Pretoria's Praetorians

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Civil–military relations in South Africa

PHILIP H. FRANKEL

Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Studies
University of the Witwatersrand

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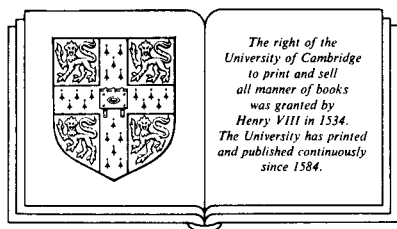More information

For Angela and Andrea

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Acknowledgements

Social enquiry, it has been said, forces us out of ourselves and into the lives of others. In moving into the lives of the South African military I have received assistance from numerous sources – from the local and British academic community whose South Africanists and military sociologists have provided intellectual stimulation for a difficult project; from the University of the Witwatersrand and the British Council whose financial generosity allowed me to take advantage of the various research opportunities in South Africa and beyond its borders; from elements associated with the Defence Force inclined to see the project as useful rather than subversive; and last, but by no means least, from members of my immediate family without whose emotional support the whole enterprise might never have reached conclusion. Needless to say, none of these sources bears responsibility for the way I have interpreted the social and political life of the Defence Force in its own right or within the broader context of the South African system.

Notes on terminology

The use of the term 'non-white' is considered by many to be derogatory and redundant in the modern South African setting. Hence the use of quotation marks. At the same time 'black' is a misnomer when applied indiscriminately to all of the subject race groups – Indian, Coloured and 'African' – although it is both convenient and fashionable to do so. For the purposes of this work, we intend to use the term 'non-white' as an equally convenient catch-all phrase referring to the collective of subject race groups (without due prejudice) and the term 'black' to refer to its 'African' component. The Coloured and Indian communities will of course be referred to as such.

For the purposes of this work, the term 'South African Defence Force' will be used interchangeably with the acronym SADF, or simply the term 'Defence Force'.

Abbreviations

AMI	Afdeling Militere Inligting (Military Information Service)
ANC	African National Congress
Armscor	Armaments Corporation
CDO	Civil Defence Organization
COIN	Counter Insurgency Unit
COSAWAR	Committee of South African War Resisters
CP	Conservative Party
DAC	Defence Advisory Council
DCC	Defence Command Council
DFAI	Department of Foreign Affairs and Information
DMI	Directorate of Military Intelligence
DPC	Defence Planning Committee
DSC	Defence Staff Council
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
DTI	Direkteur Teen-Inligting (Directorate, Counter-Intelligence)
HNP	Herstigte Nasionale Party
LTU	Leisure Time Utilization Unit
MNR	Mozambique National Resistance
MPO	Munitions Production Office
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NRP	New Republic Party
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
SAAF	South African Air Force
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAMRAF	South African Military Refugees Fund
SAP	South African Police
SSC	State Security Council
SSCS	State Security Council Secretariat
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
SWATF	South West African Territorial Force
TDF	Transkei Defence Force
UDF	Union Defence Force
ZAR	Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek
ZARP	Zuid-Afrikaanse Republikeinse Polisie

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Introduction. Analysing the South African military

The role of the military in South African politics is essentially unexplored when seen against the backdrop of the enormous output of literature on civil–military relations of recent years. Studies of South Africa have appropriated a good deal of scholarly energies as historians, sociologists and political scientists have applied their diverse skills to sewing together the past, present and future into some sort of reasonable understanding of the origins and consequences of apartheid society. Yet, despite the proliferation of knowledge on these two different planes, virtually nothing coherent and systematic has been said about the relationship between South African soldiers and the state as it has developed with the progressive institutionalization of apartheid, or, in a less abstract sense, about the role of the South African military establishment in the public and informal decision-making context of South African society. This scholarly oversight is an anomaly at variance with some of the major developments of past and contemporary South African history. South Africa has of course never enjoyed the dubious distinction of military rule along the lines of so many post-World War II Third World states. The structural features of modern-day South Africa may not even fall into the Third World category. Yet military leaders have played a direct or ancillary role in shaping the South African society we know today, in forging and subsequently developing the Union through the first three prime ministers, Generals Botha, Smuts and Hertzog, all of whom were military men, albeit in a non-career capacity.[1] In current terms, as one commentator puts it, 'knowledge of the armed forces of South Africa and how they relate to the rest of society and the power elite is indispensable' if we are to understand political and social movements within South Africa since the creation of the Republic, the mechanics of state control, adaption and change, and even foreign policy conducted on a global or regional basis.[2] Yet, as another source lamentably notes, the actual 'link between politics and the military appears to have been relatively neglected in the literature of South

Africa to date'.[3] In the last analysis, despite the odd self-justifying piece trotted out by the state or its irreconcilable antagonists, there is virtually nothing in book-length or journal form which represents a consistent and relatively analytical attempt to look at the South African military in its own social and political right, or, more broadly, which attempts to link the South African civil–military experience to the universal literature on military sociology and politics with its emphasis on how and why soldiers are drawn into the political process, the way they act on this involvement and the consequences for various types of society.[4]

There are, of course, innumerable societies where civil–military relations remain an unexplored area. One of the major problems confronting civil–military research continues to be that of disaggregating general findings to meet the peculiar historical and structural features of individual societies. Yet in some societies the neglected link between the military and politics is especially acute, particularly in conflict-ridden societies such as South Africa where so much of politics is reducible to sheer brute force and the application of state coercion. All social structures are dependent to some degree on the use of force, but there is a difference between putative and applied force, and the distinction is eroded in those societies such as South Africa where the state faces a crisis of legitimacy – indeed, an ongoing crisis of legitimacy – brought about by deep cleavage between ruling elites and masses, reinforced by an explosive mixture of interpenetrating class and cultural divisions. In these circumstances, which are acute within but not necessarily unique to South Africa, the individuals and institutions with access to the instruments and technologies of violence – among whom the military is in the forefront – can be absolutely decisive in the process by which power is allocated. As Alfred Stepan notes in his study of the Brazilian military, the response of soldiers to conflict in divided civil societies provides 'a large part of the answer to the question of who wins and who loses, who has power and who does not'. He adds:

When the armed forces prevent the winner of a presidential election from taking office, when they remove a government whose economic policies favor one class at the expense of another, or where they stage a coup to preserve the dominance of a racial, religious, tribal or linguistic group in a communally divided society, their actions clearly help determine which societal groups will gain or lose some of their most important values. Even those coups that are unrelated to group conflicts, primarily involving the defence of corporate military interests, are likely to affect political and economic outcomes.[5]

A conflict perspective on South African politics – one which focusses on the 'hard' institutions and processes at work to shape society, the police, the military and the bureaucracy within the network of state control – may indeed be the only realistic framework within which to see local develop-

ments, the more so as racial polarization takes hold and as power and public policy-making is centralized in state structures to which security organizations have preferential access. This is particularly important in the light of South Africa's new constitution whose design facilitates penetration by the Defence Force into the highly centralized organs of state security while excluding the overwhelming majority of South Africa's 'non-whites' from wielding the main levers of national political power. Whether or not the new constitution will feed rather than diffuse revolutionary pressures along lines suggested by both right- and left-wing opponents of the National Party, it is also important to recognize that military institutions are always vital to the balance of power in conditions of radical social transformation.[6] While theorists disagree as to *how* vital soldiers are in determining the occurrence and outcome of revolutions, most writers on South Africa have simply skirted the issue through their wholesale failure to link the military to the forces of counter-revolution in the local context. This is a gross oversight in the light of Barrington Moore's assertion that 'it is the state of the army, of competing armies, not of the working class, that has determined the fate of twentieth-century revolutions'.[7] This is not to deny the role of the working class in South Africa as sketched out in a sophisticated and accumulating literature on black proletarian resistance to apartheid. Work of this nature is indeed an important antidote to the tendency of political writing on South Africa to focus upon the formal mechanics of power worked through political parties, constitutions and more readily evident civil procedures. The political role of the South African military must nonetheless be seen against the historically validated backdrop that few revolutions succeed as long as the officer corps remains firm in its allegiance to the state. Alternatively, few fail in circumstances where military institutions respond to deep social tensions by defecting from the state or assuming a position of neutrality between the insurgents and the incumbents of state power.

There is, it must be emphasized, a growing recognition of the importance of the military in the South African political equation which corresponds to actual movements within civil–military boundaries leading to greater military participation in political and social affairs in recent years. Most students of contemporary South Africa would today concur with the statement that 'any analysis of South African politics will remain inadequate, incomplete and misleading without an understanding of the inextricable and inevitable role the military is playing in the formation and execution of policy'.[8] This reflects the material fact, in the words of another commentator, that 'the South African Defence Force [SADF] is no longer simply an instrument for policy implementation [but] an active

participant in policy-making ... in military matters, in wider security issues, both domestic and external, and even in matters concerning the homelands and economic and foreign policy'.[9] The literature derived from these perceptions is, however, conceptually primitive for the most part, intellectually underdeveloped in many cases and questionable in its conceptual foundations in others. With a handful of notable exceptions – there is only one scholarly book-length study of the South African armed forces[10] – the extant literature on the South African military is overwhelmingly historical in focus, ranging from the esoteric to the trivial. This historical orientation is justifiable given the relatively recent appearance of the military in the South African political mainstream. Nevertheless, as the political profile of the Defence Force has risen and it has become increasingly institutionalized in public policy-making since the mid- to late sixties, the literature has consistently failed to keep pace with developments in the form of detailed sociological analysis. Today, while the potential student is confronted with a plethora of descriptive regimental histories of varying academic quality, he is hard put to find anything at all dealing with the origins and implications of growing military penetration into the formal and informal networks of South African society – apart from a number of highly speculative articles designed to flatter the ideological sensibilities of those who oppose the country's racial policies. Nor, with the odd exception, have there been any serious attempts to contrast or compare the South African civil–military experience with civil–military systems in other parts of the world, in either the developed or underdeveloped areas. The conventional approach is overwhelmingly configurative in spirit and basically ignorant of the growing range of writings on the topics of military sociology. Above all, however, the current literature is profoundly reductionist in one of two forms, neither of which do justice to the complex reality of civil–military politics in South Africa. On the one hand, largely under the influence of crude Marxist interpretations of the relations between society and its institutions, the military is portrayed as a pale reflection of the economic forces at work in the South African social substructure. In this idiom, where the soldiers seemingly follow the dictates of the white capitalist state, little or no attention is given to the universally accepted fact that militaries can conceivably be relatively independent subsystems in the overall social dynamic, with both the will and the means to shape as well as to respond to the dictates of public policy.[11] It is, I believe, grossly simplistic and reductionist to relegate the South African Defence Force to the role of a 'knee-jerk' agent of the white state, not only because the South African state is composed of a diversity of fragments each seeking to carve out its segmental and institutional interests within the transcending racial

framework, but also because the military is one of the most powerful of
these fragments by virtue of its dual responsibility for external and internal
state control, with the real means to influence the conception, formation
and implementation of public policy (either independently or through
alignment with a variety of interests aggregated in forming the polity). Nor
for that matter is the South African military the homogeneous, purposive
and hierarchically controlled institution portrayed in much of the litera-
ture. As modern military sociology has progressively recognized, every
military organization is to some extent a complex body differentiated
along political lines, with the result that the cues provided by soldiers for
civilian decision-makers are always a reflection of the type and measure of
diversity present in any given military institution. This is not to deny the
importance of race in giving coherence to the cognitions and behaviour of
the South African military whose officer corps is overwhelmingly drawn
from the ranks of the white elite whose values and interests it must then
reflect. Yet is is fundamentally misguided to view the Defence Force as
being in a state of what one author has dubbed 'frictionless co-existence',
either internally or in its external relations with the social world.[12] In
assessing the social and political dynamics endogenous and exogenous to
the Defence Force establishment, due respect should also be given to
service rivalries between South African officers, to differences in their
social and cultural background, to their ambitions, age, rank, training,
combat experience and their varied attachments to political parties,
leaders and public policies which spill across the civil–military divide
despite the levelling and inhibiting forces of organizational socialization.
In the last analysis the South African military is composed of divergent
human beings with values, feelings and perceptions of social and political
affairs which cut across and complicate their common commitment both
to maintain the corporate interests of the military and to perpetuate the
existence of the white state apparatus. It is, I would assert, patently
ridiculous to label a modern, complex and differentiated institution such
as the South African military as a monolithic agent of a state power.

The South African military is, on the whole, a sociologically vital
organization and it is precisely for this reason that claims to its non-
political status are essentially specious. This means that South African
civil–military relations cannot be realistically approached within the
context of the formal and juridic notion that local military institutions are
the non-political agents of state power concerned exclusively with the
execution of public policy. The essence of this approach, with its intel-
lectual origins in the lofty realms of British constitutional law, is enshrined
in a variety of South African statutes, from the inspiring Defence Act of
1912 and through its subsequent amendments. Hence members of the

Defence Force are barred from the membership of any political party; they may not, according to the SADF Order of September 1970, participate in any meeting, demonstration or procession on behalf of a party while in uniform or while performing duties in terms of the Defence Act; and they may not take part in any activity furthering the interests of a political party or of candidates for election to parliament, provincial councils or any other public body elected on a political-party basis. Yet, as most contemporary theorists recognize, the 'liberal' format for the conduct of civil–military relations is essentially over-heroic and idealistic in its understanding of what military institutions actually do – as opposed to what they should do – in society: it is sociologically naive and, at a deeper level of criticism, basically misconceived when measured against the developments of both past and current civil–military history. It may or may not be desirable that soldiers 'intervene' in the civil political process (most of the current generation of theorists believe they should not), yet the fact is that soldiers often do so, for a range of reasons from the instrumental to the ideological; and this intervention forms the foundation stone of many military coups and governments in contemporary Third World countries.[13] Gaetano Mosca's acute comment, while it precedes the development of modern professional armies, is perhaps still of considerable relevance today. As he astutely notes, 'whenever and whatever governments have built up standing armies in order to deal with ... unruliness, or for other reasons, they have almost always found themselves at the mercies of those armies'. Be it the rebelliousness of the Strelitzes under Peter the Great, the Turkish mercenaries of the Abbasids or the Janissaries of the Ottomans, he grimly concludes that 'history teaches us that the class that bears the lance or holds the musket regularly forces its rule upon the class that holds the spade or pushes the shuttle'.[14] Even in the developed world, of which South African leaders claim their state a part, the distinctions between the lines of civil and military authority are so amorphous for political purposes, so caught up at the junctures between what one commentator has described as the 'intermingled world of strategy and policy',[15] that it is virtually impossible to make any clearcut case for the so-called 'non-political soldier' envisaged under the neo-British liberal paradigm. Indeed, there are precious few cases in the civil–military experience of the modern Western world where it can be shown that on matters of national security (the very meaning of which fluctuates from case to case) the political will of the military has been imposed on the civilians or, as the liberal model demands, vice versa. In the hard material context of public policy-making today, Gibbon's dictum in his magisterial study of Rome still holds water. As he notes, in a manner which still essentially describes the interrelations between modern civil

and military authority in even the most 'advanced' industrialized states, 'the firmest and best emperors were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter the pride of the Praetorians, indulge their pleasures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donative which . . . was exacted as a legal claim on the accession of every new emperor'.[16]

It is, in fact, particularly difficult to accept the notion of the non-political soldier obedient to civil authority in the specific South African context. There is simply no reason to believe that the various forces working to disturb the delicate civil–military balance described by liberal theory in other contexts are not also present in the South African case, be they in the form of the professional immaturity of the military establishment, the insensitivity of civil leadership to the prerogatives of military institutions or, in the last analysis, the fact that military professionalism is, in the words of one analyst, 'Janus-faced' (i.e. that modern career soldiers may abjure politics as beyond their realm of expertise yet, in turn, intervene in politics in order to protect their corporate isolation).[17] Indeed, when looking carefully at South Africa, it seems that the very nature of its history, society and politics conspires to produce the very socio-political conditions fuelling the contemporary situation where persistent patterns of civilian supremacy are the deviant rather than the normal cases in much of the non-Western world.[18] Allowance must of course be made for the fact that South Africa is not a typically Third World state, nor for that matter, despite the rhetoric of government, a typical state of Africa. Her military institutions are, for one thing, founded on strong, if adapted, British military traditions which lend strength to the technical subordination of the military to civil political authority. Yet, as countless analyses have pointed out, the South African state rests on relatively narrow class and racial foundations; state coercion is a predominant component of the arsenal of political control in the hands of the dominant white minority; and, as a natural extension, the 'hard' institutions of society – the police, the military and other components of the state security network – enjoy considerable access to social status among the elite, to state resources and the levers of public policy. Not all power stems, in the light of the Maoist dictum, from 'the barrel of a gun', yet in the South African case those who legitimately control the barrels of guns in the process of executing the will of the state must be a critical factor in the equation whereby power is distributed throughout society. There are, in addition, few reasons to believe that the power of these social formations will fade away in the course of immediate history. On the contrary, as the South African state has progressively shifted in an authoritarian direction away from its original mildly liberal inheritance, as national security has been redefined

to encompass a range of issues beyond the purely strategic, and as internal and international pressures in favour of the politically disincorporated have intensified, so civil–military boundaries have inevitably tilted in favour of local military institutions in the public policy-making process. Full-time members of the Defence Force may well remain exceptions to public service legislation extending the political rights of civil servants (e.g. under amendments to the Public Service Act of 1973), yet the accumulating challenges to state security, as seen from the perspective of the executive branch of government, are progressively eroding the notion of the non-political soldier contained in the Defence Act from an ideal prescription to a misplaced description of the actual nature of civil–military realities. The conscription policies of the state, it should be added, invigorate the penetration of political influence into the South African Defence Force by virtue of the fact that national service is confined to members of the ruling white minority who are increasingly recirculated between the civil and military realm – as an alternative to the absorption of questionably loyal 'non-whites' into the state security structure. Segmental conscription of this type is notoriously politicizing in its impact on military institutions, because it blunts organizational socialization in the military by bringing soldiers and civilians into frequent contact. In the last analysis, the liberal conception of civil–military relations founders on the acute race and class distinctions at the basis of all political development in South African society. The military in South Africa is, when all is said and done, a key institution supporting the values and interests of the white minority. This institution may have its own corporate interests and may have reached a level of professionalism in the sense of having developed into a relatively exclusive body with an autonomous status apart from the mainstream of society, yet it is still irrevocably tied to the defence of special sectional interests associated with the perpetuation of South Africa's racial state. The South African military establishment may display many of the features of any other modern military force. Nonetheless, because it is locked into the state structure by a mixture of biological and functional forces associated with military–state relations, its actions can never be entirely free from the social and political cues emanating from the white sector of South African society. In such circumstances, the classic *quid pro quo* where civilians and soldiers respectively determine the principles and execution of national security policy breaks down, or is at least under considerable political pressure, for day-to-day and long-range decision-making purposes. In practice, the confusion between race, state, soldier and civilian generates a fusion of roles and functions in relation to which the polite theoretical distinctions between civil and military have little practical meaning.

I believe that a full-scale exploration of civil–military relations in South Africa provides a key to many of the dominant issues in contemporary and future South African politics – a key largely unturned or misturned in recent analysis. At a higher level of abstraction, a case study of the SADF could conceivably contribute to the ongoing debate over civil–military relations – to defining the role of the military in society, to show how soldiers respond to socio-political pressures, the consequences of militarization and its impact on the politics of ruling elites – all set within the peculiar racial and political configuration of South African society. At the same time I recognize that many of the lacunae and failings in the present literature on the military in South African society are a result of problems of access to the necessary material required to pass judgment on civil–military relations in the South African context. I am not insensitive to these difficulties although my basic feeling is that many of the research problems have been overstated or exaggerated without due respect for the variety of tools available to modern social scientists confronted with the task of indirect investigation. The fact that there is no official history of the South African Defence Force, that there is hardly a developed body of literature exploring the relations between the Defence Force and wider society on any systematic basis, indeed, the simple fact that the SADF is still very much an unknown quantity in its internal dynamics and as a factor in the civil–military arena, all attests to the real issue, which is that it is indeed difficult at the best of times to conduct research on the South African military – an institution, like the military of any other state, which is relatively closed, tightly bureaucratic in organization, intimately involved with the security of the state and thereby hostile to even the milder forms of academic penetration. Even in societies more genuinely democratic than South Africa military bureaucrats are reluctant to open their activities to public scrutiny. The tendency is exaggerated in South Africa where the progressive institutionalization of authoritarianism over the last thirty-five years has fed a general breakdown in public control over what the institutions of state say and do. Today, when political leaders in the ruling National Party purposely or unwittingly confuse the maintenance of 'national' (white) morale with the need to eliminate many sources of information potentially critical of the state or its agents in the bureaucracy, the police and the military, the activities of these agents – the police and military in particular – have simply disappeared behind a virtually impenetrable wall of security legislation. If so little detailed work has been done on the South African military at least part of the reason lies in the ever-widening conception of what constitutes 'state security' and in the ever-increasing refusals of disclosure justified by reference to the 'national interest'. Add to these difficulties the risk of prosecution under the widely formulated Defence

Act, the Official Secrets Act and a daunting array of complementary
security legislation, and the erstwhile researcher into South African mili-
tary affairs has neither the psychological nor practical incentives to
investigate beyond the few existing, available, disparate and readily
known scraps of data and information.

   Despite this situation I nevertheless believe that there is adequate and
reasonably attainable information to support research of better quality
than has heretofore emerged – provided scholarship is persistent and
creative enough in its detection and use. The difficulties generated by
research on militaries are always relative and even if the South African
military is particularly reluctant to open its official files there is still a
substantial amount of unprocessed and readily available information on
local civil–military relations to which academics can gain access with
minimal risk, and without the official sanction of the Defence Force
authorities with their natural preference for classified in-house studies. For
one thing, civil–military relations is a two-sided process in which the
military only directly controls one decisive element. It may be possible for
the military to deny researchers access to official archives or (to a lesser
degree) to individual members of the officer corps, but it can only partially
veil the civil dimension of the civil–military interaction which takes place
beyond its own institutional boundaries. In present-day South Africa, the
impact of the military on society is readily visible in a way which
circumscribes the Defence Act and the network of security legislation
designed to intimidate the academically and politically inquisitive. Mili-
tary institutions openly interact with members of the business community,
they play a direct and indirect role in the process of designing national
education policies at the secondary level and they force themselves into the
public eye through the wide-ranging system of national conscription.
These fibres binding civil to military society are widely and relatively freely
reported in the daily press, in South African parliamentary reports and in
the increasingly lengthy and sophisticated White Papers issued by the
Department of Defence when publicly rationalizing and explaining the
role of the Defence Force to the South African white community. This
means that there exists a veritable minefield of data for the analyst with the
time and patience to sift through the verbiage of parliamentary debates
and newspaper reports, with the discrimination and intelligence to read
between the lines and statistics of official Defence Force statements. Nor, it
should be added, is the South African military that impenetrable institu-
tion described by a multitude of contemporary scholars. As the social role
of the Defence Force has been extended, some individual members of the
military welcome communication with external experts, not only as a
means of incorporating civilian skills and technologies into Defence Force

operations, but also as a tool for explaining and clarifying the role of military institutions in the seemingly Byzantine, complex and unfamiliar realms of civil society and politics. Even where it is impossible to forge individual channels of communication into the Defence Force there exists a large and relatively neglected historical literature on the South African military in the form of regimental histories and personal memoirs which provide insights into the culture, spirit and philosophy of South African military institutions.[19] When these are read with discernment and in conjunction with the official journals and magazines produced by the SADF (*Militaria, Paratus* and *Uniform*) it is possible to glean substantial and valuable material.

I do not wish to generate unfounded optimism. A considerable proportion of the empirical data at the foundations of research into the sociology of militaries which is present in other contexts is absent in the South African case, and much of this basic material cannot be compensated for by investigative manoeuvring or intellectual manipulation. Every study of the South African military at this point in time must inevitably be coloured with a deeper tone of speculation than might be considered analytically appropriate in other more open settings. Nonetheless, there exists a large body of unprocessed data which, if creatively used, reveals many if by no means all the major ingredients of contemporary South African civil–military interaction. Orchestrated against the background of the enormous and burgeoning literature on military soiciology from other developing and developed areas, this data can also be turned in a comparative direction – with due allowance for the particular structural and historical features within which South African civil–military relations are formulated. It is in this sense of an *interaction* between soldier and civilian with the backdrop of universal experience that the following study is conceived. I am not only concerned with the political behaviour of South African soldiers *per se*, but with the way in which this behaviour both reflects social tendencies and forces ingrained in the South African system and how it in turn feeds back into the civil mainstream to affect political institutions and processes – all against the theoretical background posed by civil–military interaction in other areas of the world. The state, of course, plays a crucial role in this process of inward and outward political movement. Since the state in itself is an outgrowth of an accumulation of historical and cultural forces shaping both the military and civil sectors of society, the first chapter is immediately concerned with the essential features of the South African military, with the organizational mechanics providing the filters for institutional behaviour and with the broad social and historical terrain from which these instruments have sprung. Hence, following an essentially descriptive subsection in which the basic institu-

tional features of the SADF are presented as a means to portray the complex, differentiated and essentially modern qualities of the South African military establishment, we move to the historical crucible out of which the Defence Force has emerged – dominated as it is by the interaction between imported British imperial and indigenous Afrikaner military traditions. This dynamic, described as a dialectic between 'liberal' and 'kommando' conceptions of civil–military authority, sets the tone for one of the central pillars of this study; that is, that the current militarization of South African society, the growth of the garrison state with its accompanying siege culture and the emergence of so-called 'total strategy' represent a basic reinvigoration of the kommando ethic in the traditional heartland of Afrikaner political culture. Fuelled by a variety of political and economic changes in South Africa's internal and external relationships, this had led to a basic boundary shift in civil–military roles and the distribution of social power – neither of which are readily reconcilable with the 'liberal' model of civil–military interaction associated with the British, Commonwealth and (until recently) South African civil–military experience. The main body of this work, chapters 2, 3 and 4, is concerned with enunciating the relative breakdown of the British civil–military heritage in the circumstances of contemporary South Africa. Chapter 2 identifies the mixture of domestic and international forces which have fed the garrison psychologies and institutions characterizing modern-day South Africa; it considers in somewhat greater detail the changes in the officer corps of the SADF which have fuelled the politicization of the military establishment and it seeks to identify the mechanics of total strategy on the basis of the view that total strategy represents the ideological umbrella under which the Defence Force has begun to make a variety of intrusive movements into the civilian political realm. Chapter 3 is a straightforward exposition of the dynamics of militarization: it analyses, *inter alia*, the South African defence budget, the growth of the local armaments industry, the disappearing distinctions between the civil and military sectors of society as the military extends its web into national education, the scientific and business communities and, finally, the appearance of military influences in the highest of public decision-making bodies and state councils. Chapter 4 is concerned with the responses of South African society to growing military claims on the levers of political power and to social resources. The final chapter – an excursion into the political future backed by the civil–military experience in societies other than South Africa – attempts to assess the intermediate and long-range implications of militarization for South African society.