

THE APPLICATION OF SUPER'S THEORY IN THE MILITARY: CULTURE AND GENDER IN THE LIFE ROLES OF YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

Political and societal changes in South Africa have resulted in the fundamental transformation of amongst others the personnel composition of the National Defence Force in order to be more representative of the South African population as a whole. As a corollary to this process, the South African Military Academy is making a determined effort to increase the number of black and female students within its student population. The possible influence that this change in the personnel structure could have on the future work culture of the organisation was studied through the life-role concept. The results indicate that young black and female officers consider the community role more important than their white and male counterparts. In contrast the leisure role is significantly more important for white officers. The different gender and culture groups have similar attitudes towards work. Possible implications of these differences for the functioning of the South African National Defence Force are discussed.

OPSOMMING

Politieke en samelewingsveranderinge in Suid-Afrika het aanleiding gegee tot die fundamentele transformasie van ondermeer die personeelsamestelling van die Nasionale Weermag om sodoende verteenwoordigend te wees van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking as geheel. Bykomend tot hierdie proses wend die Suid-Afrikaanse Militêre Akademie ook 'n daadwerklike poging aan om die aantal swart en vroulike studente in die studentepopulasie te verhoog. Die moontlike invloed wat hierdie verandering in die personeelstruktuur op die toekomstige werkkultuur van die organisasie kan hê, is deur middel van die lewensrolkonsep bestudeer. Die bevindings toon aan dat jong swart en vroulike offisiere die gemeenskapsrol as belangriker, vergeleke met hulle wit en manlike eweknieë, beskou. Daarenteen is die ontspanningsrol vir wit offisiere belangriker. Die verskillende geslag- en kultuurgroepe huldig dieselfde houding teenoor hulle werk. Moontlike implikasies van dié verskille op die funksionering van die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Weermag word bespreek.

The political and societal change manifested in South Africa since 1994 has resulted in fundamental transformation in the Department of Defence (DOD). As part of this transformation process the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has likewise experienced major changes in amongst others the composition of personnel and management structures. In this respect a change has occurred from the traditional military structures evident prior to 1994 towards structures congruent with the political and societal requirements of the present day. Furthermore, blacks and females are now better represented in the above structures than previously. This is indicative that the DOD is now a product and reflection of all the people of the country and in turn this contributes significantly to its legitimacy.

Sverko and Vizek-Vidović (1995) state that beliefs about work are largely determined by sociocultural factors. Significant differences occur in the meaning attached to work across different societies and cultures, and also in different historical periods. In South Africa Linde, Rothmann and Sieberhagen (1999) expect that, following the democratic elections of April 1994, the need for representivity in terms of race and gender, as well as affirmative action, would have a profound influence on organisations. Consequently the question could be posed whether this transformation of the South African labour force and the resultant change on the manpower composition of the DOD would also have an influence on the future perception about the relative importance of work in the SANDF.

The South African Military Academy, as the academic cradle for leadership in the SANDF, has made a determined effort to increase the number of black and female students. By 1998 the Academy increased the proportion of females to about 31% and the proportion of blacks to 21% of the student population. (According to the recent South African Employment Equity Bill, "black people" is a generic term which denotes Africans, Coloureds and Indians.)

The graduates from the Military Academy are considered to be the "best and brightest" of the young professional officers. They are earmarked to form a leader group within the officers corps and will eventually fill the top posts in the armed forces. Determining the relative importance of work within the total life role structure of these young officers could give an indication of the future work culture of the SANDF. The aim of this study is thus to determine whether there is a difference in the relative importance of life roles for the different culture and gender groups of young professional officers studying at the South African Military Academy. If this should indeed prove to be the case, the information could be utilised to sensitise different cultural groups with regard to each other's perception about the importance of work *versus* non-work in their lives.

Theoretical background

From an organisational point of view the term "career" traditionally refers to the sequence of work-related positions in a person's life. The concept is thus only interpreted in terms of the individual's work role. The counselling approach, on the other hand, expands the definition to include all the major life roles. The latter perspective is supported by the well known developmental theorist, Donald Super, who defined a career as "... the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a life time" (1980, p. 282). In this definition Super puts the individual's life roles into a developmental or time-related framework. The importance or centrality of work within such a framework is described by "juxtaposing it with other specific or supplementing life roles" (Super & Nevill, 1989, p. 2). The latter roles refer to the individual's participation in, feeling of commitment towards and value expectation of the roles of student, someone at leisure, homemaker and citizen.

In the South African context, Naicker (1994, p. 31) criticised developmental career theories and took to task some developmental theorists, such as Super, of "underplaying the role of social forces" by over accentuating the role of the individual. Naicker called for the adoption of a different paradigmatic perspective and proposed a socio-psychological model of career

counselling. However, in their comment on Naicker's article, Stead and Watson (1994) defended Super's model and stated that Super's conceptualisation of role salience and the relative importance of work for different individuals explicitly addressed the impact of social and cultural factors on career development. Super's Life-Career Rainbow (1980) and Archway (1990) models indeed underscore the interaction of situational, historical, socio-economic, psychological and biological determinants in the career development process. It is submitted that such an approach is a *sine qua non* in a diverse society such as South Africa.

However, four years after their first article, Stead and Watson (1998) shifted their emphasis by questioning the appropriateness of Super's career theory for black South Africans. After a thorough discussion of the key concepts of Super's theory, they concluded that the theory lacked several important factors such as ethnic identity, discrimination, unemployment, and world view; all of which were considered important to the career development of black South Africans.

Despite their criticism the above-mentioned authors did not reject Super's theory, but stated that much research was needed on the theory as it applied to black people in the South African context. It could be accepted that such research should focus on those factors which were identified as lacking some theoretical basis. In the present research, however, the discrimination objection can be disregarded as the SANDF has since 1994 made a serious attempt to eradicate discrimination, and to a great extent, has succeeded in doing so. Likewise, in the present context unemployment as a factor is not applicable, as the subjects are Permanent Force members and thus employed full time. In response to Stead and Watson's (1998) comments, this study will attempt to address ethnic identity and indirectly shed light on the world views of different ethnic groups as these emerge from the relationship between life roles and underlying value systems. In addition the question of gender will also be addressed.

International research background

Early research into gender differences concentrated on the work role. The first publications in this regard reported that males placed a higher premium on the work role than females (Greenhaus, 1971; Masih, 1967). On the other hand results in the 1980s were contradictory. Super and Nevill (1984) found that more males regarded the work role as more important than the homemaker role, but Greenhaus and Sklarew (1982) established that females reported a somewhat higher level of work-related exploration and work role salience than males. Super and Nevill (1984) warned, however, that women should not be considered a homogeneous group. A distinction should be drawn between those who wished to get married and for whom work was merely an activity to fill the time and a source of extrinsic reward in contrast with those with a definite career orientation. This perspective supported Yanico's (1981) finding that the work role was more important for females with a non-traditional gender role self-concept.

Several studies indicated that females participated more and felt more committed to the role of homemaker than their male counterparts (Farmer, 1983; Nevill & Perotta, 1985; Nevill & Super, 1988; Super & Nevill, 1984). According to Yates (1985), the same applied to the community role. There also seemed to be an indication that, although males participated more in the work role (Nevill & Super, 1988), females felt more committed to the role (Nevill & Super, 1988; Yates, 1985). This dual commitment to home and family, on the one hand, and work, on the other, could probably be an underlying reason for Karpicke's (1980) finding that female students experienced more conflict between the work and home roles.

The results of the International Work Importance Study contributed much to extending the knowledge base with regard to the relationship between culture and role importance. Kulevnic and Super stated: "We have shown that role salience is related to nationality and have identified some distinctive role

configurations for each country. There are also some similarities between countries" (1995, p. 270). Finally the latter authors, however, came to the conclusion that "... groups are forwarded largely on the generational principle and to a much lesser extent on the national" (p. 274).

South African research background

The results of the South African Work Importance Study (Langley, 1995) indicated that high school girls participated more than boys in study, community and home and family life. Boys, on the other hand, participated more in work and leisure. The same pattern was disclosed with regard to commitment to and value expectations of the different roles. In research among tertiary students, gender differences in the community and homemaker roles seemed to continue (Mercurio, 1989; Smith, 1992) but no differences were observed with regard to work or study (Beggs, 1990; Mercurio, 1989; Watson, Stead & De Jager, 1995). Beggs was of the opinion that it may be that, as students mature and enter university, gender differences in study and work role salience diminished. Smith, however, found that male students participated more in the work role than females. The information regarding leisure was also contradictory. Mercurio reported a higher commitment to leisure by first year student males, while several studies could not support this finding (De Jager, 1996).

Two longitudinal studies reported on developmental trends in the role salience of military (Kotze, 1998) and civilian (De Jager, 1996) students. The participants in both studies were from the white population group. De Jager found that civilian female students felt increasingly committed to and expected more of their work roles. On the other hand, female military students showed an opposite tendency. Towards the end of their third study year they expected to realise fewer of their important values through the work role in comparison with their male counterparts. With regard to the community role, female students in the military ultimately felt more committed to and expected to realise more of their important life values through this role than their male counterparts. Consequently, at the end of their third study year, they participated significantly more than males in community activities. De Jager's results for civilian students showed a significant main effect for gender, but did not reveal a difference in the developmental patterns of the two genders for the community role. The discrepancies in the results of the latter two studies for the developmental pattern of the community role stress Watson *et al's* (1995) remark about conflicting results for gender with regard to study and work role salience. Further research to shed light on these contradictory results is thus suggested.

In South Africa language and culture are often investigated as independent variables. Langley (1995) reported, with regard to high school pupils, that the African language speaking sample in her study regarded the study role as more important than the Afrikaans and English speaking groups. On the other hand, leisure was more important for the latter groups than for the African speaking pupils. All three groups ranked home and family equally important.

In research with students on a tertiary level, Langley's findings with regard to the study role were supported by Smith (1992). Beggs (1990) took a contrary view and reported that white university students measured significantly higher than blacks on the participation, commitment and value expectation dimensions of the study role. The latter results were supported in the study of Watson *et al.* (1995) who established that the study and work roles were more salient for white students than for their black counterparts. The latter authors argued that their sample lived in an area which had experienced a particularly prolonged and intense period of political unrest and that for these students other life roles, such as those of citizens, may have become more important because of the political need to be involved in improving the situation of their community as a whole. They accentuated the need to investigate the importance of other life roles for such students.

From the discussion above it is evident that the relationship between gender and life roles still needs to be clarified. Similarly, a need for further research on the life role salience of white and black subjects has been identified. Until recently females and blacks have been under represented in the officer corps of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). This imbalance is now being addressed through a process of affirmative action. Knowledge about the relative importance of the different life roles for young female and black officers could assist the SANDF with the integration of these new employees into the culture of a transformed National Defence Force. Consequently the aim of the study is to describe in terms of gender and culture, the relative importance of life roles and to determine whether there are significant statistical differences between the various classification groups. In accordance with Langley's research (1995), the hierarchy of the five roles for the gender and culture groups will also be reported.

METHOD

Participants

The participants for the sample were 207 junior and candidate officers representing 88 % of the total population of 236 undergraduate students of the South African Military Academy. Of these students 94 (45%) were in their first year, 56 (27%) in the second and 57 (28%) in the third study year. All students had at least one year service in the National Defence Force. The group consisted of 142 (69%) males and 65 (31%) females, while 163 (79%) were white and 44 (21%) were black students.

Instrument

The research instrument used was the South African version of the Life Role Inventory developed in collaboration with the International Work Importance Study (Super & Sverko, 1995). Langley (1995) reported reliability indices for a South African sample of high school students of over 0,80. High reliability coefficients were also found in studies with tertiary civilian students (De Jager, 1996; Smith, 1992). Kotze (1998) reported Cronbach alphas for military students ranging between 0,80 and 0,95 for the 15 subscales of the questionnaire. The latter results supported Langley's remark that this questionnaire was "... a psychometric instrument with higher reliability than any other such instrument for all the diverse cultures in South Africa" (1995, p. 198).

Langley (1990) reported on the construct validity of the scale for high school children. Dobson (1994), also reported by Foxcroft, Watson, De Jager and Dobson (1994), conducted an investigation into the factor structure of the questionnaire on a tertiary level. The scales were subjected to a principal compo-

nents analysis for a sample of 472 white university students. Four components were extracted which reflected the student, community, leisure and home and family roles. It was, however, found that the commitment to and value expectation of the worker role loaded on the student role. Foxcroft *et al.* (1994) explained this in terms of the student and worker roles not being distinctive in a university sample.

Statistical analysis

A descriptive and exploratory research design was used. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the life roles of the military students. Inferential statistics were employed to investigate the possible relationship of gender and culture with the dependent variables (life roles). Two-factor ANOVAS were used to separately test for significant differences in the study, work, community, home and family, and leisure role salience of male and female, and black and white young professional military officers. Eta squared was calculated to determine the effect sizes of culture and gender on life role salience.

In order to compensate for the possible increase of type 1 errors because of multiple comparisons, Bonferroni adjustments were made to the significance level. De Jager (1996) suggested, however, that statistical calculations with a less stringent significance level of $p < .05$ be regarded as noteworthy and suggestive of possible trends and should be reported accordingly.

In accordance with Langley's (1995) research, the hierarchy of the five life roles was obtained by arranging the means of the scales in descending order. No further statistical analysis was made to establish whether these rankings were statistically significantly different from each other.

RESULTS

As study year correlated with only one from the 15 subscales, namely with value expectation of the study role ($F(2,204) = 4,104, p < 0,05$), it was decided not to consider the students' study year as a possible covariate in the subsequent analysis of the data. The results of the two-factor ANOVAS for the main and interaction effects of gender and culture on life roles are reflected in Table 1.

As is evident from Table 1, culture had a significant main effect on all three dimensions of the community and leisure roles. No significant differences were found for the home and family, and the work roles. To analyse the main effects, Table 2 gives an exposition of the means and standard deviations of the different subscales.

TABLE 1
FACTORIAL 2 X 2 ANOVAS FOR MAIN AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF CULTURE AND GENDER ON LIFE ROLES

Role Dimension	Source	Study Role		Community Role		Leisure Role		Work Role		Home and Family Role	
		F	p	F	P	F	p	F	p	F	p
Participation	Gender	1,23	,269	,12	,735	2,09	,150	,493	,483	2,907	,090
	Culture	2,52	,114	14,79	,001*	9,54	,002*	,057	,811	2,536	,113
	Gender* Culture	1,74	,188	,82	,367	,18	,669	1,304	,255	,910	,341
Commitment	Gender	1,44	,231	,26	,610	6,81	,010	,214	,644	,250	,61
	Culture	5,32	,022	21,72	,001*	15,99	,001*	,007	,934	,605	,438
	Gender* Culture	,49	,486	1,37	,244	,13	,719	,201	,654	1,811	,180
Value expectation	Gender	,01	,931	,07	,793	6,85	,010	,512	,475	,863	,354
	Culture	1,01	,316	28,37	,001*	8,86	,003*	,051	,822	,085	,771
	Gender* Culture	4,11	,044	,90	,345	,01	,925	,586	,445	,097	,756

* $p < 0,0033$ (Bonferroni adjustment)

TABLE 2
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR CULTURE

Role	Culture			
	White		Black	
	M	SD	M	SD
Study role				
Participation	29,74	5,19	32,05	4,47
Commitment	31,43	5,55	34,59	6,36
Value expectation	41,24	8,09	44,89	7,31
Community role				
Participation	18,56	5,97	22,09	5,82
Commitment	23,55	7,32	29,25	5,98
Value expectation	32,85	10,13	38,09	8,78
Leisure role				
Participation	30,62	4,94	25,16	6,53
Commitment	32,96	5,61	25,70	6,35
Value expectation	44,61	7,53	33,73	9,21
Work role				
Participation	26,96	5,03	28,20	6,82
Commitment	33,27	4,58	33,32	7,60
Value expectation	44,71	6,76	45,23	7,18
Home and family role				
Participation	25,01	6,17	27,41	6,61
Commitment	33,56	5,54	35,25	5,15
Value expectation	43,74	7,89	44,18	7,95

An analysis of the means of the specific role dimensions revealed that white students participated more in, were more committed to and expected to realise more of their values through the leisure role than their black counterparts. Black students, however, participated more in community activities, were more committed to and expected to realise more values through this role than white students.

If a less stringent p-value of 0,05 is applied, more significant main and interaction effects are revealed. Gender then shows a main effect on value expectation of the community role and culture shows a main effect on commitment to the study role. Table 3 represents the means and standard deviations for gender.

TABLE 3
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR GENDER

Role	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	M	SD	M	SD
Study role				
Participation	29,62	4,75	31,55	5,68
Commitment	31,58	6,15	33,23	5,04
Value expectation	41,32	8,21	43,52	7,54
Community role				
Participation	19,04	6,14	19,91	6,01
Commitment	23,70	7,56	27,09	6,59
Value expectation	32,54	10,11	37,09	9,31
Leisure role				
Participation	29,29	6,10	29,83	4,94
Commitment	31,17	6,69	31,95	6,02
Value expectation	41,95	9,17	43,05	8,87
Work role				
Participation	27,23	5,64	27,22	5,10
Commitment	32,98	5,95	33,94	3,64
Value expectation	44,92	6,68	44,62	7,23
Home and Family role				
Participation	24,61	6,65	27,51	5,07
Commitment	33,43	5,47	34,98	5,43
Value expectation	43,21	7,61	45,20	8,35

Female students regarded the community role as more important for the realisation of their values than their male counterparts (Table 3), and black students felt more committed to study than the white students (Table 2). Only one interaction effect between gender and culture was found, namely for value expectation of the study role. White females obtained a higher score than white males, but black males on the other hand expected to realise more of their significant values through study than was the case for their female counterparts.

To determine the effect sizes of culture and gender on the life roles of military students, eta squared was calculated for the life roles where significant main and interaction effects were found (see Table).

TABLE 4
ETA SQUARED CALCULATIONS: EFFECT SIZES FOR CULTURE AND GENDER ON LIFE ROLES

Role	Eta squared		Effect size	
	Culture	Gender	Culture	Gender
Study				
Participation	1,2 %	0,6 %	small	zero
Commitment	2,6 %	0,7 %	small	zero
Value expectation	0,5 %	0,0 %	zero	zero
Community				
Participation	4,5 %	1,0 %	small	small
Commitment	7,3 %	3,2 %	small	small
Value expectation	4,2 %	3,3 %	small	small
Leisure				
Participation	6,8 %	0,1 %	medium	zero
Commitment	9,7 %	0,1 %	medium	zero
Value expectation	12,3 %	0,0 %	medium	zero

1 % = small 6 % = medium 15 % = large

Table 4 indicates that culture has a larger effect than gender on the life role experience of military students. This effect for culture group is, however, only a small to medium effect size.

In addition to the significant statistical differences between the gender and culture groups discussed above, the groups also differ with regard to the hierarchy of their life roles which was obtained by merely arranging the means of the scales in descending order. This information is reflected in Table 5.

From the ranking of the means of the different life roles it is clear that, with the exception of the home and family role, the relative rankings of the other life roles are within one rank-order position for males and females. Females, however, expect to realise more of their values through their home and family role and also give this role a higher overall priority.

Black and white students have a notably different perception of the importance of the leisure role. In the overall ranking it is the most important role for white students, but the least important one for their black counterparts. White students throughout rank their community role as the least important.

DISCUSSION

If De Jager's (1996) suggestion of a less stringent significance level of 0,05 is followed, female military students are more committed to and experience the community role as more important for value realisation than their male counterparts. This finding supports international results in Poland, Portugal and in the United States (Hornowska & Paluchowski, 1995; Ferreira-Marques, 1995; Super, Nevill, & Baker, 1988). In South Africa the research results with regard to students at tertiary institutions also support the international indication that females feel more committed to and hold a higher value expectation of the community role than their male counterparts (Mercurio, 1989).

In the present study no gender differences were found for the work role. Kotze's (1998) results that female military students' expectations of their work role were lower than those of their male counterparts could thus not be verified statistically. Three possible reasons could be postulated for this discrepancy: Firstly, the number of female subjects in the previous group was small, resulting in a difference between the variances of the two groups. Secondly, it could be that the power of the longitudinal research design of the previous study revealed differences which could not be detected by the present cross-sectional study, as cross-sectional studies "are subject to serious error that can be reduced by using longitudinal designs" (Young, Savola & Phelps, 1991, p. 2). Thirdly it may also be possible that the gender difference indicated a few years ago has actually declined and that females now saw a future for themselves in the National Defence Force. From Table 5 it is, however, clear that females still ranked their value expectation for the work role lower than their male counterparts.

TABLE 5
RELATIVE RANKINGS OF THE LIFE ROLES FOR GENDER AND CULTURE

	Gender		Culture	
	Females	Males	Blacks	Whites
Participation	Study	Study / Leisure	Study	Leisure
	Leisure		Work	Study
	Home and Family /Work	Work	Home and Family	Work
Commitment	Community	Home and Family	Leisure	Home and Family
	Home and Family	Community	Community	Community
	Work / Study	Home and Family/Work	Home and Family	Home and Family /Work
Value expectation	Leisure	Study / Leisure	Study	Leisure
	Community	Work	Work	Study
	Study	Community	Leisure	Community
Total role	Home and Family	Study / Leisure	Work	Work / Leisure
	Work	Home and Family	Study /Home and Family	Home and Family
	Leisure	Home and Family	Community	Study
	Community	Community	Leisure	Community
	Study	Work	Study	Leisure
	Home and Family	Study / Leisure	Home and Family	Work
	Work	Home and Family	Work	Study /Home and Family
	Leisure	Home and Family	Community	Community
	Community	Community	Leisure	

A significant difference between culture groups was established with regard to the leisure role. Black students participated less in, were less committed to and had a lower value expectation of the leisure role than their white counterparts. This supported the research findings of Langley (1995) with high school children and Smith (1992) with Technikon students. Smith was of the opinion that his finding reflected some of the lifestyle differences of the South African society at that stage. Students from different cultural groups lived predominantly in different residential areas. The majority of black families lived in township and rural environments which had comparatively few leisure facilities compared to the urban environments in which the majority of white families lived.

Although the black and white students of the present study are all employees of the South African National Defence Force, earn the same salaries and share living and leisure facilities, it may well be that they also grew up in the circumstances described above. On the other hand, it could also be that this phenomenon of a seemingly lower importance of the leisure role for blacks relates to black students' experience or evaluation of the community role. Black military students participated significantly more in community activities and also felt more committed to and held a higher value expectation of the community role than their white counterparts. Esen (in Smith, 1992) suggested that in white culture the needs of the individual took precedence over the needs of the family or community. However, in black culture individual needs were secondary to the needs of the community and, therefore, it may be expected that black students attach more importance to the community role than white students. Stead (1996) confirmed these different cultural attitudes whereby white students were seen to identify themselves with a Western lifestyle which emphasised independence, individuality, self-actualisation, and competitiveness. In contrast black students tended to be community oriented, emphasised co-operation and were influenced by the wishes of significant others. Because of the high value placed on the community and collectivity, black students placed less importance on leisure as this role was predominantly aimed at individual needs.

The importance which black military students placed on the community role coincided with what Mbigi and Maree (1995) called "the African cardinal belief of Ubuntu," according to which "a man can only be a man through others." In this sense Ubuntu is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity for people adhering to the African culture. On the other hand, Ubuntu also includes key values such as conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collec-

tive unity. Within a military context, Malan (1995) is of the opinion that the principles enshrined in Ubuntu could serve to "embrace the African citizen in uniform" (p. 23), reinforcing traditional military values, such as brotherhood and responsibility for the welfare of subordinates. Given the high value which black students and female white students place on the community role, the assimilation of these two groups into the SANDF could thus foster a culture which may counteract the shift away from traditional military values, as embodied by career officership as a calling, towards occupationalism where the military becomes an extension of the civilian perspective that a military vocation is just another job for the individual. That such a shift is indeed evident in the SANDF was convincingly demonstrated in the research of Heinecken and Khanyile (1996) and Kotze (1998).

Although the assimilation of more women into the SANDF may bring a greater sensitivity for responsibility towards the community, the life role priorities of females may create practical problems with regard to the execution of one of the National Defence Force's main obligations regarding regional security. Females consider their home and family role more important than their male counterparts (Tables 3 and 5). This may be the underlying reason for Heinecken's (1998) finding that, proportionately, fewer women support the notion that the SANDF should provide peace-keeping forces to Africa, and that female officers are strongly opposed ($p < 0,001$) to combined operations with other African armed forces.

Black military students felt significantly more committed to the student role than their white fellow students. This finding again supported the results of Langley (1995) and Smith (1992), although the latter studies also found differences with regard to the participation and value expectation dimensions which were not indicated in the present study. According to Smith it was conceivable that black students saw the student role as a means of social advancement. In the military context black and white students shared the same career status and had the same future career prospects. Consequently there could not have been a difference in the two cultural groups' expectations of their studies as a means of social advancement, whereas the subjects in the studies of Langley and Smith still expected that their studies would open career opportunities.

Although significant differences were found for gender (to a lesser extent) and for culture group, it should be noted that the effect sizes for these two independent variables on life roles were either small or medium and that neither gender nor culture had a large effect size (see Table 4). In the study of Watson:

et al. (1995), a large effect size for culture was found for participation in the study role and for participation in and commitment to work. In the military context white and black students did not differ with regard to the importance of the work role. This finding could be an indication that the different gender and cultural subgroups had similar attitudes towards their work. This conclusion supported Soeter's (1997) hypothesis that, despite differences between subgroups within the military, there was evidence for a shared communal character of military life.

In terms of the aims of this study it could be concluded that female and black military students in some respect differ from their respective counterparts regarding the relative importance of life roles. Although minor differences occur in the rank orders allocated by males and females generally, black and white students display major differences with regard to the priority of leisure in their lives. In the overall rating white students consider leisure as their most important life role, whereas it is the least important one for the black students. This finding points to an important ethnic difference in the value systems of the two groups. The exceptionally high value attached to leisure by white students may continue when they return to the line and could well influence productivity negatively. The importance of the leisure role could also be a form of psychological escape which could lead to alienation between the two groups and the isolation of the one group from the other.

Female and black military students feel more committed to and hold a higher value expectation of the community role than their counterparts. This similarity is most probably the result of a shared underlying altruistic value system, in that both groups are less egocentric and more concerned about the needs and welfare of others. This phenomenon could be well utilised by the National Defence Force. The perception in the past was that the previous Defence Force was alienated from South African society at large. Soldiers, such as the above-mentioned female and black groups, who have a community driven value system could thus play a valuable part in bridging the gap between the military and the community and enhance civil-military relations. It could also lead to better co-operation between members of different ethnic and gender groups in the organisation, increasing group cohesion and fostering the traditional value system of the military, which Moskos describes as "transcending individual self interest in favor of a presumed higher good" (1989, p. 378). The utilisation of such a window of opportunity with regard to nation building in general, and mediating role of females and blacks in this respect in particular, forms naturally fruitful ground for applied social research in future.

Finally it is submitted that, in an external environment controlled for discrimination and unemployment, there are no significant differences for the importance of work in the lives of the different gender and ethnic groups. The differences found for the community and leisure roles could be logically explained in terms of the accepted underlying value systems of the two classification groups.

One could, therefore, conclude that Super's theory indeed seems to be applicable also to the career development of black military students in South Africa.

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