commitment, either to NS or as objectors, is emphasised as a positive value, regardless of the potential implications thereof, indicating the disassociation of action from implication in Voster’s narrative. His acknowledgement of individuals who resisted and spent time in prison is fleeting and he rather focuses on positioning NS uncritically as a rite of passage, a masculine achievement, and an accepted norm of life as a white South African during apartheid. There is, however, a sense of defensiveness to the narrative that is expressed through Voster’s response to questions regarding silence in the new political landscape. He insists that he is “not shy about [his military service]” and that he has “nothing to hide”.⁸ This narrative focuses almost exclusively on the personal meanings attached to military service in the form of benefits and positive connotations for growth, but avoids engaging with the political meanings of serving in apartheid security forces. This characterisation is not isolated to Voster’s retrospective view of NS, but persists through his discussion of conscription and his understanding of the ideological context. Voster’s narratives reflect an identity position where the positive values of commitment and masculinity are associated with performing military service that only maintains its positive connotations if disassociated from the political contexts and the implications of that service.

³ Translation: Voster regrets that compulsory military service is no longer a norm.

⁴ Voster, R., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 14/01/2008, pp.15-16.

⁵ Translation: A man must be able to drink alcohol.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.16.

Peter Schofield, on the other hand, addresses the politics of service in the apartheid security forces more directly, and in so doing, generates a set of contradictions in his narrative. As a British national, career soldier, and veteran of the British Army Parachute Battalions who emigrated to South Africa in 1976, Schofield's perspective of the South African context differs from the traditional conscript's, as his views were not formed by the same closed socialisation environment of apartheid. His idea of southern African conflicts is rooted in the perception of the global threat of communism and he positions the ANC as a puppet of the Soviet Union. By joining the SADF, he argues that he was contributing to the fight against communism, stating that he "was and am convinced that I was fighting Mother Russia ... by joining the [South African] Defence Force" and that, furthermore, "had we [the West] lost that war, [South Africa] wouldn't now be governed by the ANC [but by] Mother Russia".⁹ He continues to assert that it had never occurred to him that he was fighting against "black people or the indigenous Africans [sic]".¹⁰ Schofield briefly addresses state perpetrated violence against black South African citizens when he compares the Soweto Uprisings of 1976 to other state perpetrated violence, concluding that "the massacre of Soweto never rang true in my mind in the meaning of the sense of the word massacre... Soweto was unpleasant but it didn't worry my conscience particularly."¹¹ He questions whether the Soweto Uprisings are even to be viewed as an atrocity and positions the state, and its security forces, as neutral actors that, in fact, had behaved less violently than what he had witnessed in other contexts during his military service in the British Army. Despite portraying the apartheid state as comparable to other nation states in terms of its use of violence, Schofield expresses disagreement with the system of apartheid, asserting that he never supported apartheid and that he did not fight for the country. Schofield positions soldiering as a profession and repeatedly extolls the professionalism, quality of training, and the quality of the individuals he served with, as well as the pride he felt in his accomplishments as part of South African special forces, throughout the interview. However, there are instances in the interview where his statements become contradictory.

Schofield states that he demanded two assurances from the SADF: firstly, and specifically that he "would never be required to operate internally in South Africa against our own people", and secondly, that he never be deployed against "the Queen [of England] or her subjects or her troops".¹² These demands place his actions as a soldier squarely in the political sphere, despite his

⁹ Schofield, P., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 21/08/2007, p.8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.8.

protestations otherwise. He directly recognises that by joining the SADF he was acting on behalf of the apartheid state and indicates further awareness of the state's actions against its own citizens. This contradiction is further compounded by the effect it has on his relationship with his daughter, who dislikes his military history. Schofield describes his arguments with his daughter concerning his openness about being an officer in the SADF special forces as political, stating that she "doesn't like me to talk about Recce... she's ashamed of the fact that I was a Recce and thinks it's something bad and we did evil things."¹³ His defence of his pride in the achievement and his fellow soldiers takes a broad scope in stating that what he "did in Recce and what my youngsters did in Recce, and the young men who served National Service relatively cheerfully, and without complaining too much and did their jobs *bought you [his children] and the rest of South Africa another 20 years* [emphasis added]", a time which he argues allowed his children to complete their university education "without interference of other political influences or other colour groups or anything else".¹⁴ This is a revealing statement that positions two decades of the apartheid status quo as positive, at least for those groups benefiting from it, and therefore for Schofield reflects positively on the individuals who defended that political system, despite his assertions that his military service was apolitical. Schofield reduces the interviewer's question of resentment towards the political transformation to expressing the view that the average special forces soldier's experience was centred around duty, challenge, enjoyment of the profession, the pride of the accomplishment and being part of such an exceptional unit. Those individuals who were "right wing inclined", he argues, were very rare within the special forces.¹⁵ This separation of the military – and the special forces in particular – from any negative political connotation appears throughout Schofield's interview. This argument suggests again that the military had no political alignment, and that, by extension, this also distances himself from the political context.

The separation of professional, well-trained soldiers from any negative aspersions continues in Schofield's repeated dismissal of any question of the negative impact of military service. Two negative perceptions are addressed in his narrative, namely PTSD and extreme behaviour. With regard to PTSD, Schofield rejects its existence or, at the very least, its legitimacy as a concern. When the issues of trauma, stress, and the provision of counselling for special forces operatives are raised by the interviewer, Schofield dismisses the questions wholesale by stating that he has never "believed that there's such a thing as post-traumatic stress", and particularly so "if he's a well-

¹³ Schofield, p.37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.35.

trained professional soldier”.¹⁶ He again addresses PTSD more broadly, this time unprompted and including both career soldiers and conscripts when he states that “it probably does [exist] but as I say [if] you can’t take a joke you shouldn’t have joined”.¹⁷ The exact meaning of this is not addressed subsequently, but this statement reinforces the extremely negative construction of any potential psychological effects of military service and also suggests that soldiers should embody ‘toughness’ and endure hardship without complaint. He goes to some length to normalise extreme behaviours as anything but psychological trauma, which starts to reflect his identity positioning and content. Extreme behaviour leading to the deaths of more than one of his own unit members is characterised as merely being a result of “adrenalin”, with no “unhappiness or maladjustment”.¹⁸ Other extreme behaviours are similarly dismissed as temporary reactions. In describing post-operation reactions, he argues they’re “short term, and they’d drink a bunch of booze and have some wild parties... get themselves cleaned up, fit again and go off and do the whole damn [sic] thing again”.¹⁹ However, there is some inconsistency in the portrayal of the behavioural impacts of military service. On one hand, Schofield states that the soldiers he served with were all well-adjusted and transitioned well after service, even in terms of the political transition of South Africa, but on the other he states that “[Soldiers] never settle. Very few [soldiers] actually settle into a normal life again”.²⁰ The fact that Schofield mentions that many ex-special forces members were still involved in mercenary work and highly dangerous security work in the Middle East is normalised and portrayed positively as a sign of their professionalism, skill, and the respect with which their ‘enemies’ regard them.

Neutral Narratives

While Voster and Schofield present military experiences and values unquestioningly positively, albeit with different foci, Peter Williamson’s narrative reflects a more critical approach. He holds the positive view of military service expressed by Voster and Schofield, but this is complicated by an awareness of the implications of military service. The contradictions and identity turmoil this causes is directly addressed in his narratives. While Williamson does position the military and military service as neutral, i.e. being purely an issue of “[fighting] for the government in power”, he

¹⁶ Schofield, p.29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.38.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.31.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.34-35.

expresses serious struggles with his place in contemporary South Africa as a result.²¹ This tension, I argue, is a result of Williamson's sense of nationalism and citizenship being associated with his military service. However, unlike Voster and Schofield, Williamson is unable to maintain a disassociation between military service and the maintenance of the apartheid state. He is able to articulate his historical experience of military service, which will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter, as a form of peacekeeping, but subsequently becomes disillusioned with politics more generally, and his sense of belonging and citizenship more specifically. While it is difficult to determine the aspects of Williamson's military identity from this interview transcript, there is a clear connection between the military identity and his unease in contemporary South Africa. While not a career soldier, he did remain involved in the Citizen Force throughout the 1980s and early 1990s in addition to a professional civilian career. He articulates the shift in understanding of military service from a naïve and ignorant "gung-ho" loyalty to the apartheid regime, to reaching a realisation that he neither agreed with, nor was committed to, continuing his military involvement.²²

Williamson states that he became aware of the injustices of apartheid, characterising it as indefensible. This awareness is reflected in his approach to his military service and he states that towards the end of his military career he developed a "Vietnam Syndrome ... [and that he did not] want to get killed doing this" as opposed to his early service where he was "keen as mustard... fighting for volk and vaderland".²³ While there is consistency within this narrative of disillusionment, Williamson articulates a set of difficulties and discomforts with his place in post-apartheid South Africa. He expresses a lack of belonging in that he is "still considered an outsider" and still experiences a pervasive feeling of being at odds with the new status quo.²⁴ His feeling of discomfort is amplified in specific situations, especially in his dealings with the new government where he states "every time [he] heads in to any sort of government organisation... maybe [his] body language is wrong, but everything, all the press... seems to indicate that [he's] not welcome here [in South Africa]. That [he's] different".²⁵ However, he also includes a sense of guilt for benefiting from and enjoying apartheid. I argue that these points of contention reflect incompatible identity positions that he is unable to reconcile, as Voster and Schofield have done, by disassociating military involvement from the socio-political context. Firstly, his unease with his citizenship reflects the role

²¹ Williamson, P., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 14/02/2008, p.10.

²² Williamson, p.12.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.15-16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12.

of military service in cementing white male South Africans as 'true' citizens being undermined by the political transition and the loss of that validation. Secondly, his awareness of the indefensible nature of apartheid and the guilt generated by his positive association with the benefits of the regime that he contributed to, are in contradiction with his historical sense of national identity and belonging. Williamson expresses the effect of these contradictions by stating that he is "tired of being guilty", immediately followed by confirming that he is indeed guilty of fighting for the apartheid regime.²⁶ He also expresses an awareness of how his military involvement affected his behaviour and the 'abnormality' of society and some of his behaviours after returning from deployment. However, he does not go into detail or offer an analysis of these behaviours, characterising them as normal for the time. Williamson's sense of citizenship and belonging thus reflects identity positions and elements that no longer hold true in the post-1994 context. The identities remain in turmoil, as he did not find new identity positions to which he could tether his constructions of nationality, citizenship, and belonging. Moreover, he could not disassociate his military experiences from their political implications, nor maintain a level of willed ignorance sufficient to avoid what constitutes a crisis of identity.

Richard Henry's retrospective discussion of his perception of military service focuses on those shifts that he has identified in his personal and family experiences. In my view, Henry's narrative illustrates two ways in which SADF veteran identities were impacted by transition, namely its personal meanings, and the socio-political behaviour associated with military service. Henry's construction of NS positions conscripts as "pawns" exploited by politicians, implying a situation where conscripts had little to no agency. He acknowledges the ideological context, communism and the Soviet threat in particular, as a method by which the apartheid regime mobilised support for its regional and internal security operations, but also expresses that the Soviet threat in particular seemed reasonable to him.²⁷ When questioned about his perception of the contemporary political sphere, where many former communist 'enemies' are now serving in the cabinet, Henry shifts the focus towards the impact that military service had on individuals. While the shift includes a brief acknowledgement of a negative undercurrent that the entire conflict was a "waste of time", Henry does not directly answer the question.²⁸ Instead, he re-frames the experience of military service according to the personal meanings that could be attached to it. Military service is characterised in youthful and masculine terms of power, strength, and virility as "an experience, you're young, keeps

²⁶ Williamson, p.12.

²⁷ Henry, R., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 19/09/2007, p.37.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.39.

you fit... it made a whole generation of South Africans quite macho and aggressive... in a good way and in a certain way you wouldn't take crap [sic]".²⁹ This militarised masculinity is compared to the modern 'metrosexual' masculinity, when Henry states that apartheid and the militarised context "was a male's environment and now it's not a male environment at all".³⁰ This immediately leads to a comment on NS as possibly the "hardest thing that you've [conscripts] ever done" and the fact that many men who fulfilled their service feel some desire for recognition.³¹ This sequence thus clearly draws associations between military service, masculinity, the political context, and re-affirmation of his citizenship.

The third point of impact, that is behaviour, as expressed by Henry, is inclusive of perceptions of culture, the behaviours learnt in the context of military service, the expression of political agency, and the challenges that some veterans face. Behaviour is not addressed directly, but forms part of the other discussions, as indicated above where Henry outlines his perception of masculinity associated with militarism. The characterisation of masculinity in this transcript is expressed as a persistent relic of apartheid militarism and NS. As a whole, NS is characterised as a fundamentally formative experience, "a major portion of your life [at time of service]... the best and the worst... the drunkest...".³² The centrality, and value, of military service itself has dissipated in the post-apartheid era and Henry raises some concerns about its legacy, including brief mention of alcohol abuse, the self-imposed silences some veterans exercise, a cultural context where militarism and interest in the military is waning, and difficulty coming to terms with the idea of defeat. In my view, these developments seem to be perceived as threats to militarised identities. A further indication of this sense of threat is expressed when Henry refers to the difficulties experienced by his brother in the transition. While not explicitly detailing his brother's difficulties, Henry does state that his brother left the SADF when "things were already starting to change" in the political sphere and subsequently struggled with extreme aggression and a sense of betrayal that the SADF "buckled" to the ANC.³³ Henry's brother represents an individual for whom military service and political orientation overlapped and found expression in extreme behaviours that may have held currency during apartheid. Accordingly, a key concept I identify in Richard Henry's overall narrative is the loss of currency value of NS, and military service more broadly, in South Africa since the end of apartheid

²⁹ Henry, p.40.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.40.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.40.

³² *Ibid.*, p.42.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.39.

and the impact of this loss on individuals who had identified strongly with those experiences as formative or central to their constructions of identity positions.

Negative Narratives

A counter-narrative to the generally positive perception of apartheid militarism and NS, and the associated dismissal or downplaying of negative behavioural effects of military involvement, is also present in this interview archive. The Dr. M interview is an exception in the archive in terms of his views on training, white South African culture during apartheid, and militarism more broadly. His narrative makes no attempt to deny the political implications of service or the negative impact of military service on individuals. Furthermore, it mounts no retrospective defence of the meanings of service in terms of identity through attempts to distance military service from apartheid and clearly associates military service with apartheid. While Dr. M's narrative is primarily concerned with his personal struggles with the psychological impacts of his military experiences, it does also encode a set of identity features of veterans, both in terms of his own identity and his perception of other soldiers and veterans. The narrative, as a result of his attempts to make sense of his personal experiences and addressing the psychological challenges of trauma, further includes reference to other veterans who are suffering the negative consequences of military service. As a result, this is one of the only narratives that places the responsibility for negative effects of military service on the SADF rather than positioning those effects as a result of individuals' 'weakness' or inability to cope with extreme or traumatic experiences.

Dr. M addresses the righteousness of the border conflict and the relationship between soldiers and their 'duty' when he reflects on the role of religion in NS. He relates that "traumatised young men would not go to the dominee... [because the dominees] were basically saying if you've got enough faith you can get through this. Some of the dominees said this and they also said you're fighting for the right. I don't think anybody on the border seriously thought they were fighting for the right after a couple of months there. I just don't think you could see routine torture of the local population... treating them [the local populaces] with the most open contempt [as righteous]".³⁴ This indicates a schism between the expectations of service and the reality of experiences in the conflict. It represents a tension between expectations and attached values of fulfilling duty and largely negative

³⁴ Dr.M, Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, November-December 2007, pp.17-18.

experiences that stood at odds with internal values. There is also a hint of the spiritual turmoil experienced by some SADF soldiers and the lack of opportunity to address the contradictions as a result of the clergy's support of apartheid conflicts. The self-positioning and identification with a concept of righteousness and moral behaviour indicated by this section in Dr. M's narrative expresses surprise at the interviewer's statement that many veterans still justified and rationalised their involvement in the conflict by referring to the threat of communism.

Dr. M's interview is unique, given the level of self-reflection present in the narrative, not only in terms of the political implications of service (which is present in some other interviews), but also in the amount of consideration given to his role in the military and more broadly in South Africa. Dr. M relates that he had suppressed the emotional trauma of serving as a medic in combat during the border wars, but still maintains that he did feel a great sense of personal guilt for complicity in the apartheid system. He expresses this in terms of survivor's guilt, racial guilt, and complicity in the system of separation based on race. Of his time on the border he states "I think I've attained a lot of survivor guilt over that [being a doctor treating a great number of UNITA injuries]. I felt, here's my white skin coming from the country that's causing all this conflict, safe because all of these absolute destitute black people in UNITA are taking these injuries. I felt such guilt over that...".³⁵ The sense of guilt is not isolated to experiences on the border however, and he refers to the guilt he felt for complicity in the separation of races in South Africa, especially in the context of the TRC. He states, "I went so far as to draft a personal apology for being complicit in apartheid. A personal apology for ever thinking it was normal that you had a hospital for black people only. For in any way complying with that system. I think we all did. All doctors did. Our training did."³⁶ The interviewer prompts Dr. M to address the perception that he perhaps was a victim of apartheid as well, to which he replies that he "didn't see it at the time the TRC was there... I definitely feel that now".³⁷ He refrains from elaborating on what that means in terms of behaviour. While noteworthy for the presence of this level of self-reflection, Dr. M does not indicate whether the sense of guilt had translated into any sense of responsibility or whether he had taken any steps to address the legacies of those injustices of which he was aware. Whether his perception of victimhood takes precedence over his sense of guilt remains unclear. Guilt and victimhood are persistent elements of his self-perception, but their positionings and relation to identity are too vague to determine.

³⁵ Dr.M, pp.25-26.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.52.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.52.

In terms of the persistent behavioural aspects of NS, Dr. M again raises some issues not present in any other interview. Camaraderie is positioned as one of the enduring positive benefits of military service whenever it is mentioned by other respondents in the archive. However, in Dr. M's case camaraderie plays a limited role in terms of the legacies of service. Instead, it is characterised as a superficial coping mechanism in Dr. M's experience, when he states that he "did have lots of meetings with people I'd been in the army with... We'd talk about life in the army but I think this is the level most men talk about the army, it's a sort of jokey thing... rolling around with laughter remembering things that are actually not really funny, but you had to kind of make them funny because that was the only way to make them bearable".³⁸ In the course of Dr. M's efforts to manage his PTSD, he attempted to use these meetings as a way to raise the issues and perhaps find opportunity to discuss traumatic events with fellow veterans. These attempts were met with rejection, and he relates an attitude of apathy and silence towards issues stemming from military service. He states that some former comrades were "delighted to hear from me but when they hear that I'm thinking about dealing about this [psychological trauma], reading of this, they don't want to talk about it".³⁹ Traumatic experiences, he states, have been "banished completely from their consciousness".⁴⁰ Despite this expressed suppression, in the course of his medical career he has encountered many men around his age facing severe problems, referring to symptoms such as alcohol abuse and problematic relationships, that in some cases he linked directly to traumatic military experiences. Attempts to engage with SANDF personnel on the issue of psychological assistance have been failures and he states that it all gave him a "strong sense that we must deal with it ourselves".⁴¹

Despite the distancing of military experiences from his current positions regarding them, NS is still positioned as a formative period in Dr. M's self-perception and identity constructions. Dr. M describes how the experiences of abuse lead to attempts to separate himself from other military personnel and the military establishment as a whole. This resulted in him eschewing any behaviour that would be considered *paraat*⁴² and focus entirely on his profession, to the extent of refusing to carry arms or participate in any parades or religious services. His retrospective view of this decision indicates that his NS experiences were central to his professional identity and also resulted in a

³⁸ Dr.M, p.55.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.60.

⁴² *Paraat* is literally translated to English as 'ready' or 'readiness' but the connotation of its use in Afrikaans goes beyond that to also contain elements of commitment, the willingness to sacrifice, eagerness, discipline, and a sense of self-righteousness.

greater degree of trauma, but that it created a perceptual difference between his view of Self and Other. This is clear in his statement, "I know that I was more traumatized in these combat situations because I didn't have a weapon... But I also felt that if I carried a weapon I would be just like them. I would be totally, totally beyond the pale. Because I'd be part of the military establishment."⁴³ This behaviour is not isolated to his time in the SADF; he describes the persistent consequences of his military experience. This is expressed in terms of his profession becoming his "holy grail... to be the best doctor I can be. And unfortunately I can see my family and my wife have suffered enormously... I can recognise the effect of [22 years of repressed trauma] and a certain level of creativity and motivation and drive has been completely absent since I came out of the army".⁴⁴ Dr. M does not directly imbue military service with a set of values, but the narrative clearly indicates the effects military experiences have had on his perception of himself, his positionings of work and family, and his approaches to national reconciliation (albeit in a limited symbolic form).

Retrospective Narratives: A Summary of Content

The degree of variation of approaches and narrative foci in the archive is reflected by the five transcripts outlined above. The positive-to-negative continuum only provides a baseline from which to generate positions and comparatively discuss the transcripts. Voster and Schofield both present positive views of military service as a whole and conscription and conscripts in particular. However, despite the similarly positive and value-laden natures of their narratives, the different foci of their arguments result in different implications for their identities. Voster's argument focuses near-exclusively on the perceived personal benefits of service and the set of values he associates with fulfilment of those expectations. It is clear that he maintains the positive connotations even at the time of interview, regardless of any negative implications of supporting apartheid militarism, which he neglects to acknowledge. Military service is imbued with a broad set of values that are embodied by veterans, an identity he strongly maintains. Schofield makes an argument appealing to the positive values of military service as well, but seemingly demands that the political and social implications of military service be ignored in favour of those benefits service may have conferred onto soldiers. Furthermore, he positions soldiers, and himself, as apolitical agents merely fulfilling their duty or performing their jobs to the highest degree of professionalism, which should supposedly absolve veterans of any degree of responsibility for involvement in state sanctioned

⁴³ Dr.M, p.63.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.55.

oppression. Both these narratives also associate masculinity and citizenship with military experience, implying that full realisation of either is contingent on having fulfilled military service.

Both the disassociation of military service from its political implications and the denial of any possible negative impact from military service on soldiers contain a range of characterisations that are reflective of identity positionings. Schofield's political disassociation serves to decontextualise military service and shift the focus to the supposed positive values of, for example, resilience, sense of duty, esprit de corps, and discipline that military service engendered. This is similar to Voster's characterisations, which also gloss over any negative consequences. In terms of identity, these narratives do reflect those aspects of gender established by the literature discussed in Chapters 1 to 3 of this thesis. They reflect a masculinity characterised by power and resilience achieved through the dutiful fulfilment of militaristic expectations without complaint. Military service is imbued with the meanings of self-realisation and excludes anything that may be perceived as a weakness or anything that may challenge the interviewees' interpretations of their military experiences. With regard to Schofield, he overtly and directly argues that a real professional soldier embodies commitment, discipline, and fortitude that somehow makes them immune to negative psychological effects. In the case of Voster, the issue is avoided through a dogged focus on the technical aspects of military service and those positive values that persist, specifically commitment, discipline, adventure, rite of passage to masculinity, and true citizenship. These two narratives reflect a maintenance of historical identities and its values, but only insofar as the identity maintains its disassociative positionings between experiences within the military sphere and the political implications of taking part in military activities serving a political purpose. Both narratives also show contradictions that go unaddressed.

Balanced retrospective views of military service reflect the same level of variation. Williamson's view incorporates the positive personal benefits alongside recognition of the potential negative consequences of military service, the social benefits conferred by service alongside recognition and awareness of the injustices that allowed them, and a strong sense of national identity based on fulfilment of military service undermined by the contemporary political milieu where SADF veteran identities have little to no currency. His narrative provides no solutions to managing these tensions, which left him in a state of internal unease and at odds with preponderant values in post-1994 South Africa. Henry, while reflecting some of the same positive/negative views of military service, emphasises justifications of historical events, casting conscripts as pawns exploited and duped by politicians. He takes no explicit stance on issues of responsibility or reconciliation, but the narrative does tend towards a passive positioning of SADF veterans whose identities and values are

threatened by a shifting socio-political landscape. Most of the transcripts tend towards the positive end of the continuum, positioning military experiences and associated values positively, with limited acknowledgement of the potential negative implications, both personal and social. As a result of the generally positive positionings of military experiences, most transcripts do not typically tackle difficult questions of trauma, personal responsibility, or the impact of decades of militarism.

The singularly negative construction of military service by Dr. M has the effect of shifting the focus of military service almost exclusively towards the potential behavioural and psychological impacts, a topic typically avoided by those veterans interviewed for this archive. The narrative also illustrates how the experience of conscription resulted in the formation of a professional identity and behaviour directly opposed to the expected embodiment of militaristic values. There is an underlying understanding in the archive that the experiences of military service had extensive effects on behaviour, and Dr. M's narrative brings that into sharp relief. The negative approach to the entire experience of military service also results in a rejection of a variety of justifications for the border wars, including a rejection of the communist threat, the pristine image of apartheid security forces, and the righteousness of defending systems of prejudice and oppression. This is also present in Williamson's narrative, where his inability to maintain a level of willed ignorance and disassociation between his own actions and their political implications led to the erosion of belief in the justifications for apartheid conflicts. However, whereas Dr. M responded by drawing values and self-worth from his medical career, Williamson expresses a degree of identity turmoil as a result of not having an alternative identity anchor, such as a career or vocation. Having established this continuum of general approaches to military service, I will now turn towards specific recurring or specifically relevant themes as they present in these veteran narratives.

Interviewee Views on Entry into the SADF and Associated Meanings

Conscription features extensively across the archive as the vector for military service, but enlistment and military-career oriented paths are also present. A key feature of conscription as an entry into the military is the absolute normalisation, if not naturalisation, of compulsory military service. The narratives substantiate the claims made in the literature presented in Chapter 2 regarding the coercive structural context that groomed young white South African boys for military service. However, the level of normalisation seems to go beyond what is suggested in the literature. Registration at age 16 and call-up after matric raised few questions – not from the interviewees

themselves, nor from their families. Serious considerations of the implications of call-up and military duty are the exception. Interviewees also cite existing connections to the idea of military service as a way of normalisation, referring to family members who had served in various conflicts (with the South African War, world wars, and the Korean War mentioned), as well as siblings or extended family members having fulfilled their service. A notable exception is respondent 'Dr. M', who attempted to avoid conscription as a result of his liberal Catholic familial context. Despite his expressed dislike of the idea of conscription, he did participate in the compulsory cadet system and was registered at age 16 with pressure from the school headmaster.⁴⁵ In this instance, liberal political leanings seem to be the source of opposition to conscription, but there is only one other source of opposition to NS mentioned in the transcripts. Steve Smit opposed conscription into the SADF because of some disagreement with the manner in which the Defence Force was conducting itself, as he did not agree with "what was happening in the Defence Force".⁴⁶ The exact nature of this position is not clarified and he opted to join the South African Police instead. Smit expresses that he found the police to be overly antagonistic, militaristic, and corrupt, opting not to continue in police service as a result of the 'quality' of other policemen. This led Smit to join the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) and later transition to the National Intelligence Service (NIS). In this instance, the idea of service generally is not objected to, but rather the morality and ethical conduct of leadership and colleagues. The broader ethical dimensions of service within the apartheid security sector does not present itself in any other transcript in the context of entry into service.

Roy Vermaak's comments on military service and his reasons for joining the special forces illustrate the naturalisation of militarisation and how it had permeated everyday civil life. His narrative of entry into the SADF is one of normalisation, establishing himself as an "average South African boy" with an interest in military affairs as a result of seeing another family member being called up, being exposed to recruitment drives before and after his own call up, and his perception of military service as a great adventure. Vermaak states that he was not driven politically, by racism, or by any innate aggressiveness, but rather by "young men's eagerness to go and experience the war through the form of the military".⁴⁷ In addition to personal reasons, the ideological threat of Communism seems to be the default justification of conscription, especially combined with the compulsory nature of NS. Richard Henry expresses this distinctly, in addition to referring to his family's military heritage. He appears dismissive of the question of motivations, stating that he was reasonably excited and that

⁴⁵ Dr.M, p.1.

⁴⁶ Smit, S., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 06/08/2007, p.2.

⁴⁷ Vermaak, R., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 14/09/2007, p.4.

“it was pretty much, it’s the law, I have to go”.⁴⁸ In response to questions of ideological motivations, Henry rejects political motivations but does refer to the threat of Communism, stating “there wasn’t much political ... The Communist was the threat. There was no black African Nationalism, that wasn’t mentioned.”⁴⁹ Anton Oberholzer also refers to the “obviously compulsory” nature of conscription but adds that there was social stigmatisation attached to trying to avoid NS. This stigma is associated with both duty as a South African citizen and in terms of the need to defend hearth and home from threat. Oberholzer states that, “as a white South African you had to go and fight for your country, and the Communist force was pretty strong and moving towards South West Africa”.⁵⁰ This reflects the association between NS, the perception of duty and obligation (whether related to masculinity here is not explicit but can be inferred), and the full realisation of white South African citizenship.

The complexity of pressures on the conscript is compounded by family situations. This has already been alluded to, but it is explicitly articulated by Dr. Colin Forbes, who states that he “never questioned National Service, whether there was an option of going or not. I was fully committed to going, my brother had gone straight after school and had come with lots of stories to me it was kind of a right [sic] of passage”.⁵¹ In addition to this, Forbes adds that NS was a patriotic duty and that he was defending South Africa. Forbes positions himself as a liberal English-speaking South African and disassociates himself from the government. Despite stating that he did not have any strong political inclinations, he does admit that he was a ‘mild racist’, a state he applies to all white South Africans. What complicates this narrative is the manipulative pressures placed on him by his parents which hastened his reporting for conscription. Marius Oberholzer also relates a story of pressure from his parents, both civil servants, during his mid-1980s call-up. His father, a state prosecutor, gave him an ultimatum to choose between the SADF and the security police.⁵² In the case of Trevor Samson, he attributes his unquestioning submission to conscription to political naiveté and the fact that his mother wasn’t “politically inclined”.⁵³ Thus, according to Samson, conscription became something “that everybody did and my turn came up and off I went”.⁵⁴ This would suggest that opposition to

⁴⁸ Henry, p.1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

⁵⁰ Oberholzer, A., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 17/01/2008, p.1.

⁵¹ Forbes, Dr.C., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 04/11/2007, p.1.

⁵² Oberholzer, M., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 14/01/2008, p.1.

⁵³ Samson, T., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 27/04/2008, p.1.

⁵⁴ Samson, p.1.

conscription, even if just a discussion of avoiding NS, is a result of politicisation, while passive submission is posited as apolitical. Sven Kreher recounts family discussions concerning politics that led him to debate leaving South Africa to avoid military service. However, in his case, elements of citizenship and duty combined with fostering values such as discipline resulted in his reporting for NS.⁵⁵ Mike Huxtable and Ruvan Boshoff's narratives also include overlap between the issues of NS, patriotism, duty, and NP support. In both cases, they describe their parents as nationalists in support of the NP for whom NS was a given. In the case of Boshoff, he was even told that NS would "make a better person out of you".⁵⁶ The importance of parental guidance is clear across these examples and throughout the archive, even in cases where parents attempted to dissuade their sons from performing NS (as in the case of Dr. M, where his decision to complete NS became a point of contention in an atmosphere of blame). These instances also serve to undermine narratives that argue that NS was unrelated to political convictions.

Culture, especially Afrikaner culture, is also frequently cited as a motivating factor for completing NS. Roelof Voster expresses this in relation to his family and culture by saying that "being conservative Afrikaans... the army was something you had to do... yes, it was a concern, boetie's going to the army, type of thing, and no-one actually liked that but it was part of life, so to speak".⁵⁷ Culturally different experiences of military service are often cited across call-up, training, and service contexts, but the normalisation of NS and the militarisation of civil society is clear in the context of call-up and mustering for training and service. For most of the interviewees, by the time of registration or call-up, the idea of NS had been normalised to the point where, short of the extremes of conscientious objection or self-imposed exile, they saw few alternatives. In terms of drawing generalisations on the basis of evidence in the archive, it could be argued that concepts that supported NS, such as its relationship to citizenship, its power as a rite of passage, the patriotic elements, and the marking of the experience as an adventure had taken deep hold on the average young white South African male. What is conspicuous by its absence in these interviews, despite some prompting, is the lack of self-reflection on the lead-up to military service. The normalisation of militarism and state sanctioned violence as a solution to threat, and as a mode to fulfil gendered duties and 'prove' citizenship, had been deeply instilled. Despite the variation in interviewees' contexts and the internal and familial tensions, the net result was invariably submission to conscription. Identity and

⁵⁵ Kreher, S., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 22/02/2008, pp.1-2.

⁵⁶ Boshoff, R., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 27/04/2008, p.2.

⁵⁷ Voster, p.1.

demilitarisation theories do not address how to challenge these normalised worldviews. Considering the impact these normalised worldviews have, this indicates a gap in the models suggested for addressing and changing militarised behaviour. In the following section, interviewees' experiences of training will be outlined.

Narratives of Military Training

The archive presents a distinct set of narratives that concern the experiences and valuation of military training. The interviewees express divergent responses to the nature of training in terms of prior expectation, physicality, brutality, and the quality of training. The interviewees' approaches to training are clearly mediated by past experiences of brutality as well as educational contexts, especially when it comes to interviewees with medical backgrounds. However, despite a pervading environment of brutality, the positive valuation of military training is more common in this archive than a negative one, and it takes a variety of forms. For example, whether training was brutal is not questioned or challenged directly in this archive. John Keene, a conscript who would attain the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major, notes the "incredible savagery" of training.⁵⁸ The brutality stemmed not only from instructors, but also from the "barbarism" with which older trainees treated new intakes.⁵⁹ This, Keene states, continued as the norm and was part of the SADF's organisational ethos. Responses to the severity of SADF training vary and they are subject to a variety of interpretations. In the case of Roy Vermaak, a special forces veteran, the severity of training has clear positive connotations. The learnt ability to "vasbyt", despite the extreme nature of training, is posited as a sign of the calibre of the training. Whether or not the level of brutality displayed was necessary does not seem to have been considered. The description of the extremes of training is normalised across narratives related to training, with reference to the common 'rondfok and opfok' sessions. Despite the acknowledgement of abuse, perhaps as a result of its normalisation, SADF training is seen as having a predominantly positive impact that interviewees attribute to its perceived quality and its reinforcement of values such as discipline, toughness, and following orders. Indeed, individuals who struggled during training are positioned as the problem, rather than a system that even the interviewees recognise as excessively brutal.

⁵⁸ Keene, J., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 19/09/2007, p.7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

Experiences of military training are further mediated by values and culture, either being interpreted as positive or entirely normalised. M. Oberholzer adopts a cultural interpretation of responses to training and relates that training was normal, even referring to the similarities between training and his strict and disciplined family context. He claims to understand that the severity of training instilled even greater discipline, in short, justifying the brutality. Continuing the cultural interpretation of these experiences, Oberholzer argues that English-speaking conscripts questioned and struggled with training more than their Afrikaans peers. Paul Fouche also interprets his training as a soldier as normalised by Afrikaans-speaking white South African culture, in that discipline was a “high priority” and thus the training served existing cultural values.⁶⁰ Culturally mediated experiences are of import, given the reported additional ill-treatment of English-speaking soldiers by instructors and officers. However, not all English interviewees in the archive would agree. Some, such as Mike Huxtable, apply their own cultural interpretations to their experiences in training. Huxtable attributes English conscripts’ lack of motivation for military service to the lack of patriotism, whereas he feels Afrikaners entered into the SADF with a pre-existing understanding of military service as a defence of the Afrikaner *volk en vaderland*, in addition to the aforementioned discipline and obedience to authority.⁶¹ Frans van Niekerk presents the view that Afrikaans and English conscripts experienced the same problems as a result of ‘normal training’, but that they merely adopted different coping mechanisms given their diverging cultural values and socioeconomic backgrounds. In his view, Afrikaans men responded with increased aggression as a coping mechanism, while English men showed a greater willingness to question their situations.⁶² In addition to culture, van Niekerk specifically attributes the differences in responses to socioeconomic disparity, in that the Afrikaners did not have the financial means to pursue alternatives, although he says nothing regarding their inclination to find alternatives either.⁶³ Whether the financial position of English conscripts did have bearing on their behaviour is not addressed in the literature, but what is important here is perception. The perception of the strong-willed English serviceman is also found in M. Pretorius’ transcript, in which he states that he gained a greater sense of confidence and freedom of expression from interacting with English soldiers. However, one anonymous interviewee (‘National

⁶⁰ Fouché, P., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 15/04/2008, p.22.

⁶¹ Huxtable, M., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 26/02/2008, p.6.

⁶² Van Niekerk, F., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 09/02/2008, p.5.

⁶³ Van Niekerk, p.5.

Serviceman') did state that despite the cultural differences, English soldiers were as *paraat* as the Afrikaners.⁶⁴

While some interviewees do criticise aspects of military training, few view the entire experience negatively. Dr. Colin Forbes' view exemplifies this limited criticism of training.⁶⁵ Despite recounting experiences of abuse and the fact that his medical training was substandard, he raises no fundamental problems with NS. Dr. M is the only interviewee who expresses a strong negative view of training and NS generally. In his narrative, abusive training techniques and discrimination against English speakers is not normalised or reinterpreted as serving constructive purpose. He criticises training, in particular, not only as harsh, punitive, and inconsistent, but also as ill-suited to his role as a medic, as he received no actual training in field trauma or trauma treatment.⁶⁶ The lack of suitable training is mentioned by Forbes as well, but is not specifically criticised as a failure on the part of the SADF. Dr. M provides a greater amount of detail on the minutia of abuses and the nature of the environment created during training that is echoed, at least in passing, by many of the other interviewees as well as broader literature. The key difference is that, unlike other interviewees, Dr. M is the only individual who found the abusive nature of SADF training remarkable and objectionable rather than a direct continuation of militarised civil contexts. However, Dr. M presents an extreme departure from the norm in terms of responses to training. The norm, as overwhelmingly expressed by the interviewee responses, is the acceptance and rationalisation of abusive experiences during training.

Responses to the Ideological Context

As discussed in Chapter 1, ideological convictions or ideologically-informed worldviews have strong impacts on the perception of experiences and events and, therefore, on identity positionings. Throughout the interview archive, questions of ideology, politics, and propaganda are raised by both the interviewer and the participants. In some cases, the interviewees take it upon themselves to

⁶⁴ National Serviceman (Name Withheld), Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 10/09/2007, p.19.

⁶⁵ Forbes, p.6. In this instance he specifically mentions that medical training only started during the last three months of training and that there was no training for treating trauma injuries. These criticisms are mentioned in passing a number of times throughout the interview.

⁶⁶ Dr.M, pp.2-5. Dr.M's criticisms of training are widespread throughout the interview but these pages in particular focus on the broader nature and failures of the training.

address ideological issues without prompt, suggesting that, for some, ideology was an existing concern they felt the need to address. The spaces in which these questions are situated span across all distinct narrative sections and, as a trend with few exceptions, take the form of disassociation. What I mean by this term is that the interviewees go to some length to distance their own actions from political and civil contexts in apartheid South Africa. A few methods are employed to achieve this disassociation, including claims to ignorance on the one hand and the affirmation that their own convictions do not reflect the status quo on the other. The latter is presented, or at least understood, by interviewees as immunisation from questions of complicity or responsibility. In this section, ideological content will be outlined through a consideration of the interviewees' positionings relative to NP policies and SADF practices, the conflicts they were part of (e.g. what they perceive as the enemy, threats, or justifications), and their comments regarding political transformation after the end of apartheid.

A common approach to the question of the relation between the military and political spheres during apartheid is the distancing of military service from its political implications. While this may hold true at a personal level, some interviewees extended this across the military as a whole. General George Meiring, who was the General Officer Commanding South West Africa (1983) as well as the Chief of the SADF and later the SANDF, positions the military and political spheres as oppositional in that the political sphere did not always behave in a manner that supported military operations and influenced the conduct of operations. This divorcing of the military sphere from the political in the context of apartheid is, in short, disingenuous, especially from high-ranking military personnel who also formed part of apartheid policy implementation and enforcement both regionally and internally. However, this separation of military actions from its political implications is widely maintained throughout the interview archive, reflecting SADF doctrine and its prevailing rhetoric.

Political views in the context of military service during apartheid are framed in terms of duty and citizenship. Peter Williamson positions his own military service during apartheid as neutral, stating that "you fought for the government in power and that was it" and that he "was happy to keep the peace [and] wasn't there to take sides".⁶⁷ In the interview, and specifically in the context of discussing his views on military service, he repeatedly establishes his belief in his position as a "true white African" based on his heritage and his ability to speak a variety of African languages "in the

⁶⁷ Williamson, p.10, 11.

true sense”.⁶⁸ However, Williamson also claims that he realised the injustices of apartheid but did not have the fortitude, or “guts” in his own words, to challenge the system. Furthermore, he claims that he could not defend the system of apartheid, which he is “guilty” of enjoying and privileging from.⁶⁹ His reconciliation of support for military service in support of apartheid and acknowledgement that apartheid is indefensible illustrates the extent of the disassociation of the military sphere from the systems of injustice that maintained apartheid and the privileges it conferred on white South Africans. The sentiment of ‘service to the government at the time’ is echoed widely in the archive, but is not the only form of rejecting the political dimensions of military service. Other claims reflect the literature in terms of seeing service as an adventure (e.g. Peter Williamson, Dr. Colin Forbes, Marius Pretorius, Peter Williams, Roy Vermaak), a rite of passage (e.g. Roelof Voster, Dr. Anthony Turton, Henry Combrink), or merely as an unavoidable apolitical event to which they were subjected. The fact that the military was a space in which political engagement was discouraged could also be a contributing factor. Dr. M recounts that during training and operations, there was an unspoken agreement to avoid any political discussion in order to avoid interpersonal conflict.⁷⁰ There was also a significant threat of being informed upon for defeatism or anti-government sentiment. The notion that the military should be apolitical, and therefore that it was apolitical is also raised by Mike Huxtable, who claims that it was the police, not the military, who had chosen sides and created problems during internal operations.⁷¹ The higher-echelon interviewees in the archive, including Gen. George Meiring and Gen. Jannie Geldenhuys, maintain and propagate this supposed apolitical posture.

More time is spent in discussing the concept of threat than the political implications of military service and this is where, I argue, the second level of disassociation from apartheid occurs. The threat of communism is frequently employed by the interviewees to justify militarism and military service. An overreaching feature of the interviewees’ discussions of threat in the form of communism is the lack of concrete understanding of what its features and tenets were supposed to be. Frans van Niekerk gives the clearest example of what communism was supposed to entail in his discussion of who the ‘enemy’ was at the time. The threat of communism forms part of his memory of apartheid, and communism is outlined as a system where “everything belongs to the government... [and that also means] no religion”.⁷² Van Niekerk states that he was taught that SWA

⁶⁸ Williamson, p.12, 20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷⁰ Dr.M., p.3.

⁷¹ Huxtable, p.9.

⁷² Van Niekerk, p.8.

had to be protected from SWAPO in order to protect South Africa from communism and its Cuban and Soviet backers. The same vagueness is present in Marius Pretorius' understanding of the 'enemy', which includes SWAPO, the ANC and its leaders, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the SACP and its leaders, and the "insurgencies" in South Africa and SWA within the ambit of the communist threat.⁷³ Both these narratives display a critical lack of nuance in their understandings of the various groups opposing apartheid South Africa and the NP, especially in terms of their ideologies, aims, or motivations for opposition. Most interviewees, however, provide little indication that they had, or have, a clear understanding of what the threats they were groomed and trained to fight amounted to. However, despite this lack of understanding, fighting communism remains central to their narratives of threat and persists in justifications of military service.

The use of the communist threats as justification for internal and regional conflicts features in interviewees' recollections of military training, school, and church. In most cases the interviewees mentioned thus far do not state what position they held on the concept of threat at the time of interview.⁷⁴ The persistence of anti-communist sentiment is expressed in M. Oberholzer's statement that, despite understanding that apartheid was "wrong", he "still [doesn't] trust communists".⁷⁵ Sarel Theron recounts a similar association between communism and race in his recounting of being taught in school that black people were easier to convert to communism.⁷⁶ The underlying association between communism and race is mentioned but not directly addressed beyond referring to it in the schooling context. Some interviewees relate the fight against communism to the relatively peaceful political transition in South Africa. This argument has already been addressed, and called into question, in an earlier chapter, but the examples from this archive indicate two approaches to the claim. In his response to the question of whether he regretted military service, Dewald Hattingh relates apartheid conflict directly to the fight against communism and suggests that

⁷³ Pretorius, M., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 29/01/2008, pp.5-6.

⁷⁴ An anecdotal expression of this is found in M. Oberholzer and A. Oberholzer's narratives - M. Oberholzer relates this in his recounting of training for signals intelligence, where they received lectures on the topic of communism and the communist onslaught South Africa was experiencing. He also relates that he had a greater understanding of events at the time as a result of his father's involvement in law enforcement as a state prosecutor, and that he saw the conflict and the actions of the Security Police (specifically assault and torture) as justified "because we were fighting communism ... [and that therefore he] personally didn't have a problem with it". A. Oberholzer's discussion of threat includes similar sentiments and similar vagueness. However, his experience indicates a broader intersection of concepts, including the idea of "whites versus Communism", the role of the church in convincing white South Africans of the threat, and he even reframes township duty as anti-communist, not anti-black.

⁷⁵ Oberholzer, M., p.30.

⁷⁶ Theron, S., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 13/02/2008, p.25.

it contributed towards a greater level of safety in South Africa.⁷⁷ Hattingh does not elaborate on the argument but the comment does reflect a common concern for safety that is expressed by many interviewees. However, safety for whom, and from whom, is not specified. A. Oberholzer's association between anti-communist operations and township duty relates to a concern for safety and contains underlying associations between communism and black South Africans, with no reference to the real political dimensions of unrest and resistance to apartheid. Paul Fouché makes the same argument for the Border Wars as 'just war' and blames the communist threat for militarism and that "things changed completely so there was no need anymore to defend South Africa against a gevaar" after the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁷⁸ A somewhat different perspective of communism is given by Richard Henry, who recounts that, during training, communism was constructed as the threat, but also as being unrelated to politics. The consideration of the causes for unrest, especially inside South Africa, is near non-existent, save a few exceptions that will be discussed shortly.

The archive contains three exceptions to the expressed belief that the threat of communism was a major factor in South Africa's militarism and its need for military service. Recce 'G' relates reaching the realisation that the perception of communism and *swart gevaar* that was created during apartheid turned out to be untrue.⁷⁹ Not all interviewees came to this realisation after transition, as is exemplified by M. Oberholzer's continued perception that communists are untrustworthy. The narrative of realisation presents still more strongly in Brian Roger's recounting of commitment to fighting communism and his later realisation that the NP government "actually wasn't fighting communism, it was fighting to defend apartheid".⁸⁰ Rogers displays a level of awareness of the processes of rationalising the communist threat, in addition to the acknowledgement of state repression of internal dissent, especially in townships. In the Dr. M's transcript, the topics of acknowledgement of injustices and communism as a justification for militarism is discussed in tandem. Dr. M expresses a level of incredulity at the interviewer's clarification that many other interviewees maintain a belief in the communist onslaught, and thereby justify the abuse of military and other state-sanctioned violence, as well as the racism inherent in the apartheid system. Dr. M attributes this continued belief in the communist threat and the denial of racism and systemic

⁷⁷ Hattingh, D., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 17/04/2008, p.74.

⁷⁸ Fouché, p.22.

⁷⁹ Recce 'G', Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 08/09/2007, p.14.

⁸⁰ Rogers, B., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 17/04/2008, p.39.

injustice to what he sees as the “multiple personality disorder” of South African society.⁸¹ This multiple personality disorder, he suggests, is how South Africans rationalised, and continue to rationalise, both their experiences and the implications of the systems they were party to, allowing them to continue believing in a communist threat despite all evidence to the contrary. This view presents a much more nuanced position, relating to questions of guilt and responsibility that other interviewees merely gloss over or trivialise.

Narratives Concerning the Position of SADF Veterans in the Post-Apartheid Context

The majority of the interview narratives concern experiences during apartheid, but there are some discussions of the state of South Africa since 1994 as it relates to veterans. The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 refers to some of the attempts to manage veterans, namely the TRC and Special Hearing on Compulsory Military Service, and the treatment of veterans by the DMV. While the TRC is mentioned in some interviews, it is typically in the form of passing comments or superficial characterisations. Therefore, to address the question of veteran identities over time, the broader discussions of concerns raised by the interviewees of post-1994 South Africa will be drawn upon to relate to the veteran management context as well as general views on race, society, culture, and the specific identity-related themes. The brief nature of many of the comments on the post-1994 period allows for an abstract analysis of those comments and the associated identity elements they contain.

In a brief response to the interviewer’s prompts concerning the 1994 political transition and the question of military defeat, Sarel Theron frames the question as a matter of difference between the political and military spheres. The transition is characterised as a political ‘defeat’, not a military one. Theron’s narrative does criticise politicians, but he states that “the military [leadership] betrayed the military... [and Adrian Vlok] and Magnus Malan, all those guys, they must take the rap and they’re just getting away with it. So there’s another injustice done. Poor schmuks [sic] on the ground take all the rap again”.⁸² While these statements do lack a sense of clarity in terms of what responsibility the specific parties should bear, Theron is certainly aware of the fact that the rank-and-file members of the security sector bore the brunt of the blame. Even though he recognises that atrocities occurred during apartheid, Theron distances himself from them in addition to shifting the blame for

⁸¹ Dr.M, p.57.

⁸² Theron, pp.41-42.

those excesses up the chain of command. He states that “we all did atrocities. Ok not us, I didn’t even know about [the atrocities]... I just got told, hey, the communists are coming, we better defend”.⁸³ He continues to reinforce this shifting of blame and responsibility to leadership in his perception of the TRC, when he states that “it’s definitely not the small guys that must take the rap. Those politicians got away with it anyway. This whole TRC thing was a joke”.⁸⁴ He places himself in an ambiguous position: removed from the considerations of the legacies of apartheid and concerned only with his own situation. He states, “let’s start new, let’s get over it... I think it’s [the political and military situation in South Africa] a bigger mess than what it ever was. This whole country is in a big mess”.⁸⁵

Theron’s brief discussion is positioned between the recounting of humorous military experiences and stands almost in isolation as a question of personal responsibility and the legacy of apartheid. His reduction of the problems facing South Africa in the aftermath of apartheid to merely issues everyone should ‘get over’ and the placement of all blame on political and military leadership (in particular he states that Gen. Malan should have been imprisoned), results in his own position being absolved of all responsibility. The absolution of lower-echelon military personnel allows the positive values he has attached to military service (outlined earlier in this chapter) to be disassociated from the political context as well as the military and its leadership. Theron maintains a positive view of military service, imbues it with positive values, regrets the end of compulsory military service, and rues the situation that the border wars had become a ‘forgotten history’. The disassociation could serve to protect a military identity that would otherwise be tarnished by associations to atrocities and injustices. He clearly states that compulsory military service teaches self-respect, self-sufficiency, and confidence. The issue is not with the value of these behavioural aspects, but that, for Theron, they have been inextricably linked to military service, reflecting narratives of rite of passage and masculine maturation outlined in Chapter 2. The fulfilment of military service thus imbues him with these same positive attributes, and according to his understanding of the political transition, absolves him of any responsibility, protecting the remaining military identity from threat.

A. Oberholzer’s discussion of the post-1994 period is characterised more strongly by a sense of exclusion from South African civil society that he generalises to most servicemen. A. Oberholzer makes an appeal to first-hand knowledge as a result of the experience to initiate his discussion of

⁸³ Theron, p.42.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.42.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.42.

the political and societal changes since 1994. He maintains this even in his own social sphere, where he states that “a lot of guys would ask, and I say, you weren’t there so you don’t know, so shut up... But the guys who were there, they all basically have the same feeling, what was it for?”⁸⁶ This illustrates the defensiveness that is present through much of his discussion of veterans and their position in post-1994 South Africa. He represents SADF conflicts as a fight against “the enemy and the Communists” (‘enemy’ here remaining unspecified) and that his job was “not to go into townships and shoot South African blacks”.⁸⁷ The TRC in particular provokes his ire in his perception that he had been asked to “go and repent my sins of the past”.⁸⁸ There is some slippage in this argument however: he maintains that SADF operations were unrelated to politics and political leadership, but simultaneously characterises apartheid conflicts as a “waste” since “the country is handed over to them anyway”.⁸⁹ To what group ‘them’ refers is unclear, but it is either communists, black South Africans, or an overlapping category. A. Oberholzer therefore constructs the historical context as an exculpation of veterans through the disassociation of any political meaning from military service, despite the inconsistency of this construction.

With this construction of the position of veterans, A. Oberholzer turns to a discussion of the experiences of SADF veterans in post-1994 South Africa, focusing on the sense of exclusion and other challenges he feels they face. Exclusion in this narrative encompasses the political change in relation to military service. He claims that servicemen are excluded from South Africa, a sentiment that remains vague throughout the transcript, but that the experience of military service remains central to the individuals. Despite referring to a range of negative social impacts he or veteran acquaintances had experienced, including difficulty in managing relationships, difficulty reading social cues, repression of experiences, and a range of other issues he includes under a broad understanding of PTSD, A. Oberholzer remains committed to NS. He states that “we had to do it [NS] and it’s part of what we became... I think it made me what I am today”.⁹⁰ The attachment is indicated in explicit support for conscription, continued association with comrades in arms, a continued interest in the debates regarding the representation of the border conflicts, and an expressed concern about the lack of awareness of the SADF’s conflict in Angola. As is commonly expressed in the archive and literature, the support for conscription is value-driven, specifically in terms of discipline and respect learnt during basic training. How the points he raises is related to the

⁸⁶ Oberholzer, A., p.46.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.47.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.47.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.46.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.48.

feeling of exclusion is unclear, but the relation hinges on a commitment to a veteran identity, the contents of which includes more negative components than the positive discipline and respect to be gained from military service. Nonetheless, A. Oberholzer maintains this commitment and still attempts to justify his experiences through a naturalisation of conflict and an appeal to the concept of a border-space. He states, “since the beginning of time we had war, and I don’t think we’ll ever stop, but it is a necessity for you to protect your borders. Protect your country from invaders. It’s an integral part. So that’s why I feel that it was necessary for us, because if South West Africa back then was taken over then we would have been next. It was just evident that we had to protect ourselves.”⁹¹ These justifications all serve as defences of soldiers’ historical actions and, by extension, the veteran identity A. Oberholzer still projects.

M. Oberholzer illustrates another response to the topic of SADF veterans’ place in contemporary civil and political society. His response to the interviewer’s question concerning whether his military background features significantly in his interactions with black colleagues indicates an intersection between historical and political perceptions, racial antagonism, and concerns regarding narratives of apartheid conflicts. He states “I’ve been asked that a few times [by black colleagues, whether I was a soldier]... I think they’ve got a more sinister motive behind it. Try and say, you were the enemy at one stage... I just blow them off... then they will try and brag to you that they were an Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier and all that... You can’t call yourself a soldier, you were a terrorist. From my point of view. Obviously one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist. So from my point of view I still see them, and I can never accept it”.⁹² This negative perception is justified by reference to the legitimacy of military service and a reference to the equivalency of violent action between the SADF and MK, portraying the SADF more positively. He continues, stating that “they [MK] were planting bombs, doing unconventional warfare, which you refer to as terrorism. They were not wearing a uniform. They were terrorists. If they come into your country carrying a firearm without a uniform that’s a terrorist... So it’s unfortunate but being that person it bugs me, because like you say in the introduction, there are a lot of people who have a misperception about SADF soldiers and what we had to go through and we were forced to go.”⁹³ The uniform is imbued with symbolic meaning and, in M. Oberholzer’s narrative, it makes any action performed while in uniform justified and legitimate.

⁹¹ Oberholzer, A., p.51.

⁹² Oberholzer, M., p.38.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.38.

There is also a subtle reference to marginalisation or exclusion from civil and political society that is connected to military experiences in M. Oberholzer's narrative. Leading on from a discussion of the elements that resulted in submission to conscription in his experience (complicity of church and state, and Afrikaner culture), the interview shifts to M. Oberholzer's perceptions of the state of South Africa since political transition. There is a stark contradiction in this narrative between the expression of deep political concerns and a sense of self-imposed political marginalisation. On the one hand, M. Oberholzer expresses concerns about political corruption, infrastructure collapse, and a host of other social challenges that he describes as the "falling back" of South Africa "towards Zimbabwe".⁹⁴ On the other, he absolutely rejects the idea of becoming politically involved with either mainstream politics or the Afrikaans organisations that had approached him. This extends to the fact that he had at the time of the interview not updated his Identity Document to the new, post-apartheid format. This retreat from civil society exists alongside a deep concern for the state of the country, his personal attachment to his veteran identity, and the perception of SADF veterans more broadly. He further argues for the positive benefits of military service by stating that some undefined social challenges facing South African society could be addressed through the discipline, self-sufficiency, and maturity that military service supposedly provides. His value system and perception of how people ought to behave as well as his valuation of black South Africans (at least the black colleagues he referred to) is informed by his own experiences of militarised society and military service. As these have little currency in the post-apartheid context, he opted to channel all his efforts into environmental concerns, rather than engage in any political actions.

With Theron, A. Oberholzer, and M. Oberholzer, there is a definite maintenance of veteran identities through the association of value systems with those military experiences, but this is certainly not universal in the archive. One interviewee, who is referred to as "National Serviceman", speaks of the long-term effects of military experiences on relationships well after 1994, and states "there's so many families and so many people that are so scarred from the war they can't even express themselves. Because they're either embarrassed or they're either too ashamed... whatever the reasons are... who really is interested in their tale? No-one."⁹⁵ For National Serviceman, the SADF veteran identity is not something to be defended and maintained, but merely the marker of some experiences that are generally perceived negatively, with a degree of resentment towards politics. However, this perception is held alongside a recognition of the formative experiences that resulted from his exposure to a broader range of other South Africans and their cultures, which occurred in

⁹⁴ Oberholzer, M., p.40.

⁹⁵ National Serviceman, p.19.

the context of military service. Recce 'G' relates a similar approach to his military experiences as formative. He suggests that certain positive aspects of behaviour resulted from them, but he also expresses a broader understanding of the context of apartheid conflicts. While Recce 'G' does express a level of internal conflict – resulting from what he identifies as the abuse of religion as a mobilising mechanism during apartheid and the tensions in his family context as a result of his military service – he does not express a great deal of commitment to a veteran identity. The communist threat, religious mobilisation, and militarism are naturalised as shifting spheres in the service of politics. His outlook on historical and contemporary contexts includes considerations of the political, economic, and societal shifts that are expressed as neither undermining nor reinforcing his military service. National Serviceman and Recce 'G's narratives indicate an awareness of the formative experiences that occurred during their respective periods of military involvement, but there is little to indicate that their veteran identities are as central to their everyday experiences of contemporary politics or society as is displayed by Theron, A. Oberholzer, and M. Oberholzer. Their military identities have been overshadowed by their civilian identities.

A different set of consequences of involvement in the military establishment is found in Howard Fletcher's recounting of his experiences in the South African Air Force (SAAF). Fletcher's narrative challenges the common espousal of the formative value of military experiences as being a result of the military organisation. Fletcher spent roughly 10 years in service⁹⁶, mostly in active operations, in addition to some years serving in the Citizen Force and compulsory camps towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. Despite being in the SAAF, he still underwent the same physical training as SADF conscripts, in addition to the technical flying training. This would suggest that his early experiences in the military mirror those of the average soldier. The advantages of the SAAF and the power especially experienced pilots wielded certainly did not exempt Fletcher from experiencing the same abusive training techniques referred to by most of the interviewees, outlined earlier in this chapter. Where Fletcher's narrative diverges is in his perception of the formative value of military experiences, which, after spending such a protracted period in the military establishment, left him ill-equipped for the challenges of civilian life. He relates that it was only after receiving extensive counselling well after exiting the SAAF that he could start to cope with everyday challenges: "[counsellors] alerted me to the fact that civilian life is actually very different to military life. In that military life is very rigid, it's controlled, you're brainwashed to the extent that you don't have to

⁹⁶ The interview does not explicitly state the duration of Fletcher's service, but roughly mentions training in the early 1980s, with operation flying starting in 1982, which suggests a call-up year of 1980. Fletcher formally left the SAAF in 1988, but continued to fly operationally until either 1990 or 1991.

think too much... but civilian life is a much more dynamic situation where you're left to your own devices and if you can't fend for yourself, then you'll never come to grips with civilian life. And I think that's been part of my problem."⁹⁷

Fletcher's descriptions of the military mirror much of the archive, but his narrative does introduce the possibility that the formative power of military experience has been overstated. Fletcher presents a counter-narrative by suggesting that the commonly cited personal and social values of discipline, commitment and so forth, usually explained as resulting from military experience, may only be attributed to it retrospectively. This differs even from those interviewees who expressed largely negative perceptions of their military experiences, and whose responses were to adopt behaviours in opposition to the demands of the military, such as Dr. M's refusal to bear arms and the rejection of religiosity in the military context by other interviewees. If it is the case that the military experience did not exert as great a formative power as is suggested by the narratives in this archive, it could threaten the construction and anchoring of veteran identities, especially in the form of value derivation. Indeed, a common claim is that the militarised generations before political transition embody those positive values as a result of their military experiences, as opposed to an environment that inordinately privileged and supported white men in developing those values through other means. This would furthermore invalidate many interviewees' argument that the supposed dearth of discipline and respect commonly cited as a problem with South African youth in the post-apartheid period could be rectified with the reestablishment of overt militarism and the reinstatement of forced military conscription.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the identity content derived from narratives in the Missing Voices Oral History Project archive. Through an analysis of the interview archive transcripts, I identified five broad sections that relate to identity and its persistence: 1) approaches to conscription expressed in a positive to negative continuum; 2) the relationships between military service and its meanings; 3) the extent of the normalisation of militarisation, as seen through views of training; 4) the management of the ideological contexts of the conflicts and its relationships to identity; and, 5)

⁹⁷ Fletcher, H., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 15/01/2008, p.26.

veterans' views of post-apartheid South Africa and to what extent veteran identities are relevant in this context.

The initial section concerning the continuum of views on military experiences outlines the approaches to be found in the archive and unearths some underlying identity associations and management approaches. The five interviewees – Voster, Schofield, Williamson, Henry, and Dr. M – each focus their construction of their military experiences around focal points, but even in cases where a central point is shared between narratives, their associated meanings differ. This is present in the comparison between Voster and Schofield, who both position their military service as entirely positive, and who generalise the experiences to all soldiers and conscripts. Both rely on the professionalist construction of military service and a disassociation of the military establishment from the political context and apartheid. While there is less slippage present in Voster's interview, given his total avoidance of the potentially negative effects of service, Schofield goes to great lengths to reject even the possibility of them occurring. Williamson maintains a positive view of military service, but acknowledges a variety of damaging and unjust facets of service, such as the injustice of the political systems and – though the reference is vague – the potentially negative impact on individuals. Williamson still occupies an unstable middle ground between positive personal experiences and an awareness of the injustices and damage caused by military service. Henry's retrospective discussion, on the other hand, is focused more on his disillusionment and personal shifts away from militarism. Henry's narrative does draw on historical concepts of masculinity and the formative power associated with national service, but he recognises the historical threats and modes of mobilisation as supporting apartheid, and his narrative rejects some and critiques other political aspects of NS. Dr. M represents a uniquely negative narrative in the archive, rejecting the narrative of a positive formative experience for one of a deeply negative personal experience of the psychological damages he and other soldiers suffered. No excuses or justifications are made in his narrative and there is a unique consideration of the effect of apartheid conflicts on South Africa's neighbours and their populations, indicating a much broader understanding of this history. Differences between views and approaches to military experiences notwithstanding, the formative power of military service and the central position occupied by these experiences in relation to values is undeniable. A key observation from this section is the connection between the purposeful projection of veteran identities, such as in the cases of Voster and Schofield, and the rejection of any negative connotations to service, whether they be political or psychological. Interviewees in this archive who do criticise aspects of military service are shown to be more likely

to acknowledge negative effects alongside the positive elements they derived from their experiences.

The opening question of the interviews results in entry into service and its associated meaning being present in almost all of the transcripts. In terms of identity, these sections in the transcripts contain a great deal of historical identity content, value content, and discussions of contextual pressures. The literature presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis emphasises the impact of contextual pressures, but the interviewees show little awareness of the forces exerted by structures such as schools and churches beyond a few mentions of schoolmasters and religious leaders during the discussions of their pre-NS years. The naturalisation of militarism and military service is highlighted in this archive by the fact that even individuals who were against NS, came from families who opposed NS, and had political viewpoints against NS, still submitted to it. The discussions of entry into service take on a political undertone, as can be seen in Trevor Samson's association of opposition to conscription with politicised perceptions of South Africa, which he contrasts with the apolitical construction of passive submission. Other interviewees, such as Mike Huxtable and Ruvan Boshoff, address the connection between NS and NP support, expectations of patriotism and a sense of duty. Cultural expectations of Afrikaans and English men are also raised by interviewees in the discussions of conscription. Broadly speaking, the Afrikaners argue that conscription was part of cultural expectations and continued accepted cultural practices. Afrikaners tended to find the extreme nature of training more natural and acceptable than English conscripts. English interviewees acknowledge a different viewpoint from Afrikaners, but also admit to having the same sense of patriotism and duty Afrikaners displayed.

Training is also a common point of discussion throughout the interviews. It is related in the narratives to the normalisation of brutality, but also the values it supposedly instilled and the camaraderie it generated. Discussions of the brutality of training also take on cultural dimensions, as mentioned above, with Paul Fouche expressing that discipline and obedience to authority were core parts of Afrikaner cultural values and that training therefore merely served and reinforced those existing cultural values. Personal experiences are also referenced to portray training as positive, with sentiments of confidence-building and self-sufficiency commonly cited. Criticisms of training are scarce in this archive, taking the form of critique of the quality of medical training in Dr Colin Forbes' view. Only Dr. M broadly criticises the nature and purpose of training and questions the necessity of the brutality. An underlying tone in discussions of brutality that spans both discussions of entry into service and training itself is where the interviewees locate responsibility for success or failure.

Responsibility for the success or failure of conscripts in training is seemingly placed on the individuals rather than the SADF training structures. Men who struggled during training are characterised as weak, not tough enough, liberal, lacking determination, or affluent. It remains unclear why the respondents opt to accept responsibility for the structural deficiencies of SADF training, but this is reflective of concepts of individual responsibility and the values of strength and discipline. This also reflects the continuum: the more positively military experiences are perceived, the more likely the interviewees are to express this individualised sense of responsibility for the failure or success of training.

Discussions of ideology are particularly fragmented and are largely aimed at disassociating personal actions from their political or civil implications. Interviewees rarely explicitly define their ideological positionings, making it difficult to place their discussions of ideologies as part of historical experiences or contemporary views on history. The converse also applies: some interviewees claim that they no longer hold to historical ideologies, such as the threat of communism, but simultaneously express distrust of communists who also happen to be black South Africans. In discussions related to ideologies, the concept of threat is often raised by both the interviewer and interviewees, and the communist threat is cited as the central threat to apartheid South Africa. There are few transcripts that even mention apartheid South Africa's internal opposition. Communism is not, however, a clearly understood threat in the archive, with very few interviewees being able to give any form of definition even when prompted. Despite this, the communist threat is still held as a reasonable motivation for militarism and military service, and in the case of M. Oberholzer, sufficiently justifies the torture and assault of suspected communists by the Security Police. In discussions of communism, there is also a great degree of overlap, if not metaphorical use of 'communist' to mean black African. The claim that apartheid conflict stemmed the tide of communism and delayed a violent communist takeover of South Africa, allowing for a peaceful negotiated political transition, also surfaces in the archive, but is not a common argument. There are, of course, notable exceptions that distinctly separate historical and contemporary beliefs. Recce 'G', Brian Rogers, and Dr. M acknowledge that their belief in the threats posed by communism and African nationalism were unfounded or greatly exaggerated. However, state violence, even excessive state violence, is more commonly justified by reference to the communist total onslaught.

As with discussions of ideology, narratives of the post-apartheid political and social contexts are also heavily fragmented. Commentaries range widely from placement of blame onto politicians or

military leadership, feelings of exclusion, marginalisation, or belonging, and the impact of political transformation on the legitimacy of SADF veterans' citizenship. This illustrates how views of past military service have been related to contemporary experiences of identification through a variety of concepts, including political identification, nationality and citizenship, and – more vaguely – race. Allusions to the personal impact of military experiences also present more strongly in the discussions of post-apartheid South Africa, with PTSD or other psychological and social issues predominantly being raised in these contexts. The self-imposed rejection or distancing of individuals from political spheres is also evident in these discussions, and these are expressed through the feeling of marginalisation or a sense of being unwanted, or even purely through perceptions that the situation cannot be saved, that South Africa is too far gone, or that the country is on the brink of total collapse (typically 'Zimbabwe-esque'). The positioning of selves within social and political contexts is in itself telling about perceptions, given that none of the interviewees expressed any consideration of their potential role in addressing historical imbalances or injustices. The Freedom Park Wall of Names is briefly mentioned in abstract as a symbolic opportunity for reconciliation, a form of decontextualisation of military action, or an opportunity to develop a shared nationalism. None of these approaches display any consideration of the effect the SADF had on South African communities or neighbouring countries, nor do they suggest that veterans may have a role to play in addressing those effects. To generalise the tone of discussions of post-apartheid political and social contexts, it can be said that the interviewees display only inward-looking commentary, with no consideration of out-groups. In the following conclusionary chapter, the transcript contents will be related to the preceding chapters to address the thesis questions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate SADF veteran identities in contemporary South Africa through a social constructionist analysis of a sample of interviews from the Missing Voices Oral History Project archive. Arguing from the premise that identities are historically constituted, I presented the theory to be employed, the historical context in which these identities were produced, and the historical shifts that challenged or undermined the context-dependent facets of those identities. The interview transcript analysis focused on the positions and interpretations of the interviewees' historical experiences and their own views on their involvement in apartheid. Thus, this constitutes an attempt to gain knowledge of historical processes by considering the reinterpretations of historical events in the form of identity constructions, their component values and their positionings, in order to gain access to the underlying factors influencing the individuals who formed part of and drove historical processes.

Theory and Context

The identity theory included in this thesis emphasised the generation of Self/Other distinctions through the generation of differences, real or perceived. Constructions of differences are present in the transcripts and differentiation between Self and Other is expressed through values and an appeal to shared moral orders, expected behaviours, and the largely consistent positive Self-positionings alongside negative positionings of Others. Group membership is also discussed in terms of exclusivity and is associated with NS through references to rites of passage, masculinity, and citizenship, and so forth. In this way, group membership is imbued with similar identity dimensions, that is, the assumption that group membership reflects the same moral orders, expected behaviours, and positionings of in- and out-groups. These instances all constitute what Woodward referred to as identity at work. In the archive this presents as references to historical experiences such as NS or voluntary military service and claims to truer citizenship, nationality, and in certain cases more authentic South African ethnicity. What this indicates is that the identity content generated during apartheid military experiences is still employed to interpret experiences since political transition, in that some interviewees have renegotiated their experiences and imbued them with contemporary political currency through these claims of authenticity and positive self-positionings, although this is not universal in the archive.

The identity theory literature consulted, especially that of Woodward, Althusser, and Turner et al., does suggest that renegotiation is a natural part of identity evolution. The importance of this for the thesis questions was to interrogate which aspects of identity have been maintained, repositioned, or renegotiated, and to question what potential implications that may have in the context of broader South African social and political changes. This is accessed through the consideration of the stereotyping, biases, and the underlying arguments of positionings of Self and Other present in the interview archive in relation to both historic and contemporary experiences. As will be outlined shortly, the interviews contained a broad range of reorientations (not necessarily changes, but the reinterpretation of events as more positive or constructive, for example), but also examples of maintenance of static positions where individuals chose to withdraw from political or even social life in order to protect and maintain historical constructions of Self, hinting at the behavioural implications of identity management. This does go some way in addressing one of the challenges of historical identity research presented in Chapter 1, regarding whether expressions of identity are merely instances of historical performativity or actual contemporary identity positions in relation to society, politics, gender, ethnicity, and so forth. However, determining whether a positioning is an instance of context-dependent performativity or an expression of current identity positioning falls short of determining the extent to which identities influence current behaviours and perceptions.

The social constructionist approach to identity allowed the identity components described to be related more directly to the historical contexts in which they were generated. Social Constructionism demands the consideration of the contexts of narratives. In the case of this thesis, it allows for a comparison between the interview narratives and the known historical content of the events discussed to grant access to the meanings, values, and moral orders underlying identity positionings. Contemporary technological contexts are also forefronted by Social Constructionism in the implications of individuals being restricted or empowered by opportunities for generating, renegotiating, or maintaining identity groups. The limitations of the technological context that informed identity positionings during apartheid are present in the narratives, through reference to extensive suppression of information and the propaganda of mainstream media. However, the contemporary technological context is glossed over except for the instances where the democratisation of information through technology has allowed the reinforcement and maintenance of group identities in cyber space. The attachment to group membership also presents as a restriction on perception of historical and contemporary actions and behaviours, limiting interviewees' perceptions of possibilities of behaviour. Both technologies and group membership provide access to identities and their component parts. Social Constructionism, in its inclusion of

context and the possibilities for identity formation, thus serves this thesis' attempt to gain knowledge of history by considering the constructions of known historical events in the form of identity positions to gain access to underlying factors influencing historical processes.

The comparative historical content was presented in Chapter 2, which focuses on those environmental structures that informed identity during apartheid. The sites of coercion discussed in Chapter 2 include the schooling environment, churches, and the use of mainstream media to disseminate the ideological worldview that supported apartheid militarism. The SADF's own programmes are also included and reflect the breadth and depth of integration into the civil spheres of white South Africa. Gender in particular presented as a major point of influence over white men during apartheid, exploited both by the NP and the SADF. These structural components present the backdrop against which individuals navigated and negotiated their personal positions and against which the narratives contained in the interview archive are compared. However, given the open-ended and unguided nature of the interviews, some disparities between the emphases in the literature and the narratives of the individuals did arise. Mentions of schooling and mainstream media certainly reflected the historical literature included in Chapter 2, where recollections of school headmasters and veteran teachers overseeing the forced registration of schoolboys are not uncommon. The effectivity of mainstream media as a tool for reinforcing the ideological underpinnings of apartheid militarism is also reflected in interviewees' recollections of the various 'threats' facing white South Africa.

However, there are departures from the literature on two points – that of gender and organised religion. The emphasis of gender present in the literature included in Chapter 2 is not reflected overtly in the interview archive, but issues that are raised do reflect the literature. The departure is that the masculinities on display are seemingly not questioned as a matter of course even after political transition, although there are noteworthy counterexamples. This would indicate the persistence of masculinities and constructions of gender that are rooted in historical contexts, which are in some cases also transmitted to subsequent generations. These masculinities show little sign of change or the need to change. The extent to which constructions of gender are representative of SADF veterans falls outside the scope of this thesis, but it does raise questions surrounding social transformation. The second departure, that of the interviewees' relationship towards organised religion, is characterised by a great deal of turmoil that is not reflected by the narratives of organised religion, which tend to focus on organised religion's resistance to apartheid.

Chapter 3 presented the veteran management context in South Africa since political transition. Given the lack of official programmes for veteran management during transition, I measured the situation in South Africa against international models for DDR to gauge the extent of potential demilitarisation. SADF institutional culture was explored in order to provide a foundation against which DDR concepts could be contrasted and also to establish the behaviours and worldviews that soldiers were exposed to during their time in military service. The consideration of demilitarisation through DDR emphasised the relationships between individuals and historic processes as they relate to reconciliation and redress of injustice, issues that were only symbolically addressed in the South African context. The representation of the SADF and its veterans by the TRC and the Special Hearing on Compulsory Military service certainly impacted the constructions and discourses surrounding veterans negatively, but did not present particularly strongly in the interviewee narratives, where the TRC was dismissed wholesale (save rare exceptions). A consideration of the TRC in relation to DDR ideals of demilitarisation indicates a major missed opportunity to address the legacies of apartheid, be they economic, social, or cultural. Furthermore, the delineation of potential DDR processes indicates a critical lack of self-reflection in the veterans' narratives, given the awareness that the TRC generated around the injustices of apartheid and some interviewees' refusal to acknowledge responsibility.

However, this does not mean that SADF veterans give little thought to how they have been represented in South Africa since political transition. Of the questions raised in Chapter 3 regarding post-transition veteran management and representation, including representation, culpability, redress, and moral ambiguity, only the representation of SADF veterans presents strongly in the interview archives. While there are mentions of shame and guilt in some narratives, the concern on the part of many of these veterans was to 'set the record straight'. Their constructions of both historical events and their involvement in these events argue for positive or at least neutral representation, largely given the supposedly positive effects of military involvement. Given their expressed concern with representations and marginalisation of SADF veterans, the lack of mention of the various developments regarding veteran management is noteworthy. There is no mention of the various veteran management measures mentioned in Chapter 3, which were being publicly debated while these interviews were being conducted, and there is no indication that the interviewees attempted to address issues of representation or marginalisation themselves. Overall, there is little indication that the events since political transition have impacted perceptions of the SADF for the interviewees in this section of the archive, other than serving as a foil for the problems they perceive with the SANDF or general behaviour of South African youth.

Identity, History, and the Missing Voices Archive

The interviewees discussed in depth in Chapter 4 were chosen from the disparate transcripts to indicate the variation found among the small SADF veteran sample size of the archive (of which I analysed 38 interviews from the Former Members of the Permanent Force, National Servicemen and Citizen Force, Former Members of the Secret Service, and Related Stories sub-classifications). As the interviews were not conducted with the aim of unearthing identity content¹, specifically drawing identity from the narratives is limited to what identity content happened to be raised obliquely by the interviewer or interviewee. Furthermore, the interviews display little separation between historical observations and observations of contemporary phenomena, as comments of contemporary contexts, such as the behaviour of politicians, is mediated through historical perspectives. However, through the application of identity theory and the historical texturing this allows, a set of themes related to identity constructions emerged from the narratives. The previous chapter dealt with specific instances of more overt references to identities, positionings, and constructions of historical events; this concluding section will outline the broader identity themes that can be drawn from the archive. This section will furthermore begin to suggest directions for elaborating on our understanding of historical identities related to military service. The themes this section will focus on are citizenship (that is, civil identity or nationality) and its relationship to military service, the maintenance and transmission of militarised identities, and finally, how the archive relates to the literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

Civil Identity

The concept of citizenship is a commonly raised topic of discussion throughout the transcript archive. Citizenship, typically constructed as a sense of belonging and nationality, is related to the interviewees' experiences of apartheid, the political transition, their perceptions of politics both before and after transition, and also their military service. Given the nature of the interviews, the veterans do not explicitly discuss their identities or their constructions of citizenship. However, it is in the analysis of the associations drawn between their historical experiences and their constructions of the legitimacy of their citizenship that the thesis question of the persistence and reconstruction of

¹ To reiterate, the specific aims of the project were to collect "personal experiences, perceptions and stories" from veteran forces including SDUs, the SADF, 32 Battalion, Koevoet, Citizen Force, and conscripts. See <http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?inventory/U/collections&c=A3079/R/>

identities can be addressed. Furthermore, the relationship between veteran identities and veterans' perceptions of the role they ought to inhabit sheds light on these veterans' views of South African society and its politics. Throughout the archive, interviewees affirm and reaffirm their claim to South African nationality and the legitimacy of their citizenship. These affirmations do not only take on the form of reference to family heritage, ancestry, or virtue of birth. In many of the narratives, interviewees position themselves along a continuum of greater and lesser degrees of citizenship. The relative strength of citizenship is related strongly to the concept of national service, and – to a lesser degree – values. For example, Peter Williamson, whose broader narrative is discussed in Chapter 4, decries the situation where he has been made to feel like an outsider despite claiming to be a “true white African” as a result of his birth and his connection to African cultures (specifically through language). However, military service also features heavily in his claim to citizenship, based on his construction of service as “fighting for the government in power” and displaying loyalty to political leaders regardless of personal political affiliation or stated awareness of the injustices of the apartheid regime. A similar concept of earning citizenship is espoused by M. Oberholzer when he describes meeting immigrants and the young sons of immigrants who were required to fulfil national service from the mid-1980s in order to access full citizenship. The relationship between citizenship and military service is also evident in Peter Williams' interview, where he recounts the provision of South African citizenship to Angolan FNLA members who joined 32 Battalion. As a general observation of the construction of citizenship in the Missing Voices archive, military service is directly connected to the legitimacy and strength of claims to South African citizenship and the privileges that status ought to afford.

In parallel with the claim to citizenship are the perceptions, among some of the interviewees, of ostracisation or feelings of not belonging in South Africa in the period following political transition. In Chapter 4, the loss of military identity currency experienced by Richard Henry and Peter Williamson clearly sets out this experience. However, the question remains as to what makes military identities so resilient, despite the expressed sentiment that part of feelings of unease in the new political dispensation is a result of continued attachment to those identities. A further observation is the association between these perceptions of ostracisation, criticism of the political direction of South Africa, and the continued apolitical self-positioning of the interviewees. Based on the description of the ideological components of military training and experiences within the SADF, there is evidence to suggest that the military actively discouraged political engagement and purposefully avoided overt political education (this is seen particularly when interviewees struggled to answer questions of clarification regarding who the ‘enemy’ was supposed to be). However, this

does not account for the veterans who admit to awareness of the injustices of apartheid, whether that is the oppression of black South Africans or the aggressive military destabilisation of black African neighbours. As a result of the nature of the interviews conducted for the archive, there are no attempts to untangle the subtle connections drawn between facets of belonging, citizenship, military service, and values, but a certain discursive sequence can be drawn from the archive.

This discursive sequence in the archive generally follows a contradictory pattern of positionings. Throughout the narratives, claims of apolitical commitment to the ruling government at the time is contrasted with expressions of a sense of betrayal by either politicians or other political organisations, such as the SADF or churches. Narratives of the purpose of service and the nature of the conflicts are also positioned as apolitical but simultaneously related to the current political leaders of the country (i.e., black and communist). Another example of these contradictory narratives is the portrayal of military service as largely positive, in parallel with multitudes of anecdotal examples of the damage caused by military service to the lives of acquaintances, family members, and comrades in arms. However, as is clearly established in Chapter 1, narrative inconsistency is expected when considering identity positions over time. Nonetheless, the widespread presence of these inconsistencies in the archive is indicative of how political and social viewpoints are constituted, and how these veterans have been influenced by the experiences of a militarised society and military service. The narratives in these examples only begin to untangle the ambiguities of identity positionings associated with citizenship and their behavioural, transformational, and moral implications and also indicate the potential for further historical identity research.

Maintenance and Transmission of Militarised Identities

There are also hints in the archive that the identity content sourced from these militarised and military experiences from the apartheid period are being transmitted to subsequent generations. The tension created between Peter Schofield and his daughter as a result of his attachment to his military experiences and associated political views has already been outlined. However, he also relates the manner in which he discusses the maintenance of his own military identity with his children. Schofield characterises his relationship with his son, who also completed NS, differently in that he seems to give a greater deal of credence to his son's criticisms of the militarised context, his (Schofield's) military identity, and the effect that it had on his upbringing and family context.

Schofield uses his son's experience in the SADF as evidence of the positive effect of military experience in general, but does make some allowance for soldiers who disliked the experience. Schofield indicates that he was directly involved in his son's service, providing him with the opportunities to have a more positive experience and universalising those positive experiences across all compulsory military service, stating "I don't think National Service did anybody any harm in the broad sweeping terms". This instance occurred during apartheid, but it illustrates the direct transmission of militarised values of discipline and military experience as a rite of passage to manhood and maturity.

In M. Pretorius' narrative, the transmission of militarised values occurred after the political transition and the end of conscription. In this case, he relates his constructions of values, the contemporary challenges South Africa faces regarding its youth, and the relationship with his son to militarisation and military experiences. Pretorius speaks about a "discipline problem" among contemporary youth that he relates to the absence of conscription, which he maintains is a positive process, opining that his son would have benefited from and enjoyed NS. This goes hand-in-hand with Pretorius positively insinuating the historical experience of NS into his son's life from a very young age. He tells the story of using his old *staaldak* as a shooting trophy between him and his son, a practice that started when his son was five. Pretorius relates that this entire process is imbued with a great deal of sentiment and nostalgia, and in light of his associations between NS and discipline (among others), indicates a direct transmission of militarised values and expected behaviours to his children. The transmission of militarised identity components in the form of values, political views, and expected behaviours deserves greater consideration in tracing the progression of history and identities, but falls outside the scope of this thesis and the interview archive itself.

The Archive and Historical Knowledge

These examples of citizenship and the transmission of identity draw together the archive, my reading of identity, and the historical literature outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. From the reading of the archive, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the impact of military service on individuals' identities did not cease with the end of conscription, apartheid, or the political transition. The narratives hint toward persistence of historical perceptions of values, groups of people, and political ideologies, among others, that are rooted in historical formations of identity. However, when comparing the historical literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3 to the narratives found in the

Missing Voices archive, I found the level of ignorance regarding the military, and social histories these veterans were directly part of, surprising. Key to this mismatch concerns the process of conscription itself, a process many interviewees absolutely normalised without consideration of how it had come to be so widely accepted. On this point I would argue that the interview archive introduces a challenge to the historical literature in that the explanations and processes outlined in the literature (the militarisation of education, civil society, politics, security, gender, and mainstream media) are not sufficient in addressing the extent to which these interviewees internalised and normalised contextual forces that resulted in submission to conscription. The lack of consideration given to the motivations for military service, even among those few narratives that do show a great degree of retrospect and introspection on the experiences, cannot simply be explained by a discussion of historical context without accounting for the individuals' relation to that context. Dedicated identity-focused research and interview systems related to historical questions could contribute to addressing this concern, and furthering understanding of how individuals participated in and drove historical processes, and subsequently, how responsibility and redress could be approached.

An expression of the centrality of meaning and its relation to identity is also found in the archive, specifically in the three female interviewees who provide outside perspectives of the process of conscription. Ansie Turton's overall view reinforces the perspectives of many of the men in the archive in asserting that their task was to defend South Africa. This view is expressed in an entirely unquestioning manner, referring to her husband's service as, "he's looking after your country, he's looking after you, the safety of your families as such, then you've got to accept. You've got to just... this is how it works".² For Turton, militarisation and conscription are characterised by the safety and protection it provided, and this sentiment is relayed with a sense of acceptance and submission to government. Furthermore, Turton expresses that it would have been "wrong" to feel anger towards the government of the time. Marie Human cites the communist threat, ignorance, and "incredible patriotism" as explanations of their support for conscription. However, Human adds that conscription and the concept of soldiers were romanticised, mentioning that "for us young girls it was quite romantic that these boys went, and they had to go, it was just like that... like I say, it was quite romantic, it was quite accepted. It's what you have to do".³ The construction of masculinity from the female perspective was briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, with the SADF attempting to exert

² Turton, A., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 28/04/2008, p.8.

³ Human, M., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 20/02/2008, p.1.

social pressure onto its soldiers through women, but it remains largely unaddressed in the literature included in this thesis. However, the effect of this is overtly addressed by Mike Huxtable, when he relates that women much preferred to initiate relationships with veterans, stating “the women that I dated say, I’d rather date a guy that did military service than a guy that didn’t. Because the guy that didn’t don’t [sic] have the discipline... initiative... got no self-confidence... no pride, no vision or direction”.⁴ Based on their brief interview transcripts, Turton and Human reflect the SADF’s expectations of women that were outlined in Chapter 2. This also indicates that military service allowed for white men who fulfilled expectations of military service to be more successful in purely civil and social contexts, such as choosing partners.

In Human’s narrative, she attempts to address the question of who the enemy was and vaguely remembers communism and SWAPO, but she shows no definite recollection of why those groups were such grave threats. Vagueness notwithstanding, Human’s perception of threat and the romanticised ideas regarding soldiers and the military proved sufficient to produce a conviction that was strong enough to view mass conscription as both normal and necessary. Patti McDonald provides a counter-narrative by relating her experiences as an anti-apartheid activist and member of the South African War Resistance movement. McDonald came from a liberal English family, but professes a great deal of ignorance regarding the military and political situation in South Africa before leaving the country to assist objectors and exiles in London. The dimensions of McDonald’s activism fall outside the scope of this thesis, but her view on aspects of militarism in South Africa does contribute to my argument that the historical literature does not account fully for the high levels of submission to conscription. What McDonald’s narrative emphasises is the centrality of conscription to South African men, even objectors and exiles. She lauds the war resisters as deeply “committed and concerned individuals” but does cite a range of issues they experienced that made both exile and returning to South Africa complicated.⁵ McDonald references difficulties experienced by objectors and exiles outside of South Africa, specifically mentioning perceptions of failure of masculinity and continued suppression of resultant emotions. This would suggest that military service remained a core identity anchor even for some objectors and exiles. The themes included in the women’s narratives focused on the effects of militarism and military service on individuals, but does not directly address the roles played by soldiers in the history of apartheid. However, these narratives introduce an important direction for future research – i.e. the impact of extensive

⁴ Huxtable, p.24.

⁵ McDonald, P., Interviewed by Mike Cadman, Missing Voices Project, University of Witwatersrand, 22/02/2008, p.5.

apartheid militarisation on gender relations and the possibility of transmission of these historical military gender identities to subsequent generations.

The Personal, Ideological, and Moral Ambiguity of SADF Veterans

The discussion of ideological contexts, in the form of political orientations and the construction of rationalisations and justifications for military service during apartheid, does reflect much of the existing literature. As with the overview of narratives concerning entry into military service in Chapter 4, the centrality of the coercive structures, in the form of schools and churches among others, is reinforced. The two forms of disassociation identified in Chapter 4, that is, distancing personal convictions from apartheid political ideals, and the recourse to the threat of communism, both betray a sense of persistence and slippage in some interviewees' narratives. This slippage indicates an overlap between the contemporary political sphere and the historically held perceptions of political ideologies and their racial connotations. This disassociation of security force involvement from its political implications begins to address the thesis question of how historical experiences can inform identities and subsequently shape behaviours. If the disassociation of veteran identities from the structures of apartheid persists, the connection between apartheid security forces and the maintenance of apartheid falls away at the personal level. This presents a barrier to addressing persisting economic and social injustices present in post-apartheid South African society, as it allows individuals to absolve themselves of responsibility for their roles in creating, maintaining, and defending the systems that caused inequality as well as the current status quo.

The second level of disassociation, recourse to the threat of communism, has a number of implications. As outlined in the section regarding entry into the military, many interviewees expressed that at the time they did not see any options or alternatives to service. As with military service, the pervasive presence of the threat forms part of the interviewees' historical norm, but it is also employed as a retroactive justification for military experiences. The threat serves to simplify the historical context by framing all challenges to the apartheid regime, including ethical and moral forms of resistance, as challenges to the overarching concern for security from the communist threat. This stripping of agency from opponents of apartheid as mere threats to security repositions military service and the actions of the security sector as a neutral defence of freedom (economic and religious freedom in particular) against communism. The persistence of negative views of supposed

communists indicates the persistence of these historical perceptions and their associated historical values, such as the belief that communists are untrustworthy and corrupt. These values, in turn, are expressed in justifications for historical actions, including military service; the difference in values between the Western-aligned apartheid government and communists; and the association between communism and black Africans. While many of these narratives recount historical contexts and thus do not necessarily reflect the interviewees' convictions at the time of the interviews, their disassociations do impact the positionings and constructions of the interviewees' views of contemporary South Africa, its politics, and its society.

Addressing the Thesis Questions

The chapter progression of this thesis reflects the questions set out in the introduction, with Chapter 2 providing an outline of which historical elements contributed to SADF veteran identities. The literature reviewed indicated the permeation of NP ideologies, in particular the militaristic approach to managing political threats, through schooling and organised religion, disseminated by mainstream media and mobilising citizenship, class, racial, and gendered identities through the threat of communism. Despite the extensive body of literature related to the structures of apartheid, there are some shortcomings. Some narratives in the archive do include references to the role of organised religion in the formation of the interviewees' approach to conscription and military service and are also marked by disillusionment with religion. These narratives expand on the literature included in Chapter 2 by suggesting the role that religious leaders played in disseminating apartheid ideologies, including its support for militarism, and veterans' retrospective responses to realisations of trusted religious leaders' involvement in what they characterise as brainwashing. The fact that this took place is not ground breaking, but the effects on individuals and the manner in which the consequences of those events are carried forward indicate the potential that identity analysis has for contributing to the historical understanding of the social effects of apartheid. Furthermore, despite the lack of narratives that directly address gender, the constructions of gender did present as a consistent underlying lens through which experiences and events were interpreted. The reinforcement of masculinity was also present in the discussion of gender relations, both in the narratives of the men and the three women who were included in the archive. In combination with a consideration of the SADF's programmes for involving women in militarisation, the revelation of the centrality of militarism and conscription to interpersonal relationships is somewhat novel and deserves further dedicated identity study to access its historical implications. Thus, the comparison

between the literature presented in Chapter 2 and the content of the interview archive does reflect the major source structures of SADF veteran identities, but suggests a gap in explaining the extent of internalisation and normalisation of militaristic values even in contexts where the individual interviewees expressed greater degrees of freedom to make alternative choices. It is on this key point where a focus on identity in historical research provides insight through its recognition of identity positions that are greater than the sum of their varied components. In terms of gendered relationships and religion, the literature also falls short, and could be expanded upon for a greater understanding of how historical processes affect individuals.

Contrary to my expectations, the processes of political transition, which are subject of the second thesis question, did not present strongly within the archive. How political transition reflected on SADF veteran identities is thus not a significant feature of the interviewees' narratives. However, this makes it no less important to the question of how SADF veteran identities have changed or been maintained over time. As an expression of political transition and the recognition that South Africa's apartheid history needed to be uncovered, it was my expectation that the TRC would be commented upon in the transcripts. It was posited that narratives concerning the TRC and Special Hearings would provide resources to answer both the question of how political transition reflected on SADF veteran identities and the reconstruction of SADF veteran identities after transition. However, the former supposition is troubled by the fact that there are very few, if any, serious considerations within the archive of the effects of political transition on the historical SADF veteran identity. Furthermore, the reconstruction of SADF veteran identities as result of the TRC is largely dismissed by the interviewees, save for Dr. M. The implications of this lack of engagement with the political transition of South Africa from repressive apartheid towards some form of democracy can be abstractly related to the narratives of the SADF veterans. This lack of engagement is a disassociative positioning of military involvement that can be related to the fact that transition required little behavioural change of white South Africans, giving them no need to address the transition or to actively reconstruct identities built on apartheid ideals. There are also indications that this lack of engagement extends into other spheres such as civil society and politics, suggesting a broader issue regarding the integration of SADF veterans in the post-transition South Africa. This represents both a lack of challenge to SADF veteran identities and the absence of an environment that would undermine SADF veteran identities. Despite their dismissal of the TRC and the Special Hearing, its role in reconstructing SADF veterans as having played a part in state repression does warrant comment in the interviewees' narratives. However, it is more obviously related to the third thesis question of how SADF veteran identities have been reconstructed since transition.

SADF veteran identities have seen some degree of bidirectional reconstruction and re-representation on the part of the veterans themselves and external observers such as the DMV. The details of the external representations and constructions of SADF veterans are discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, and includes both TRC and DMV representations. However, the transcripts, as stated above, contain little reference to the representations of veterans at the TRC (apart from the dismissals of the TRC in its entirety), in parliament during discussions leading up to the Military Veterans Bill, or the establishment of the DMV. Instead, the interviewees focus instead on some negative representations of SADF veterans in mainstream media and among fellow South Africans. The well-worn statement of “setting the record straight” (and variations thereof) is not rare in the archive and these corrective narratives are typified by exculpatory and disassociative positionings. Where potential wrongdoing is not entirely denied, responsibility is placed ever-upward in the chain of command, even beyond the generals and Ministers of Defence. In the rare cases where wrongdoing or blame for being part of repressive state structures is admitted in the archive, recognition of blame or wrongdoing is not connected to any form of responsibility. The dominant reconstructions of SADF veterans by the veterans themselves can be characterised as the repositioning of historical (read: militarist) values, behaviours, and actions as entirely positive, if not the possible solutions to the ills of South African society, ranging from addressing the issues of corruption, to poor political leadership, and even to the ‘unacceptable’ behaviour of South African youth. These constructions overlap with the discussion of the final thesis question, that of the role SADF veterans envision for themselves in post-apartheid South Africa.

As stated above, the positive construction of NS and military experience is broadly posited in this archive as a panacea for the various challenges facing post-apartheid South Africa. The assertion is often made that the reinstatement of conscription or the adoption of militaristic values and behaviours would benefit society. This is in contrast with the interviewees’ oft-cited experiences of rejection and marginalisation as a result of military identities in various contexts, ranging from interpersonal spaces, to workplaces, and in dealings with government institutions. Both of these expressions hint towards the positions that SADF veterans feel they ought to inhabit, as authoritative figures in social and political contexts. Furthermore, interpretations of contemporary social and political events partly remain rooted in the discourses of apartheid ideology, with references to communist political leaders as sources of corruption or instability, or arguments that inequality may be the result of cultural differences rather than the consequences of systemic oppression. In combination with the dissociation of Self from the injustices of apartheid, I would

argue that these constitute attempts to re-imbue veteran status with the same privileges and advantages it was afforded during apartheid. The archive indicates that this process occurs to varying degrees, and exceptions to the various positions have been noted in Chapter 4. However, the interviewees in general tend towards the maintenance of SADF veteran identities, and are resistant to transformation. The retreat from political and social matters has the consequence of positioning those with strong ties to SADF veteran identities as passive and apolitical observers, capable of critiquing the challenges facing South Africa without accepting any responsibility for them.

Therefore, in conclusion, this thesis established the major structures relevant to the development of SADF veteran identities and traced the shifts in their contexts in terms of the construction and representation of SADF veterans through political transition and into the 'new' South Africa. Through reference to identity constructions and narratives in the SADF veteran section of the Missing Voices interview archive, I found that the transition itself did not fundamentally undermine the veteran identity positions held by interviewees and that there was little indication that most of them engaged with the content of the TRC or any of the related national debates. Similarly, the social change experienced as a result of political transition did not fundamentally challenge constructions of veteran identities, apart from the keenly felt loss of identity currency and associated feelings of rejection or marginalisation as a result of transition. The 'corrections' interviewees attempted to make regarding the constructions of SADF veterans merely addressed negative representations of veterans, and did not seek to reconstruct the SADF veteran identity in light of revelations of the injustices perpetrated by the SADF for the apartheid regime. Finally, my analysis of the archive indicates that individuals who show attachment to the SADF veteran identity believe that the behaviours and values encoded in the identity ought to maintain the status it enjoyed during apartheid, to the extent that militaristic identity elements are actively being transferred to subsequent generations. However, that this position is achieved through the normalisation of the abuse they, and others, suffered, as well as the disassociation of military experiences from their repressive and unjust implications and consequences.

Given the open-ended nature of the interviews conducted for the Missing Voices project, certain topics were raised by interviewees that are not directly addressed in scholarly research, and could benefit from further historical study. The foremost of these topics is that of the role of organised religion and its impact on the individuals and their decision to submit to conscription, and more

broadly, to support apartheid. There are indications in some narratives that disillusionment with organised religion had wide-reaching impacts on the interviewees' personal lives, positions on spirituality, and views on morality. Dedicated identity research could unpack the religious discourses that contributed to the widespread support for apartheid that the narrative of the small-scale resistance to apartheid in white faith communities fails to address. Historical analysis of apartheid identity positions in relation to organised religion would contribute to addressing this gap. Secondly, discussions of gender relations, as well as the content of the interviews conducted with the three women included in the archive, positions women as active participants in militarisation rather than mere subjects to men in a militaristic patriarchal society. This, combined with the SADF programmes mentioned in Chapter 2, suggests that the role of women should be reconsidered in relation to the development and perpetuation of militarism and apartheid. Furthermore, this would contribute to understandings of how the apartheid context influenced the opportunities and restrictions on gendered identity formation for all genders, allowing contribution to multiple fields of study.

The amount of identity content derived from an archive not designed for the purpose of identity research suggests that the historical study of identity has the potential to make significant contributions to the understandings of apartheid and the persistence of its legacies. This thesis has attempted to show the potential of such work for gaining knowledge of historical processes by considering the interpretations and reinterpretations of historical events in the form of identities, their component values and their positionings, and it has shown that identity research offers some access to the underlying factors influencing the individuals who formed part of and drove historical processes. While this thesis encountered various limitations related to the gaps in research already conducted and the purpose of the source material in the Missing Voices interview archive, it illustrates the need to apply further identity research to historical processes such as SADF conscription and the support of regimes like apartheid.

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