A leadership approach to the transformation of institutional culture

A case of the South African National Defence Force

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ABSTRACT

This article raises the question of the critical need for the South African Public Service to change from a transactional to a transformational leadership approach in order to accelerate the transformation of public institutions. This article examines why the transactional leadership approach has not succeeded in transforming the institutional culture of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in reflecting the shared assumptions, beliefs and values of all constituent armed forces. The results of this empirical research have revealed that the transactional leadership approach has maintained the status quo of the former South African Defence Force (SADF), which has prohibited the SANDF from transforming its institutional culture to one that is inclusive of all constituent armed forces. It is argued that a transformational leadership approach would expedite the transformation of the SANDF's institutional culture.

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness and success of many institutions can be attributed to transformational leadership. The literature suggests that there is a relationship

between transformational leadership and the effectiveness of institutions as well as links between the transformational leadership of superiors and the performance of their subordinates (Cavazotte, Moreno and Hickmann 2012:443; Avolio and Bass 2004:11). Transformational leadership has not only become a silver bullet for achieving success in institutions, but the relevance of the chief executive officer's (CEO's) leadership for institutional performance during institutional change is also paramount (Ling, Simsek, Lubatkin and Veiga 2008:558–559). Stoker, Grutterink and Kolk (2012:582) agree, stating that transformational CEOs play a key role in effectively achieving change, because they encourage employees to constantly anticipate and adapt to change.

The *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service*, 1995 focused on the overall transformation of the public service. It provides for the development of a new vision and mission for the public service: "The Government of National Unity is committed to continually improve the lives of the people of South Africa through a transformed public service which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all" (Republic of South Africa 1995: par 2.1). This is underscored by Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (hereafter referred to as "the Constitution") (Republic of South Africa 1996:107–108), which provides normative guidelines on the transformation of public administration which impact on leadership and management. According to Kuye (2006:296) the proclamation of the *Public Service Act 103* of 1994 can be regarded as the "beginning of transformation of the South African Public Service". Significant changes were required in the composition and functioning of the public service. The public service has succeeded in establishing an integrated public service that reflects the South African demographics. Kuye (2006:296) points out that the public service has not changed much regarding its structure and nature, which is centralised control with top-down management, lack of accountability and transparency and absence of effective management information and lack of effective leadership (Kahn and Naidoo 2011:81).

The 1996 *White Paper on Defence* is the formulation of new defence policy and the transformation of the Department of Defence. Transformation is essential in the light of three sets of factors: the history of armed forces in our country; the new strategic environment at international, regional and domestic levels and, most importantly, the advent of democracy in South Africa. The process of transformation is guided by the principles of "defence in a democracy", which is derived from the Constitution and government policy (Republic of South Africa 1996:5–7). The 1996 *White Paper on Defence* and the 1998 *Defence Review* mainly focused on the political transition from Apartheid to a democratic South Africa and the concomitant integration of former armed forces into the SANDF (Republic of South Africa 2012:35); which is a powerful demonstration of the

government's commitment to national reconciliation, unity and transformation (Republic of South Africa 1996:25). The *Defence Review* of 2012 is necessary because of South Africa's increased involvement in international and regional political and economic affairs (Republic of South Africa 2012:35). This notion is expressed in the Department of Defence's transformation policy, which states that transformation should not only ensure representativity at the different management levels, but also that the principles of equity should be implemented and adhered to (Department of Defence 2009:3); which can be achieved by the Department's leadership (Department of Defence 2009:D2-8).

From a developmental state perspective Nzwei and Kuye (2007:198) present two crucial premises of a developmental state that disqualifies developing countries: 1) developing countries are disadvantaged in the world of economy and their reliance on market forces to produce significant growth would take years; and 2) those developing countries that possess the power to overcome such challenges will play catch up as late developers. Nzwei and Kuye (2007:200–201) argue that South Africa is experiencing basic social rights challenges, which among others include basic primary education, reasonable good health and basic housing. Maserumule (2007:214) agrees, stating that the eradication of social imperatives (poverty and poor services) require an effective public service that is able to enhance government's capacity to effectively implement its developmental programmes. An effective leadership approach is required not only to transform the public service, but also to promote the developmental state of South Africa (Kahn and Naidoo 2011:88–89).

This article examines a transformational leadership approach that would accelerate the transformation of the SANDF's institutional culture. The authors argue that it would be challenging for the SANDF to adopt a transformational leadership approach to enhance the transformation of its institutional culture. The SANDF adopted a transactional leadership approach in 2009 (Department of Defence 2009:D1-1), but has not made the transition from an autocratic to a transactional leadership approach. In this research, the authors explored the extent to which the equitable implementation of the premise of transformational leadership would benefit all constituent armed forces equally. They investigated why transactional leadership has not transformed the SANDF's institutional culture in reflecting the shared assumptions, beliefs and values of all constituent armed forces. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used**.** Questionnaires were administered to randomly selected senior officers who attended the 2011 Executive National Security Programme at the SANDF College and underwent training in Joint Senior Command and Staff Duties at the SANDF War College. A Likert-type rating scale was used. Of the 90 questionnaires submitted, 54 (60%) were received. The SPSS computer programme was used to analyse the data. Interviews were mainly conducted with senior officers of

the South African Army because it is the largest arm of service. This article addresses the contextualisation of leadership and institutional culture, which focuses on the theoretical factors of leadership and institutional culture. It also addresses leadership approaches that can transform an institution's culture. The empirical analysis deals with a transformational leadership approach that can transform the SANDF's culture and the study concludes with a discussion of the findings and conclusions.

CONTEXTUALISING LEADERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

This section provides a literature overview of leadership and institutional culture.

Leadership

According to Drucker (1992:100), leadership is a means to an end and not an end itself. Leadership to what end is thus the crucial question. The end should be the achievement of the institution's mission and the leadership qualities that are needed. Drucker (1992:101–103) mentions five qualities of effective leadership. First, leadership is about performance that requires leaders to formulate the institution's mission and explore ways of achieving it. It requires leaders to determine goals and priorities and set and maintain standards. Leadership involves lifting a person's vision to higher sights, raising a person's performance to a higher standard and building a person's personality beyond its normal limitations (David 2001:135). Second, leadership should be seen as a responsibility instead of as rank or privilege. Leaders should take responsibility for the actions of their subordinates and not blame others when things go wrong. Third, leaders should build human capacity. They should use their leadership abilities to influence their subordinates, to increase people's competencies by training and developing them and motivating them to internalise the institution's vision and strive to achieve the mission. Leadership is a process – it is about change, moving people in new directions, realising a new vision or doing things differently or better (Denhardt and Denhardt 2006:8). Fourth, leaders should take calculated risks. Leaders should weigh up the short-term gains against long-term benefits. Leadership is the ability to influence individuals and groups, inducing them to work willingly for the attainment of the business's predesigned goals (Cronje, Du Toit and Motlatla 2001:149; Ricketts, 1997:3). Fifth, to earn the respect and trust of subordinates, leaders should lead by example and ensure that their integrity is maintained by "walking the talk". Leadership is the process of influencing people and providing an environment for them to achieve

team or institutional objectives (McShane and Von Glinow 2000:434), and use their competencies to influence employees to use their abilities and skills and to improve their performance (Reggio and Murphy 2002:75–76).

According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001:343–344), institutional culture influences the behaviour and performance of employees, which enhances the institution's productivity. This statement supports Wilkens's (1984:41–42) claim that institutional culture can influence an institution's performance. He argues that the institution's culture is the foundation for achieving its strategies and competitive advantage. Leaders can therefore use institutional characteristics (behaviour, structure and processes) to influence and change employees' behaviour and performance.

Institutional culture

The new South African National Defence Force comprises five Statutory Forces, namely the South African Defence Force (SADF), Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) and the two Non-statutory Forces (Umkhonto we Sizwe [MK] and the Azanian People's Liberation Army [APLA]). According to Andrews and Mead (2009:20–21), the constituent units of the new institution are responsible for establishing a new institutional culture which evolves over time. According to McShane and Von Glinow (2007:255), the new institutional culture should reflect the shared assumptions, beliefs and values of all former institutions.

Thompson and Strickland (2003:420–421) maintain that the origins of culture can be traced back to the founders of institutions, their value systems, attitudes, beliefs and philosophy. The leadership in institutions creates the symbols and rituals that constitute the daily practices of its workforce. Leadership is both a cause and a part of institutional culture (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly 1994:63–64). This means that institutional culture encompasses both leadership functions and institutional characteristics. Hence the existing culture of an institution reflects past and present leadership and institutional activities. Since the leaders determine institutional culture, they should portray clear, visible actions in support of the cultural values and beliefs (Tayeb 1996:83–84). The leadership should interpret events, without ambiguous meaning, confusion and conflicting results. The appropriate use of symbols and ceremonies is necessary, but it should focus on the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the job and create a sense of belonging to the institution (Steers, Porter and Bigley 1996:251–252).

Thompson and Strickland (2003:427–429, 431) hold that culture is a deeply embedded form of social control that influences employees' decisions and behaviour. It is the institution's way of directing and guiding the behaviour of employees to achieve institutional goals and objectives. Culture is pervasive

and operates unconsciously – assumptions, values and beliefs that represent institutional culture operate beneath the surface of institutional behaviour (Luthans 2005:110–111). This view underscores that of Katz (1997:213–214) who claims that institutional culture is the way in which the institution transacts business and the manner in which it treats customers and its workforce. It instils in employees a sense of belonging, of being accepted and being part of the institution. Culture is the full range of shared, learnt, patterned behaviours, values, meanings, beliefs, ways of perceiving, systems of classification and other knowledge acquired by people as members of society – the processes or power dynamics that influence whether meanings and practices can be shared within a group or society (Department of Defence 2009:B1). However, the desired culture of the SANDF is the shared beliefs and values of the workforce – it is an intangible yet ever-present theme that gives meaning to each employee and gives direction to the existence of the SANDF because it is the soul of the Department of Defence (Department of Defence 2009:D4–1). A more pragmatic view of the relationship between an institution's culture and chief executives is the practice of filling senior management positions with current managerial employees, instead of appointing staff from outside (Veldtman 2011). It ensures that those who are in control of the institution have been fully indoctrinated in the institution's culture.

Burton, Lauridsen and Obel (2004:43, 67–68) argue that for an institution to adapt its structure, policies, resources and activities to the external environment, it must be attentive and sensitive to changes in its competitive landscape. They state that an institutional climate that fosters trust among its employees and creates ways of resolving conflicts is a key determinant of an institution's performance. Through information exchange and collaborative behaviours, institutions should be able to increase their capacity to detect external signs of change, thus increasing the likelihood that the institution will respond effectively to uncertain events in the sector (Carmeli, Gelbard and Gefen 2010:340–341).

Huijser (2006:86) contends that change should not only be managed but also be led, which requires strong leadership because everything flows, and ongoing change may evoke fear, uncertainty and rebelliousness. The same notion is expressed by the SANDF which claims that soldiers should be led in combat (Rudman 2010). Cultural changes should start with the leaders who should lead by example, treating subordinates with dignity and respect and showing a keen interest in their wellbeing and career advancement (McShane and Von Glinow 2007:260). The unselfish attitude of management in valuing and putting subordinates first should be contagious and rub off on subordinates, who in turn will unselfishly value and serve the public (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy 2010:147). Valuing and putting people first should become the core values of public institutions (Republic of South Africa 1997).

According to Gomez-Mejia *et al.* (2010:167–178) management can use human resource management (HRM) to transform the institution's culture. Recruitment and selection are processes that ensure that the institution attracts and retains qualified and competent candidates. Recruitment provides the institution with a pool of candidates from which it can appoint competent candidates. Human resource development (HRD) allows the institution to develop and train its employees for senior management positions. Carmeli *et al.* (2010:340-341) claim that institutional transformation is possible, but it is difficult for institutions to adapt themselves, because they lack the power and/or the flexibility to create such an alignment. They argue that effecting a change, such as re-engineering, requires a drastic upheaval in institutional culture. It is the type of change that most institutions are reluctant to make, and it requires the active commitment of senior management.

LEADERSHIP APPROACHES THAT TRANSFORM INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Since leadership is often shared, it is necessary to look at the transformational leadership of the management team (Pearce and Conger 2003). Bullough, Kroeck, Newburry, Kundu and Lowe (2012:398) agree, stating that leadership comprises relationships that are deeply embedded in social settings. O'Reilly, Snyder and Boothe (1993:150) contend that the top management team (TMT), as opposed to the top person, have the greatest effect on institutional functioning, because the TMT is the key decision maker in an institution. A management team is the key to facilitation in a context that promotes institutional change and adaptation (Carmeli *et al.* 2010:340–341). People share their expertise and knowledge, which ultimately become valuable inputs for informed decision making. It indicates that the ability to respond and solve problems creatively often stems from employees at different levels of the institutional hierarchy (Beer, Voelpel, Leibold and Tekie 2005:19) A TMT has a strong impact on several institutional outcomes (Canella, Park and Lee 2008:773–775); this team can be seen as a group of internal change agents because they have both the position and the ability to make decisions about future and necessary changes for the institution (Stoker *et al.* 2012:583, 585). Self-direction and information processing are two of the crucial skills required by TMTs. These involve constantly seeking and receiving feedback on performance, internal processes and the distance to goals. Feedback-seeking beahviour is defined as collecting information on the degree of goal completion (Schippers, Den Hartog and Koopman 2007). This kind of behaviour is indispensable to TMT performance, because it allows the team members to monitor and adjust their own actions (Stoker *et al.* 2012:584).

According to Stoker *et al.* (2012:583), transformational leadership consists of intellectual stimulation, idealised influence (or charisma), individualised consideration, supporting followers to work towards goals and encouraging cooperation between team members. Yukl (2005) contends that the transformational behaviour of the leader makes followers trust and respect him or her, which in turn, motivates them to perform. Research reveals that there is a relationship between transformational leadership and outcome variables such as job satisfaction (McShane and Von Glinow 2007), commitment to followers (Jude and Piccolo 2004) and TMT effectiveness, which stimulates teams' collective efficacy, which in turn, increases team performance and change effectiveness (Stoker *et al.* 2012:583–584).

Transformational and transactional leadership

Transformational leadership is a reflection of the traits and behaviours that are necessary for initiating change (Burns 1978). Bass and Riggio (2006) agree, stating that transformational leadership relates to issues of transformation and change. This is underscored by Storker *et al.* (2012:585) who claim that transformational leaders are not only essentially change agents, because they show subordinates the future and inspire them to achieve this new future, but they are also effective in a situation of crisis or uncertainty.

Transformational leadership refers to behaviours that inspire and challenge people to achieve goals (Senior, Martin, Thomas, Topakas, West and Yeats 2012:282). Transformational leadership challenges the old order and breaks the continuity of the traditional way of doing things; it is a risky adventure that fosters change. It motivates and inspires employees by providing meaning and challenges to solve complex problems (Conger and Kanungo 1998:13–15). Employees are encouraged to use their innovative and creative skills to produce better goods and services. This makes employees optimistic and enthusiastic about the future (Reggio and Murphy 2002:108).

Transformational leaders motivate their employees to transcend their self-interest for the achievement of team and institutional goals. This stimulates employees to achieve self-actualisation (Senior *et al.* 2012:282). Anderson (1992:51) concurs, stating that transformational leaders motivate subordinates to achieve higher-level self-actualising needs, instead of working through a simple exchange relationship. Self-actualisation becomes the primary motivator of subordinate behaviour as opposed to external rewards. Visioning, inspiration and intense and honest concerns for the welfare of subordinates are the cornerstone of transformational leadership (Donohue and Wong 1994:29). Several elements define the characteristics of transformational leaders. These include creating a strategic vision, communicating the vision, modelling the vision and building

commitment towards the vision (McShane and Von Glinow 2007:255–256). Transformational leaders' persistence and consistency reflect an image of honesty, trust and integrity. They build commitment by involving employees in the process of shaping the institution's vision (Conger and Kanungo 1998:66; Donohue and Wong 1994:29; Reggio and Murphy 2002:109).

According to the theories of transformational leadership (Avolio and Bass 2004; Anderson 1992), there are five dimensions of the construct, as highlighted below. First, idealised influence relates to the role played by the leader as a model for followers, prompting them to emulate the leader, follow the leader in all actions and adopt the leader's values and principles. Second, motivational inspiration describes leaders who have the ability to convey ambitious expectations to their followers, inspiring them to achieve objectives that result in significant advances for the institution or for society. Third, intellectual stimulation is exhibited by leaders who are able to question the status quo and appeal to the intelligence of their followers in order to promote thinking processes that favour creativity and innovation. Fourth, individualised consideration concerns leaders who develop an environment of personal support for their group and who understand and treat every follower as having distinctive characteristics, needs and desires. Fifth, emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive and understand emotions and apply them to situations that arise (Salovey and Mayer 1990). Yukl (2008:712) maintains that two of the above dimensions, namely inspiration motivation (vision articulation) and intellectual stimulation (encouraging innovative thinking) also enhance individual and team performance. This means that transformation leaders play a key role in institutions' effectiveness. According to Cavazotte *et al.* (2012:445), the more relational elements there are in an activity, the greater the emotional intelligence that will be required of the individual who will be in charge. Hence leaders who have the ability to perceive their emotions and understand the impact of their emotions on their actions and on those of others should have a better chance of providing effective leadership. Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) argue that emotional intelligence is a more important predictor of personal success than personality traits.

According to McShane and Von Glinow, (2005:450) transactional leadership helps institutions achieve their current objectives more effectively by linking job performance to valued rewards and ensuring that employees have the resources needed to get the job done. It takes on the form of an exchange process owing to the fact that subordinates' needs are met when they meet the leader's expectations. Subordinates therefore strive to achieve these expectations because of their fear of failure or desire for rewards (Donohue and Wong 1994:28). Transactional leadership affects the employee's motivation by exchanging rewards and by establishing an atmosphere in which there is the perception of closer links between efforts and desired outcomes. It focuses on

the effects of the leader's behaviour on his or her followers (Anderson 1992:51). This is underscored by Senior *et al.* (2012:282) who claim that transactional leaders are inclined to observe followers and reward desired behaviour accordingly. They argue that such an approach leans towards task-oriented leadership, in which the task is more important than the relationship.

Transactional leadership entails managing, which helps institutions to achieve their current objectives more effectively (Conger and Kanungo 1998:13–15). In contrast, transformational leadership involves leading – changing the institution's strategies and culture so that they have a better fit with the external environment. Transformational leaders are agents of change who energise and direct employees towards a new set of corporate values and behaviours (Reggio and Murphy 2002:108). According to Cavazotte *et al.* (2012:444), transformational leadership is different from transactional leadership in the following areas: (1) transformational leaders are seen as agents of social and institutional change; (2) they are models of conduct and able to articulate a new and stimulating vision for their followers; (3) they raise the morale and inspire their followers to achieve self-actualisation; and (4) they motivate their followers to greater achievements or conquests in transcending personal and institutional goals. Transactional leadership improves institutional efficiency, whereas transformational leadership steers institutions towards a better course of action (McShane and Von Glinow 2005:451).

According to Mau and Wooley (2006:48, 52) there seems to be a movement away from the traditional autocratic leadership approach in the Canadian Defence Force, towards a leadership approach that is more participative, fosters commitment, *esprit de corps* and teamwork. The Zambian Defence Force has shifted its autocratic leadership approach to one that is situational in nature and able to deal with different situations. Boase (1994:195) claims that because of the nature and complexity of public institutions, public leaders are compelled to use different leadership approaches, depending on the situation. This truism also applies to the SANDF, which operates in a more volatile and unstable environment. In a typical bureaucratic institution the nature and character of the workplace tend to require a transactional leadership approach. But a defence force is not a typical workplace, therefore different leadership approaches may be applied, depending on the context and military mission (Mau and Wooley 2006:52).

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMS THE SANDF'S CULTURE

Transactional leadership focuses on fine-tuning and maintaining the status quo of the institution instead of on fundamental change (Tucker and Russell

2004:103). It therefore tends to focus more on the visible (artefacts, structural changes and uniform) institutional cultural activities as opposed to the invisible characteristics (beliefs, values, assumptions and traditions). It can be argued that the transactional leadership approach ingrained the military assumptions, beliefs, traditions and values of the former SADF into the constituent forces of the SANDF (Kahn and Naidoo 2011:90; Gagiano 2011).

According to Senior *et al.* (2012:282–283), traits such as integrity, trust and competence (collegial and prosocial traits) that have led to the success of the social group have been adopted by the selection processes as traits that are fundamental to leadership effectiveness. These authors (2012) hold that transformational leadership encompasses many of these prosocial traits, as well as individuals with a high fluctuating asymmetry (FA). However, the same does not apply to transactional leadership. Prosocial traits refer to the empathy that leaders show towards subordinates and methods by which institutional goals are achieved. FA concerns the extent to which the right and left side of the body are asymmetrical, and it is one of the methods used measuring developmental stability (Senior *et al.* 2012:281).

Senior *et al.* (2012:282) argue that transformational leaders are more capable of transforming an institution because they are prone to supporting a general culture of change. Conversely, transactional leaders lean towards observing followers and rewarding desired behaviour accordingly. It is clear that transformational leaders routinely demonstrate the capacity to develop successful leader-follower relationships, which is critical for effective leadership and is also generally more effective than intelligence in predicting leadership effectiveness (Judge, Ilies and Colbert 2004). The leader-follower relationship is crucial at a time of transition and forming a new institutional culture that is inclusive of all constituent armed forces. It is a means of passing on the baton to the next generation of leaders who will not only pursue the new institutional culture but also ensure that it encompasses the beliefs, values and traditions of all the armed forces.

Research shows that the hegemonic male culture of the SANDF constrains the affirmative action and gender equality programmes of the SANDF (Links 2010; Lourens 2010); and restricts the progress of women and minorities (Soldaat 2010; Yon 2010). Women are prevented from advancing beyond the glass ceiling, senior management service (SMS). The first two women were promoted to the general cadre in 1996 and 1997 respectively (Kahn 2009a:199). Both women have subsequently retired from active service in the SANDF. There is currently only one woman with the rank of major general (Yon 2010; Veldtman 2011). The SANDF has adjusted government's 50% women at SMS to 40% women serving on command (decision-making) bodies (Kahn 2010:77). This means that the SANDF is violating the democratic values as spelt

out in section 9 of the Constitution, which deals with gender equality, and its own mission of being a nonracist, nonsexist and nondiscriminatory institution (Department of Defence 1998:434). The SANDF was unable to achieve the government's gender equity goal of 50% women at SMS by 31 March 2009. It only achieved 11,98% (Kahn 2010:78). The research shows that 61,1% of the respondents agreed that racial discrimination is prevalent in the SANDF, while 24.1% disagreed. Of the respondents, 38,9% agreed that gender discrimination is common in the SANDF, while 33,4% disagreed. The results are consistent with those in previous research (Van Rensburg 2001:153).

The workforce of the SANDF is disproportionately represented at the different management levels because its racial ratio policy (Africans 64,6%, Asians 0,75%, coloureds 10,2% and whites 24,3%) (Department of Defence 2001:19). When comparing these ratios with those of Statistics South Africa – that is, Africans 79,5%, Asians 2,5%, coloureds 9% and whites 9% (Republic of South Africa 2012:3) – it is clear that there are not only inconsistencies, but also that the SANDF has not kept pace with demographic development in South Africa. This seems to benefit certain race and gender groups over others because the SANDF uses these racial ratios to determine human resource management policies (Kubu 2010:56–59). Racial and gender representation at management levels will therefore always be skewed (Lourens 2010). Affirmative action in the SANDF should have normalised representation, but does not. Wessels (2008:29–30) agrees that the majority of members of the designated groups were previously disadvantaged, but he argues that people who are born after 1994 should not be discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour because they have been born in a democratic dispensation, which allows them full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms (Republic of South Africa 1996a:7). Hence individuals who joined the SANDF after 1994 should not be discriminated against because they did not serve the "puppet regime" of apartheid (Links 2010).

Military socialisation, intercultural learning and commemoration of military events are an integral part of the SANDF. However, there is nothing holistic, unified or of national pride that reflects the new SANDF (Van Rensburg 2001:153). The SANDF commemorates military victories nationally as a means of nation building, projecting a positive image and uniting former armed forces. Some of these events include Freedom Day, 27 April (Armed Forces Day) (AFD), which celebrates South Africa's liberation from an era of apartheid and the integration of the armed forces into the new SANDF; Remembrance Sunday, 11 November; Armistice Day, which marks the end of World War 1 (WW I), in which South Africans made the supreme sacrifice, in 1918; and 16 December, the Day of National Reconciliation, which is also the anniversary of the establishment of MK in 1961 (Kahn 2009b:92–94). These activities provide opportunities for socialisation, intercultural learning and the forging

of relationships, which should nurture trust and cohesion between the diverse workforce and promote *esprit de corps.* Military cohesion refers to the feeling of identity and comradeship that soldiers have with those in their immediate military unit – the outgrowth of face-to-face or primary (horizontal) group relations. By contrast, *esprit de corps* refers to soldiers' commitment to or pride in the large SANDF to which their unit belongs – an outgrowth of secondary (vertical) group relations (Snider 1999:118–120). He further claims that both elements are essentially matters of belief and emotional attachment. Leaders should not only reach consensus on cultural issues, sentiments and beliefs, but they also need to model exemplary behaviour and encourage employees to participate in cross-cultural festivities and ceremonies (Mofokeng 2011). Military events that were unique and noteworthy to the former armed forces are not commemorated in the new SANDF (Xundu 2010). The same applies to the beliefs that prevailed in their former armed forces. For example, the leave policy does not make provision for soldiers to attend a cleansing ceremony at or near the place of an accident where an individual has died (Dlulane 2011; Makgue 2010). The essence of a soldier is in his or her beliefs. Likewise, in African culture, beliefs are an integral part of the lives of people – the very heartbeat of a culture (Makhanda 1995:32).

The fabric of the institutional culture of the SANDF is grounded in European philosophy. Research shows that the current institutional culture of the SANDF is largely a replica of the former South African Defence Force (SADF), except for a few design and structural changes (Gildenhuys 2010; Kahn 2005:243; Rudman 2010). The research reveals that 42,6% of respondents agreed that the institutional culture of the SANDF is a replica of the former SADF, while 31,5% disagreed. The majority of military units and regiments still have colonial names, while there are only a few military units with African names (Mofokeng 2011). The research reveals that 25,9% of respondents agreed to an appointment suffix that reflects Africanism, while 42,6% disagreed and 31,5% remained neutral. The results clearly show that senior officers are content with the current appointment suffix. However, when compared with the question – "In your opinion, what does your appointment suffix PE mean?" – 90,7% of the respondents incorrectly indicated permanent force (PF), while 3,7% responded correctly, namely Permanent European (PE). This is in contradiction to the responses to the former question. It is clear that the respondents did not understand what the appointment suffix "PE" means. It is obvious that they were indoctrinated to believe that Permanent European (PE) means permanent employment or permanent force (PF), which is inaccurate. The interviewees stated that they assumed that PE meant permanent force (PF) and they had in fact never asked what it really means. When the meaning of PE and its relatedness to apartheid was explained to the interviewees, they categorically

stated that an appointment suffix reflecting Africanism should be considered (Dlulane 2011; Mafhede 2010; Nkone 2010).

Of the respondents, 29,7% agreed and 29,7% disagreed with the statement: "Artefacts, rituals, ceremonies and regimental systems of my former force have been incorporated and practised in the SANDF". However, an alarming 40,6% of the respondents were neutral. The research shows that the beliefs, traditions and values of the TBVC and NSFs are excluded from the new institutional culture of the SANDF (Mdlulwa 2010; Mofokeng 2011). To a lesser extent this applies to the military museum – limited memorabilia of MK are displayed at the South African National Museum of Military History (Kahn 2009b:99–89). Kahn argues that military museums can promote the institutional culture of the SANDF because they allow for research into history that has been preserved for generations and for foreign defence forces to view the role that South Africa has played in global military campaigns. Military museums also afford different race groups the opportunity to view the role that their ancestors played in South Africa's history and allow the SANDF to make a meaningful contribution towards nation building by exposing its employees to previous conflicts between different race groups and how these race groups united in achieving political-military goals. Military artefacts are rituals, ceremonies, stories and legends through which the origin of military formations, adventures, conquests, defeats and beliefs are shared; and rites and rituals articulate military etiquette such as respect for rank, which creates military professionalism (Makhanda 1995:33).

Makhanda (1995) further states that the SANDF's values are communicated by symbols that are created by the shared assumptions, beliefs and values of the workforce. In response to the question – "Will the future institutional culture of the SANDF reflect the cultural practices of your former force?" – 27,8% of respondents agreed, while 20,4% disagreed and 50,8% were neutral. This means that future institutional cultural change is a probability. The SANDF's culture is learnt and inculcated during formal and informal training, military ceremonies, exercises and operations (Gagiano 2011; Kulu 2010; Gqoboka 2010). It creates an opportunity for transformational leaders not only to include the artefacts, but also to ensure that these artefacts reflect the shared assumptions, beliefs, norms and values of all constituent armed forces of the SANDF (Senior *et al*. 2012:282–284; Stoker *et al*. 2012:583–585).

The research reveals that 26% of the respondents agreed that the transactional leadership approach had been adopted by the SANDF, while 40,7% disagreed and 33,3% remained neutral. This shows that the majority of senior officers are not aware of the official leadership approach of the SANDF. If senior leaders do not know, what can one expect of their followers? This calls into question the communication channels of the SANDF. The transformational

leadership approach is capable of effective communication and of enhancing the institutional culture of the SANDF (Cavazotte *et al.* 2012:444–446). To be effective leaders and capable of transforming military institutions, commanders have to adopt and apply the principles of transformational leadership (Febbraro *et al.* 2008:3,6).

Transformational leadership model for the SANDF

Figure 1 depicts a transformational leadership model that would not only allow the SANDF to transform its institutional culture, but also in achieving government's imperatives. It portrays transformational leadership characteristics (inspirational motivation, individual consideration (sensitivity to member's needs, respecting differences and providing opportunities for development), intellectual stimulation (challenging others' assumptions and stereotypes, encouraging a viewing of the world from a different perspective and fostering critical and independent thinking) and idealised influence that should be instilled in transformational leaders (Burns 1978; Bass and

Figure 1: A Transformational leadership model for SANDF
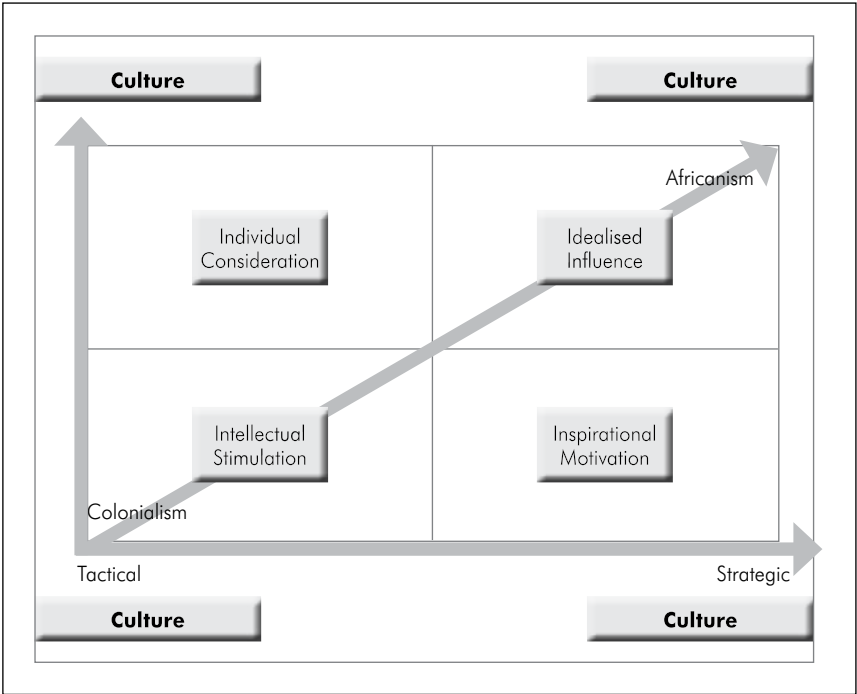
Riggio 2006; Febbraro *et al.* 2008:3.6). These characteristics would allow transformational leaders to perform certain tasks among others (grooming next generation leaders and being active change agents in formulating appropriate and feasible strategies) and specific outcomes (motivate subordinates to transcend their self-interest into achieving institutional goals and individual goals, (Tucker and Russell 2004:106-108) creating conducive environments for gender equality and a one force concept). A transformational leadership approach would also allow the SANDF to achieve its transformational goals and objectives (Department of Defence 2001:20–31).

The figure shows that transformational leadership would allow the SANDF to move from an autocratic (traditional military leadership approach) to a transformational leadership approach. The SANDF has adopted a transactional leadership approach in 2009 (Department of Defence 2009:D1-1). However, this research shows 26% of the respondents agreed that the transactional leadership approach had been adopted by the SANDF, while 40,7% disagreed and 31,5% remained neutral. This shows that senior officers are not aware of the official leadership approach of the SANDF.

The figure reveals that transformational leadership should be infused in the SANDF's leadership training and development programmes (from basic training to joint command and staff training). Transformational leadership training should take place across the different hierarchical levels and command levels (tactical, operational and strategic); because training and development are an integral part of the work experience of the workforce of the SANDF (Kahn 2005:253, 258). It will allow the SANDF to nurture and inculcate transformational leadership qualities in the members of the SANDF, because military leadership are formed in a progressive and sequential series of carefully planned training, educational and experiential events (Kolditz 2009). It also allows the SANDF to imbue transformational leadership skills in soldiers at the beginning of their military career as privates or seamen. Employees are empowered, gain experience and are exposed to many situations as they advance to the next hierarchical level, which allows them to acquire and master transformational characteristics (Mau and Wooley 2006:51-53). Research reveals a high correlation between leadership skills and capacity for self-improvement and self-awareness. It suggests that leadership can be learned through goal directed self-development, learning from others and self-experience by critical reflection (Storey 2004).

Figure 1 illustrates that transformational leadership would accelerate the transformation of the SANDF in creating an institutional culture that is not only inclusive of the military practices, rituals and traditions of all constituent integrated armed forces (Kahn 2009), but also one that reflects African cultures, values, norms and traditions (Kahn and Naidoo 2011:86–87). It would also

allow the SANDF to establish an environment in which gender equality will thrive (Kubu 2009:52–53). The model illustrates the different levels in which leaders in the SANDF operate in. Leaders at the tactical level are responsible for the execution of tasks as well as for the well-being and support of those under their command. Leaders at the operational level provide leadership to company and platoon commanders. They also provide unit objectives, goals, values and norms. These leaders are normally majors, lieutenants-colonel and colonels and senior non-commissioned officers. Leaders at the strategic level are primarily concerned with the strategic direction (strategic planning and decision-making) of the institution (Kahn 2005:187–189). In a democratic state like South Africa, where the SANDF is subject to the Ministry of Defence, means that it is also subject to strategic direction and input from the Minister of Defence.

The appreciation for transformational leadership becomes evident during combat situations, when soldiers experience extreme conditions of life and death. During these conditions, transactional sources of motivation become insufficient. In circumstances like these soldiers must be led in ways that inspire, rather than require trust and confidence. Transformational leaders are capable of both (Kolditz 2009). The trust and confidence relationship between transformational leaders and followers should take place during peacetimes, which then become natural during war. This correlates with the Manoeuvre Theory of command, which allows for timely decision-making, initiative and integrated application of mobile and conventional warfare concepts. It allows subordinate leaders to take decisions that are consistent with and also further the "commander's intent". It allows subordinate leaders who are closest to the action the latitude to take advantage of on-the-spot information unavailable to their superiors, while carrying out their broad strategic goals. To enact the commander's intent, subordinate leaders have to think like their commanders. This practice can be taught and developed during peacetimes (Mau and Wooley 2006:53–54).

The figure depicts that transformational leadership would create conditions that allows the SANDF to institute the Manoeuvre Theory of command during peacetime. The Manoeuvre Theory allows for timely decision-making, initiative and integrated application of mobile and conventional warfare concepts. It allows access to information that formerly was known only to commanders. It allows subordinates to take decisions that are aligned with the commander's intent, which allow them to make decisions that can lead to greater success during peacetimes (Kahn 2005:191). Officers' keen interest in the well-being of their subordinates and motivating them to transcend their self-interest for the achievement of military goals, particularly during combat, emanates from the Manoeuvre Theory (Veldtman 2012). If the Manoeuvre Theory is applied in peacetime it would enhance employees' performance, which would result

in increased productivity and institutional effectiveness, which in turn would result in improved service delivery to all communities (Kahn and Naidoo 2011). It calls for the devolution of power and decentralisation of authority to lower hierarchical levels, with adequate support systems to aid the training and development and ensure effective checks and balances are maintained (Republic of South Africa 2013:426–427). Figure 1 also takes into account the influence that the external environmental may have on the internal factors of the SANDF. The civilian political control and budget constraints are two crucial external factors that directly influence the effective operation of the SANDF. The role of the SANDF in sub-Saharan Africa exposes its members to different cultural demands and expectations, as well as unfamiliar legal and ethical challenges. These factors require a leadership approach that is able to deal with these issues. It is clear that no one particular leadership approach is appropriate in all situations (Mau and Wooley 2006:52). Therefore, military leaders at the different levels in the hierarchy will apply different leadership styles, depending on the context and circumstances in which they find themselves.

The transformational leadership model would allow the SANDF to: 1) introduce and inculcate a transformational leadership approach in its workforce from a new leadership approach in soldiers at an early stage in their career development; 2) establish a culture that reflects the predominant leadership approach in the SANDF; 3) create an inclusive institutional culture that reflects the military practices, rituals and traditions of all constituent armed forces in the new SANDF (Kahn 2009:4) reflects a value system that is accepted and embraced by all; 5) establish an environment in which gender equity and equality can thrive (Kahn and Louw 2011:677–678); and 6) move from an era of colonialism to one that reflects Africanism (Kahn and Naidoo 2011:86–87).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research reveals that the integration of seven armed forces into the SANDF required neither a transactional leadership approach that would maintain the status quo of the former SADF nor a motivational style based on exchanging rewards for desired behaviour. Such rewards would only benefit the majority, while excluding the minority. The SANDF needs a transformational leadership approach that will not only change people's attitudes and behaviours to embrace a new future, but also transform the SANDF's culture to reflect the shared assumptions, beliefs and values of all constituent armed forces. Transformational leaders are able to create an enabling institutional culture that allows the Manoeuvre Theory and the commander's intent to be instituted

during peace times; under conditions similar to that of war and peacekeeping missions. The trust relationship between leaders and subordinates will allow subordinate leaders to execute defence force goals and objectives within the commander's intent (Mau and Wooley 2006:53–54).

The literature shows that transformational leaders possess traits and behaviours that are not only necessary for transformation and change, but also strengthen institutions' competitiveness and effectiveness in the market. Since transformational leaders have internalised and embraced change, they are change agents, because they inspire people to achieve a new future, amidst a crisis or uncertainty (Stoker *et al.* 2012). Transformational leaders are able to build human capacity by using their leadership abilities to enhance people's competencies in achieving self-actualisation and motivating them to internalise the institution's vision and mission, and transcend their self-interest and desires for the achievement of group and institutional goals. Such leaders use institutional resources to influence and change the behaviour and performance of employees enabling them to constantly anticipate and adapt to change, which enhances the institution's effectiveness and productivity. Transformational leaders inspire employees to internalise the institution's culture, which allows them to operate in situations in which there are limited institutional guidelines and little or no supervision (Wilkens 1984).

Transformational leaders are more prone to establish a successful leader-follower relationship (Stoker *et al.* 2012), which is needed in the SANDF, especially with a view to developing the next generation of leaders. Such leaders are able to create an environment in which employees can increase their capacity to be attentive and sensitive to changes in the external environment, which may affect the institution's competitive landscape (Carmeli *et al.* 2010). Such an environment would enable the SANDF not only to respond effectively to uncertainties in the sector, but also to achieve the following government imperatives (1) narrowing the gender equity gap between men and women – achieving gender equality; (2) women and minorities achieving self-actualisation by progressing beyond the institutional glass ceiling; and (3) alleviating disproportionate representativity at the different management levels to reflect the demographics of South Africa.

Transformational leaders are able to create an institutional culture that reflects the SANDF's shared assumptions, beliefs and values of all constituent armed forces (Andrews and Mead 2009). This would enhance intercultural learning and relationships and allow for the commemoration of military events that are unique and noteworthy for the former armed forces. It would create a new SANDF culture that would reflect unity and Africanism. The research underscores the fact that a transformational leadership approach is capable of transforming the institutional culture of the SANDF.

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