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*Civilian to Officer: Threshold Concepts in Military  
Officers' Education*

AHMAD THAMRINI FADZLIN B. SYED MOHAMED

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education

Durham University

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## **Abstract**

This research discusses the threshold concepts in Military Officers' Education (MOE) at military institutions that also provide tertiary level education. Unlike other higher education systems, the military education programme is designed to transform civilians into soldiers and train military officers who are able to face the nation's future security challenges. The rules of technical preparation of military personnel and military leaders have been widely focused on but very little attention has been given to understanding the difficult conceptual and personal shifts entailed in such training. In this study, the threshold concepts theory provides a helpful analytical tool to examine the process deemed necessary for a transformation from civilian status to thinking and practising as a soldier and consequently, a military officer. Combined with phenomenography, as the research methodology, this research involved seven higher ranking officers, twenty-four military trainers, and twenty-nine officer cadets from two reputable military education institutions in Europe. The in-depth interviews explore the learning process in becoming an officer through experiences which involve learning about military practice in university settings. The findings show that there are two ontological shifts that transform a civilian into an officer – Phase I: Civilian to Soldier, and Phase II – Soldier to Officer. During Phase I, the first ontological shift in becoming a soldier involves the acceptance of discipline and obedience, recognition of a framework of related ethics and values, loyalty to the unit (collective above individual needs) and a sense of obligation. Meanwhile, Phase II requires a soldier to understand the concept of personal responsibility for the execution of mission, putting others before self, and the 'power to command' to complete the transformation to become a military officer. Apart from the identified ontological shifts and the threshold concepts to become an officer, the study also extended the current understanding of 'liminality' by offering new possible responses to the liminal experience. Drawing from the analysis of the empirical data, the study establishes that certain cadets do not essentially have to follow pre-described path to become an officer. Rather, they are capable of conforming to the well-established community of practice whilst feel empowered to intervene actively during the learning process by questioning, and refashioning received ideas.

**Keywords:** threshold concepts, ontological shift, liminality, troublesome knowledge, rites of passage, third space, ambivalence, hybridity

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract	i	
Table of Contents	ii	
Declaration	x	
Statement of Copyright	x	
Dedication	xi	
Acknowledgements	xii	
Abbreviation and Acronyms	xv	
List of Figure	xvi	
List of Tables	xviii	
List of Publications & Presentations	xix	
	<b><u>Page</u></b>	
<b>Chapter I</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
1.0	Introduction	<b>1</b>
1.1	Military Education: An Overview	<b>2</b>
1.3	Problem Statement	<b>8</b>
1.4	Research Rationale	<b>10</b>
1.5	Research Questions	<b>11</b>
1.6	Research Contribution	<b>12</b>
1.7	Structure of the Thesis: An Overview of Chapters	<b>13</b>

## **Chapter II Literature Review**

2.0	Introduction	<b>15</b>
2.1	Military Officer Education – Defining the Scope	<b>16</b>
2.2	Military Officers Education: Glimpses into The Past	<b>18</b>
2.3	Military Officers Education Curriculum: Influence, Form and Function	<b>25</b>
2.3.1	Influence	<b>26</b>
2.3.1.1	Civil-Military Relation	<b>26</b>
2.3.1.2	The Armed Forces	<b>30</b>
2.3.2	Form	<b>33</b>
2.3.2.1	Basic Training: An Introduction to the Military Practice	<b>33</b>
2.3.2.2	From Technical Education to University Degrees	<b>36</b>
2.3.2.3	Education vs. Training	<b>42</b>
2.3.3	Function	<b>47</b>
2.3.3.1	Soldiering	<b>48</b>
2.3.3.2	Officership	<b>55</b>
2.4	Theoretical Framework	<b>60</b>
2.4.1	Threshold Concepts	<b>62</b>
2.4.2	Troublesome Knowledge	<b>72</b>
2.4.3	Rites of Passage for Communities of Practice	<b>74</b>
2.3.4	The Professional Soldier	<b>79</b>
2.5	Summary	<b>80</b>

## Chapter III Methodology

3.0	Introduction	82
3.1	Research Methodology	82
3.1.1	Interpretivism as a Paradigm	82
3.1.2	Phenomenography Research	83
3.1.3	Application of Phenomenography in the Study	88
3.1.4	Positionality: Insider-Outsider Role	90
3.2	Research Design	94
3.2.1	Choice of Institution	94
3.2.2	Choice of Participants	95
	A. Policymakers	
	B. Teachers, Lecturers and Trainers	
	C. Officer Cadets	
3.2.3	Design of Questions	97
3.2.4	Ethical Consideration	100
	A. Pre-Interview	
	B. Interview Process	
	C. Post Interview	
3.3	Research Method	107
3.3.1	The Interview	107
	A. <i>Individual</i>	
	B. <i>Focus Group</i>	
3.3.2	The Analysis	111
	3.3.2.1 Transcription	
	3.3.3.2 Analysis	
3.4	Summary	114

## **Chapter IV Going Through the Phases: From Civilian to Officer**

4.0	Introduction	<b>115</b>
4.1	Phase I: Civilian – Soldier	<b>116</b>
	a. Defining a soldier	<b>117</b>
	b. Difference between soldiers to a civilian?	<b>122</b>
4.2	Phase II: Soldier – Officer	<b>131</b>
	c. Defining Military Officer	<b>132</b>
	d. Differences between a soldier to military officer?	<b>137</b>
4.3	Ontological Shifts: Civilian – Soldier – Officer	<b>142</b>
4.4	Summary	<b>149</b>

<b>Chapter V</b>	<b>Ontological Shift I: Soldiership</b>	
5.0	Introduction	<b>150</b>
5.1	Soldiership	<b>151</b>
5.1.1	The Context of Transformation	<b>152</b>
5.1.2	Point of Entry	<b>154</b>
5.1.3	The ‘Initiation Phase’	<b>157</b>
5.2	Soldiership: The Thresholds	<b>163</b>
5.2.1	Preparedness to Use Legitimised Violence	<b>163</b>
5.2.2	<i>Esprit De Corps</i>	<b>166</b>
5.2.3	Prompt and Unquestioned Execution of the Command	<b>173</b>
5.3	Summary	<b>180</b>
<b>Chapter VI</b>	<b>Ontological Shift II: Officership</b>	
6.0	Introduction	<b>182</b>
6.1	Officership	<b>184</b>
6.1.1	Personal Responsibility for Execution of Mission	<b>186</b>
6.1.2	Obligation to Put Needs of Troops Before Personal Needs	<b>191</b>
6.1.3	The “Power to Command”	<b>196</b>
6.2	Summary	<b>212</b>



## **Chapter VII Troublesomeness in Military Officer Education**

7.0	Introduction	<b>213</b>
7.1	Rites of Passage: Going Through the Initiation Phase	<b>216</b>
7.2	Troublesome Knowledge in Soldiership	<b>228</b>
7.2.1	Preparedness to Use Legitimised Violence	<b>229</b>
7.2.2	<i>Esprit de Corps</i>	<b>233</b>
7.2.3	Prompt and Unquestioned Execution of the Mission	<b>239</b>
7.3	Troublesome Knowledge in Officership	<b>250</b>
7.3.1	From obeying to thinking: Receiving orders and commanding	<b>251</b>
7.3.2	Developing the officer's mind: a troublesome process?	<b>257</b>
7.3.3	Officership: Living The Standard	<b>266</b>
7.4	Summary	<b>272</b>

## **Chapter VIII Through the Liminal – Discussion of Findings, Implications and Future Research**

8.0	Introduction	<b>273</b>
8.1	Rites of Passage: The Jewels in Officer Education?	<b>274</b>
8.1.1	The Institution	<b>277</b>
8.1.2	The Officers	<b>284</b>
8.1.3	Other cadets	<b>286</b>
8.2	The Liminal State: “A Civilian, Not Yet a Soldier nor an Officer”	<b>287</b>
8.3	The “Ambivalent” Cadets Officers	<b>292</b>
8.4	Recommendations	<b>301</b>
8.5	Limitation of The Study	<b>303</b>
8.6	Scope for Future Study	<b>305</b>
8.7	Conclusion	<b>306</b>

## **References**

## Appendix

- A. Permission Letter
- B. Consent Form
- C. Participant Information Sheet
- D. Interview Questions I: Policymakers
- E. Interview Questions II: Military Trainers
- F. Focus Group I Interview Questions: New Cadets (Year 1)
- G. Focus Group II Interview Questions: Intermediate Cadets (Year 2)
- H. Focus Group III Interview Questions: Commissioning Cadets (Year 3+)
- I. List of Protocol
- J. Cadet Evaluation Form (Institution B)

### **Declaration**

*No material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university. The work is original, except where indicated by a special reference in the text. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.*

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## Dedication



*To the school teacher who could not afford to go to a university, but his dream enables his children to do so.*

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*"I count myself in nothing else so happy  
As in a soul remembering my good friends." – (William Shakespeare, "Richard II")*

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*"I love you more than words can wield the matter, Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty" - (William Shakespeare, "King Lear")*

And to those whom I'd lost while I am on this journey;

You will never be forgotten.

"Thank You."



## **Abbreviation and Acronyms**

MOE	Military Officer Education
ODP	Officer Development Programme
PME	Professional Military Education

## List of Figure

Figure 2.1	The Liminal Tunnel
Figure 4.1	Civilian – Soldier Phase
Figure 4.2	Soldier - Officer Phase
Figure 4.3	Ontological Shift from Civilian to Officer
Figure 5.1	Ontological Shift I: Soldiership
Figure 5.2	Timeline for Entry
Figure 5.3	Thresholds for Soldiership
Figure 6.1	Officership
Figure 6.2	Ontological Shift from Civilian to Officer
Figure 8.1	Ontological Shift and the thresholds concepts from Civilian to Officer
Figure 8.2	The Collective Effort
Figure 8.3	Cadet’s Oath at Institution A and Institution B
Figure 8.4	Training and Education Timeline
Figure 8.5	Introducing a New Meaning

Figure 8.6

Liminality in Officer Education

Figure 8.7

Phases of Civilianisation Phase

## List of Tables

Table 2.1	USMA Curriculum
Table 2.2	Theoretical Framework
Table 2.3	Threshold Concepts Characteristics
Table 2.4	TCF Considerations for Course Design
Table 3.1	The Relationship between Phenomenography and Phenomenology
Table 3.2	Participants and Coding
Table 3.3	The Analysis

## List of Publications & Presentations

1. Threshold Concepts in Practice. (Eds). Land, R., Meyer, J. H. F., and Flanagan, M. T. (2016). A Book Chapter Co-Written with Land, R., Rattray, J. ISBN 978-94-6300-510-4 – *Ambivalence, Hybridity and Liminality: The Case of Military Education*.
2. Syed Mohamed, A. T. F. B. (2015) *Civilian to Officer: Threshold Concepts in Military Officers Education*, International Conference on Innovations, Shifts and Challenges Conference, 20-21 November 2015, UCSI Kuala Lumpur.
3. Syed Mohamed, A. T. F. B. (2014) *Threshold Concepts in Professional Military Education for Developing Military Leaders of the 21st Century*, Fifth International Biennial Threshold Concepts Conference, Threshold Concepts in Practice, Durham University, Durham, UK, 9-11 July, 2014 Abstract: <http://www.ee.ucl.ac.uk/~mflanaga/abstracts/TC14Abstract19.pdf>
4. Syed Mohamed, A. T. F. (2013) *Threshold Concepts and the Development of Military Leaders for the 21st Century: A Study of Military Education at the National Defence University of Malaysia*, Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) Annual Research Conference 2013 and New Researchers Conference 2013, Experiencing higher education: Global Trends and Transformations, Celtic Manor Resort, Newport, Wales, UK, 10-13 December 2013: <http://www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2013/download/SRHE-NR-Abstracts-2013.pdf>

# Chapter I

## Introduction

*I am a soldier. I have held every rank in the British Army from officer cadet to four-star general. I am now retired, but my almost forty-five years of service ensure that I remain a soldier at heart.*

- General Sir Mike Jackson (2007:1)

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The epigraph above captures the essence of the main purpose of this research; to understand the transformation of a civilian to become a soldier and later a military leader – ‘by heart’. It involves more than just observing the “look, feel, smell, and taste” of becoming a military officer as the ‘cooking’ method; the transformation process required to become a desired military officer ready to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. In doing so, the study explored the present Military Officer Education (MOE) at the military institutions that prepare these “professionals in violence” (Janowitz, 1960). Also, crucial ontological shifts that are required to become “a soldier at heart” were also explored. The main objective of this research was to study the issues of learning in a military environment and intended to open up a discussion of threshold concepts as an important but problematic factor in designing an effective learning environment within the discipline. It was truly told that military profession is never an easy one, and various challenges are faced in preparing those involved in it. Donald Rumsfeld (2002) observed that war of the twenty-first century does not only deal with the creation and the use of new high-tech weapons but also about “new ways of thinking and new ways of fighting” (21). Brodsky (1967) said that military education in essence is not just about obtaining military know-how, but also learning

about the national security requirements by being able to communicate with the policy formulators, economic analysts, political decision makers, systems analysts, sociologists and psychologists, scientists and engineers. In addition, these officers must understand research and development, production and procurement, operations and maintenance and should be familiar with the operations' research techniques and marginal analysis and gain knowledge of interrelationships among land, sea, air strategy and tactics and understand the elements of leadership and commands of staff operations and management" (429).

On the same note, Schneider (2005) pointed out that the indicator for the success of any military force depends on military education and its capability to create "intellectual leaders". These are distinct and specially trained personnel that "provide purpose, direction and motivation to the unconvinced, ignorant and uneducated—whether a subordinate, superior or peer. The intellectual leaders lead the unconvinced to seize new ideas, topple the outmoded and, when necessary, defend the old" (Schneider; 2005:16). Alas, the situation suggests a dual identity in a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998) to become 1) a soldier, and to become 2) a military officer. Each of these traits constitutes mastering and transforming oneself and making the critical transition, which may be difficult thus, leaving the learner in a state of "liminality" – a suspended state in which understanding approximates to a kind of mimicry or lack of authenticity (Meyer & Land, 2003: 10). In this regard, the present research has investigated this troublesome situation faced by the officer cadets during soldier training and their quest in becoming a military officer and determined why these areas are problematic.

## **1.1 MILITARY EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW**

The basic aim of military education is to provide schooling to military personnel, which helps them to gain the essential traits as a soldier and desire to exhibit such conduct as a military man and woman throughout their lives (Franke, 1999:68). Just like any other professional communities of practice, the intended military education must be able to transform an ordinary

civilian into a distinct man and woman of arms. Furthermore, the level of education offered at the institution usually mirrors its civilian counterparts to produce academically trained military officers who can face the future challenge of the nation's security interests into a broader regional and global context (Jowati, 2008; Watson, 2007). It means that the officer cadets are not only required to be transformed to suit a community of practice, but they must also be calibre leaders among those in the community. It resonates with what Clausewitz termed as military 'geniuses' – leaders of character whose lives and conducts are governed by the military and able to produce outstanding achievement while performing their duties. This is in line with the idea that can be traced since Plato's time, where military organisations were considered as the 'guardians' of the public, thus granting them access to the best education and training (Jowati, 2012; Patton, 1937).

In their book, Kennedy and Neilson (2002) asserted that even though, the military is considered as a crucial support for a nation in defending its sovereignty, the available literature suggests the contrary. For most of the time, history has shown that military education, either in Europe or the United States, has been subjected to criticism and rejection from the general public or from the members of the government at least. This is a usual case, as "the armed forces of a particular country are a product of their society's values, beliefs, and social orders" where conflicting indifference may result in an outright hostility (Sloan, 2012:328). As an example, Hawkins and Brimble (1947) indicated that up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the regimental schools failed to attract interest from a general public as the profession was considered as a 'profession of the fools' (3). On the other hand, the United States military college of West Point had to fight for its right to existence over and over again since its establishment in 1802, as the members had seen the college among other reasons, as a financial burden to the country (see Jowati, 2008; Franke, 1999; Patton, 1937). Shearer (1979) commented on an experimental military and civilian education at the University of Illinois at Urbana in 1918. Alarming, Shearer mentioned that;



“Intellectual achievement seemed to be antithetical to “the best elements” of military training. Military ideals and academic ideals hit head on at every point. Military men failed to understand the relevance of academic training, and faculty members bristled under the burden of military discipline that took away their autonomy in the classroom” (1979:223).

Overall, disregarding military education is a foolish act as; ignorance over it may result in disastrous decisions over a nation’s national security. In a general view, professional military education offers a nation, a chance to “enhance the safety of the nation’s social, economic, and political institutions against threats arising from the other independent states” (Huntington, 1957:1). Franke (1999) remarked that the world has been able to avoid global thermonuclear war during the Cold War due to the development of military strategy, tactics, and technology. Such credit not only suggests the importance of military education but also indicates the importance of military education for nations to avoid unnecessary wars in future. Furthermore, in some countries, the military education provides the required social agent for human development. Haussman (1974) indicated that previously, in Brazil, an education was only a pleasure; a rich man can afford. This mentality was changed when Dom Joao VI founded the Royal Military Academy at Agulhas Negras (AMAN), in 1810. He set up a training centre for the training of military professionals, which was seen by the local young Brazilian generation, as an opportunity “to educate them and to advance socially”. The career in the armed forces provided them employment and social mobility, which they could not have obtained otherwise (23-24). The same condition was also mentioned by Hawkins & Brimble (1947); Wojciechowski (1980) (1980); Hacker (1993); Green (2008); and Wang, Elder, & Spence (2012). In other words, despite the problematic history that surrounds military education, more importance should be given to the present state of military education and how its current role should shape its form in the future. At the same time, military education has also made numerous contributions to the field of education especially on the use of technology in teaching and learning sectors (see Fletcher,

2009). In short, a proper military education should be able to or foster the development of a civilian into an officer that are not only knowledgeable but also competent in managing his or her responsibilities during peacetime and also in times of crisis.

At first, it is important for the research to define the term, 'military education' properly, not only for the sake of the present research but also, it is a convention in today's military education setting. Lambert (2002) indicated that a prerequisite for any military education system is the establishment of a proper objective for such education. Besides, as some military academies offer higher education, the form of military education it formulates for the current cadets at the institution would not only reflect the current education of the military, but also predicts its outcome in the future. However, there is a concern over finding a suitable definition to be used by the research, as two terms have been commonly used by the specialist in the field that are 'military training' and 'military education'. The article by Colonel F. J. Graves, (1892) shed light on the matter after he divided military education into two parts; the education *for* military and the education *in* military (641). The former suggests a form of education that is designed to introduce the profession of arms while, the later suggests a mastery of certain crafts gained by the cadets while, serving in the army, that will help them to function at their optimum level. The Colonel included in his article that;

“The highly educated man, in a military sense, is not, to my mind, a person who has been taught a great variety of subjects, and whose mind is stored with varied knowledge. No; the highly educated man is the man whose mind, being stored with useful information and 'knowledge, is also trained to apply them at the right time and in such a way as to produce the best effect at the smallest possible cost “(Graves, 1892:635).

Kleber (1978) suggested that education *of the* military can be further divided into two phases – 1. the pre-commissioning and 2. the post-commissioning stage. Similarly, Hattendorf (2002) suggested that the term 'military education' should not be directly translated as an education that

grows one's intellect, but rather a 'professional initiation' training (1). In addition, Nenninger (2003) who reviewed Kennedy & Neilson's *Military Education: Past, Present and Future* concluded that military training is a "predictable response to a predictable situation," while, military education is a "reasoned response to an unpredictable situation" (1350). The root of this opinion is understandable where the whole notion is conceived from the fact that the education *in* the army is very much an effect of "transferring the soldiering" craft while being on-the-job training (Hacker, 1993:5). According to Johnson-Freese (2012), *The Reform of Military Education: Twenty-Five Years Later*, stated that among the other predicaments faced by military education institution in the US, is a problem of categorising what is 'training' and what is 'education' in military education. According to her, the present practice by the US military education institution, where the terms 'training' and 'education' are viewed interchangeably, had resulted in "intellectual agility being sacrificed to training-friendly metrics" (137). She further argued that "education requires thinking and reflection that takes time, increment and involves grappling with ambiguity" while "[t]raining has right and wrong answers, which allow immediate progress measurement" (138).

Despite all the arguments gathered from the literature, it is argued that both terms can be seen as an evolution of the learning process. As an example, Fletcher (2009b) indicated that it is important for a military education institution to have both forms of education and training. He explained that military training can provide "the knowledge and skills needed to perform military tasks and jobs" while, education serves military personnel at all the levels to decide "when and how to apply the knowledge and skills that they have acquired through training" (Fletcher, 2009b). Additionally, information gathered from Kennedy & Neilson (2002); Franke (1999); Hacker, 1993a; Bald (1981); Shearer (1979); Kleber (1978); Brodsky (1967) and Hawkins & Brimble (1947), led to the conclusion in this research that the make-up of military education nowadays is heavily influenced by the lessons learned after a war and technological advancement in weaponry. As a whole, recent modern military education is made up of two components; the development of military skills through military training (Camp, 1917) and military academic

through the introduction of military arts and science (Hacker, 1993). Henceforth, 'military education' in this thesis is defined as;

'A higher military education curriculum consists of academic programmes, which are on par with the other civilian institutions and military professionalism programmes used to transform a civilian into a soldier and develop them to become military officers.'

In short, any military institution that provides higher education must be able to provide an education of the said standard. At this point, there are military academies like the United States Military Academy at West Point that provides both academic and military programmes, which have the same standards compared to any other institution of advanced learning in the world (Watson, 2007).

At present, according to Watson (2007), professional military education (PME) is a product of a nation's needs to mould men and women into "an effective fighting force" (41). Due to this, it has now become a norm to find a higher military education institution that combines both military training and civilian higher education for officer cadets. As an example, institutions like the National Defence University Finland, Belgium Royal Military Academy, Norwegian Military Academy, National Defence University Warsaw, U.S. Military Academy West Point and Royal Military College of Canada are now commissioning officers upon their graduation in their studies. Apart from completing academic requirements, be it in engineering, computer science, medicine and others, the officer cadets are also required to learn military subjects like military arts, military science and military theory.

Schneider (2005) in his article *Transforming Advanced Military Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* provided good thorough accounts of the evolution of military education from the time of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Archimedes and others up until the present day. According to Schneider;

“A student becomes an intellectual leader by first becoming what Gary Klein, in *Sources of Power*, calls an “expert learner.” Any successful system of advanced military education must begin by creating the academic conditions that allow the expert learner to flourish. These conditions include rigor, creativity and motivation. Together, they forge the first links in a chain of learning by recognizing the limits of our own knowledge and the extent of our personal ignorance. An expert learner is taught to recognise his limitations. Based on his professional experience, he is taught to develop a personal theory of war: simply clear system of beliefs about the way the war works; a kind of map that helps him to establish the underlying rules of the game” (16).

Besides academic study and soldiering, more emphasis is now being given to leadership due to its “strong element of identification, where the superior officer acts as a role model for his subordinates” (Schneider, 2005:22). This emphasis can also be interpreted as a development of professionalism for the cadet officer’s officership and military ethics in terms of their ability to lead their men while being under huge tension and pressure. For example, Eriksen (2010) noted that the “recurrent challenges that soldiers and commanders face within military operations concern the discrimination between combatants and non-combatants” (195). In such conditions, a soldier or commander must be able to respond “quickly, yet wisely, sensitively and in an ethically legitimate manner”. To achieve this, most of the military education institutions have now adopted an experience-based learning system where “rule-based behaviour, deliberate decision-making, and consequence analysis are a prerequisite” (Eriksen, 2010:196).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Previously, wars were fought on designated battlefields but nowadays they can take place in an urban area full of civilians and fighters in a single location. Furthermore, a series of unconventional attacks like that on September 2011 and other similar terrorist attacks have

changed the traditional-way-of-business of these ‘professionals in violence’. Moving forward towards the twenty-first century, most of the military education institutions have formalised a type of officer development programme (ODP) to develop a cadet’s intellectual capacities, military professionalism and leadership capabilities. This programme provides a building in transforming civilians into officer cadets which would help “them to identify themselves with a new role, and thus, changes their self-conception” (Dornbusch, 1955:321). Thus, from a pragmatic point of view, the realisation of ODP in any military education institution is crucial to legitimise their roles as the main players in the nation’s defence and security sector.

However, the matter significant to the present research is a preparation to develop soldiers and military leaders, which involves a difficult conceptual process, whereas very little is known about the adoption of processes of this crucial transformation. As an example, in a defence university, Jowati presented an observation during 2006 to 2010, which reported that the cadets’ strict and packed routine “hinders students from developing into mature, independent and articulate graduates” (2010b:36). Furthermore, the observation also suggested an absence of relevant teaching and learning philosophy and also military professionalism as the academicians and military trainers had been resorting to ‘talk and chalk’ approach (2010b:34). Hence, these two crucial observations suggest an over-stuffed curriculum that hinders institutions of military education from achieving their visions in transforming the desired outcome of the ODP. Unlike other civilian universities elsewhere, the higher military education institution is unique, as it is not just an institution that provides higher education but also a defence training institution at its core. Therefore, it suggests that military institutions play a dual role, in which the officer cadets are not only educated to become doctors, engineers, managers, IT experts and professionals in other fields, but they are also trained professionally as military personnel. However, this situation can be troublesome for some cadets to get used to, which hinders them from achieving their desired goals in the field of the military.

In addition, Wenger (1998) proposed that learning is a social practice induced through social participation and to do so, the 'domain', or rather the setting environment must be able to provide a learning environment – in this particular case, a military higher institution setting – in order to encourage a meaningful learning environment. Wenger (1998) asserted that there is a profound connection between identity and practice, thus, the realisation of any form of ODP is a logical approach in directing a military education institution to achieve its purpose. Further investigations suggest that it would be sensible to include Wenger's identity in practice. According to him;

“Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants. As a consequence, practice entails the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context”  
(Wenger, 1998:149).

In the context of military education, engaging cadets as active participants on their own may be a problem. As the nature of the institution promotes a dual entity of identity to the cadet officers: (1) to become a soldier and (2) to become an officer. Hence, they may experience difficulties in negotiating these two roles collectively or individually. However, these difficulties are the result of threshold concepts – the unwritten knowledge of a particular community of practice – which restricts cadets from moving on and transforming themselves. Therefore, the threshold concepts present a new alternative views that can be adopted and internalised in any ODP programme.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH RATIONALE**

For a matter significant to the present research, the preparation to develop soldiers and military leaders often involve difficult shifts both conceptually and personally for officer cadets and little is known about this process. First of all, military education in higher education involves both academic and military training. The former is intended to elevate the status of the Army as a

whole while making sure that the force is on par with its contemporaries. On the other hand, the later promotes the continuation of military professionalism and improving it through the promotion of higher education environment. Even though, the marriage of the two is thought to be made in heaven, it brought with it a whole new problem at least in the higher learning environment. As a whole, the current system promotes double professional identities; the cadets are educated as professional doctors, engineers, computer scientist and managers while they are being trained to become officers. Hence, there is a sense of urgency to readdress the issue of learning and identifying the difficulties involved, thus, promoting a positive development of future military officers.

Hence, the finding over difficult threshold concepts may prove to be useful in informing further the curriculum designer in developing a better military officer education curriculum. At this point of the research, there are a significant number of research studies that have looked into the historical development of military education especially in Europe and the United States of America. However, most of them direct their discussion on the form of education which is heavily influenced by social change, technological advancement, world's politics and others. This suggests that there is an absence of research that discusses *the process* of educating and transforming officers for the future. Thus, the research may chart its way in providing valuable insights over finding a more appropriate way of analysing the current curricula and finding new ways of educating and the training of future military soldiers/leaders.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

On the basis of the previous discussion the following research questions have been identified.

- a) What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and leaders at military higher education institutions from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives?



- b) Which conceptual transformations and ontological shifts are found difficult for the cadets to grasp?
- c) How can the theory of threshold concepts applied to military education curricula and pedagogy inform the further development of military officer education?

## **1.6 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION**

The present research, on its own, provides a new contribution regarding the field of study, where its interest in military education has never been attempted. Since the research on threshold concepts in understanding the process of learning is progressing thus, the research that uses its fundamental notions to understand military education may contribute towards the creation of new knowledge. Significantly, the concept may open up and offer a new understanding of the challenges faced by military education institutions in educating the military leaders of the twenty-first century. Besides, the concepts identified through the research can be used to understand the ontological change required to be experienced by the cadets to become officers.

Moreover, most of the available literature had only concentrated on the historical development of military education. In this field, many books and research studies by experts and specialists have analysed military education from a historical point of view based on science and technological achievement, impacts of previous wars, the effect of leadership, education, politics and societal influences. Indeed, these publications have provided a crucial source of study for those who wish to study the dynamics of military education, which more than often provide an interesting contribution to the whole body of knowledge. However, as the thesis progressed, it addressed the significant challenges in order to prepare military officers who have been selected for their roles. It is relevant for a higher military education institution, whose interest is to produce leaders of character, to consider and weight these challenges in order to overcome some issues in educating future leaders.

In addition, the present research is one of only a few which seek views from the specialists, military instructors, current and former cadets on the university's military education

and its relevance in transforming the officers of the twenty-first century. Gathering of data from these groups of people is valuable to the policymakers and curriculum developers of the institution to construct a fundamental “less is more” kind of curriculum by discarding unnecessary content (Cousin, 2006).

## **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS: AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

The thesis has been organised into nine chapters. This chapter (Chapter I) discusses the study’s objectives in doing the research. The chapter also includes the purpose and significance of the study in present context.

**Chapter II** presents a literature review of the relevant models and theoretical framework used in the study. The selection of the models and theories in this thesis are based on their relevance to the present study and significance towards offering a perspective regarding the key ideas to be highlighted, difficulties and suitable approaches to be used in the present research. Further and deeper discussion of the theories included in this research is presented in **Chapter II** of this thesis.

**Chapter III** presents the research methodology. The approach, “Adopting Phenomenography”, as a research paradigm, allows the researcher to have a better understanding of the current standing of MOE and thus provides necessary information about the development of military officer education for the twenty-first century. A detailed description of the phases of this study, research instruments and sampling, is produced in this chapter. The chapter also explains the data analysis method that has been used to dissect information from the participants’ transcribed comments. These procedures are described in detail, in Chapter III.

**Chapter IV** is the first of four of the chapters that presents the findings of the research. In this chapter, a clear description of the existence of the phases needed to be crossed by a cadet

to become an officer are portrayed. This discussion further continues in **Chapter V** that discusses the first transformation phase, characterised as **Soldiership**, followed by the second phase, labelled in this study as **Officership** in **Chapter VI**. As, the threshold concepts concerned include the premise of troublesome knowledge, an evidence of such experience is presented in **Chapter VII**.

**Chapter VIII** provides a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter IV, V, VI, and VII. The implication of those findings is debated where the author has suggested the **Hybrid Model** that may serve as an input towards improving the MOE.

# Chapter II

## Literature Review

*In my reviews, I feel it's good to make it clear that I am not proposing objective truth, but subjective reactions; a review should reflect the immediate experience (Roger Ebert)*

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a review of existing literature on military officers' education to discuss and evaluate the revolution and evolution of military officer's education in a proper way. Hence, a threefold approach has been adopted. Firstly, there was a need to establish the historical development of military education through the years that contributes to its recent form. Secondly, the unique circumstances, in which the military education was shaped, were also considered, and the wider political and social ideas in which military professionalism was embedded within its curriculum was well explained. It also entails the assessment of the outside influences that dictates the way in which the curriculum should be designed and its form, function and intention. Thirdly, the questions about the aspect of the journey to become an officer, the generic qualities of being a soldier and an officer as suggested by previous research studies are also addressed by answering the following questions:

1. Is there any distinction between being a soldier and an officer and why are these roles important in the transformation of a civilian to an officer?
2. Why has the military officers' education system been contested in relation to its development and progress?

While answering and presenting the available literature on the subject under discussion, this chapter also exemplifies the gaps in the study of military officers' education which led to the undertaking of the present research and its importance to inform the current body of knowledge. Furthermore, the chapter argues that modern military education and training is highly based on gaining the competency of skills needed by an officer, which makes the process of transformation highly 'mechanised', despite the fact of that the process is in actual involves participation and engagement with the processes and ideas that creates the transformation with the mastery of thresholds. In other words, the transformation process occurs as part of the engagement and the mastery of the thresholds, and also at the individual level where their own engagement with the processes and experiences that support this engagement.

## **2.1 MILITARY OFFICER EDUCATION – DEFINING THE SCOPE**

A proper understanding of the term 'military officer education' used in this study is required, before embarking further on the discussion of the research. One reason for this is the complexities of the available professional military education (PME) system where there exists a number of channels that can be followed to become a military officer carried out by the different institutions. First of all, there are several institutions like the United States Military Academy at West Point (Fletcher, 1874; Gibbon, 1895; McCormick, 1970; Hansen, 1985; Arbogast, 1989; Segal, Segal, & Wattendorf, 1990; Anderson, 2008; Ender, Kelty, & Smith, 2008), the National Defence University of Malaysia (Jowati, 2006, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, 2012b), Japan National Defence Academy (Kawano, 2008), Canadian Military Academy (Pinch & Ouellet, 2008), the Swedish Military

Academy (Danielsson & Weibull, 2008), the Turkish Military Academy (Uyar & Varoğlu, 2008), the École Polytechnique (Bradley, 1975), and the Royal Military College of Australia (Bennett, 1969) which are military institutions that provide undergraduate and postgraduate military education for their pre-commissioned and commissioned officers. Apart from that, there are also Service Schools and Staff Colleges in the likes of the War Colleges, the United States Air Force Academy (Crabbe & Zook, 1963), the United States Coast Guard Academy (Dornbusch, 1955), the L'Ecole Superieure de Guerre (Bittner, 1993), and the Air University (Davis & Donnini, 1991) that provide professional military education to its officers and also to the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). Moreover, there is the Reserve Officer Training Unit (ROTU) that trains the reservists (Pema & Mehay, 2012).

Knowing the differences between these military training institutions is crucial, as each institution differs in its curriculum, mission and vision, approach, and their organisation culture in the training of their recruits. For example, the first type of institution provides undergraduate and/or postgraduate military education consisting of academic and military professionalism programme at the pre-commissioning stage. Such institutions usually provide a tertiary education together with military training which took place concurrently. On the other hand, the second cohort of institution deals with the professional training of the commissioned officers having more emphasis on the leadership promotion from Major up to Generals. Unlike the former institutions, these institutions carry out courses and test the officers on their leadership and management skills. Meanwhile, the third type of military institution deals with the training of the NCOs (usually the corporals, sergeants and the warrant officers), who obtain their positions of authority through the ranks promotion. In other words, each of the institution types, to a certain extent, deal with a different level of PME. While each of the aforementioned institutions differ somewhat in their specific task in MOE, the present research has concentrated on the first type of MOE.

## 2.2 MILITARY OFFICERS EDUCATION: GLIMPSES INTO THE PAST

Through the years, military historians have documented and done a significant number of research studies on the development of MOE<sup>1</sup> (i.e. Tresch, 2011; Micewski, 2013; Sookermany, 2012; Broesder, Op den Buijs, Vogelaar, & Euwema, 2014; Yu, 2014). The availability of these meticulous historical accounts could be a result of the military education institutions' policy itself that puts a considerable weight on the study of history (see i.e. Davis & Donnini, 1991; Echevarria, 2005; Danielsson & Weibull, 2008; Johnson-Freese, 2012; Kohn, 2013). To open up the discussion over MOE, it would be good for the study to trace some aspects of officers' education from the period of antiquity to contemporary times to show how such education policy emerged to educate and the train the officers. However, accounts that have been included in this thesis do not present an exhaustive review of the literature, as concise historical accounts suffice in the context of the present research. Despite the fact that this study's interest is more on identifying the crucial concepts in becoming an officer through MOE, historical information included in this section is confined to the development of MOE and how the present MOE evolved and became revolutionised through the years.

One excellent review of the history of education and training of officers is *The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance* written by Martin van Creveld (1990) who asserted that the advanced version of such education was developed in 1801 by Prussia, under the auspices of Frederick the Great. Schneider (2005) agreed with the same opinion that every modern military force at the beginning of the twentieth century sought to match German military education. Even though there are suggestions that the education for officers could be traced back to the times of Greek, Roman, the Athenian, and the Spartans (Preston, 1980; Hacker, 1993b;

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<sup>1</sup>. Other reading suggestion on the development of MOE: James, 1882; Graves, 1892; Lieut.-Colonel F. N. Maude p.s.c. late R.E. (1904); Forman, 1965; Bennet, 1967; McCormick, 1970; Heaton, 1980; Preston, 1980; Bald, 1981; Arnold, 1993; Hacker, 1993a, 1993b; Donagan, 1995; Echevarria II, 1995; Kenney, 1996; Whiteman, 1998; Murray, 1999; Foot, 2001; Lyonnais, 2003; Jordan, 2004; Carafano & Kochems, 2005; McKinley, 2005; Roy, 2005; Schneider, 2005; Edmunds, 2006; Danielsson & Weibull, 2008; Green, 2008; Heinecken & Visser, 2008; Pinch & Ouellet, 2008; Rodriguez, 2008; Segal & Ender, 2008; and Strauss, 2008.

Schneider, 2005; and Strauss, 2008), this form of education was never formal and institutionalised. According to Strauss (2008), even though war was an important part of Greek and Roman societies, no military academies or war colleges were created to teach strategies, tactics or the art of war because “war belonged to everyone” (53). Thus, every citizen was a student and teacher of war. However, there are certain similarities between the practices and traditions of the period that have been inherited in today’s MOE. During the period of Plato and Aristotle, the training of soldiers and officers was regarded as a task of utmost importance, as the armed forces were regarded as “the guardians of [the] state” (Hacker, 1993b). More interestingly, Strauss (2008) asserted that military training begins with the Sparta where the men were required to go through a special education – the *agogê* (loosely translated as upbringing). Through such system, the men left home at the age of seven and lived in barracks until they were eighteen thus “producing hardy warriors who put the public good before their own desires” (55-56).

As centuries passed, such practice continued until the feudal times, where soldiering was seen as a profession without a need for training, as the skills required to be performed by a soldier were “born with them” (James, 1882:369). This, according to Preston (1980) had made the feudal armies to be very different, where the military structure is now being based on the service of a knight, who held land in return for providing defence, stability, and security and was remarkably effective in those respects over several centuries (3). This practice of ‘Knighthood’ is an important episode in the development of MOE as from it, fashioning the practice of “having a commission and the qualification for command in the field” (Preston, 1980:5). What is more:

“[T]he most important concept of knighthood that had been handed over to us is the code of chivalry. In the middle ages, religion and chivalry became inextricably mingled, and though the general education of knight did not include much of contemporary scholasticism, the church taught him simple lessons of honour and conduct. Those whose business was to administer force (or to “manage violence” in the terminology of modern



sociology), had to use it only for the protection of the fair sex and the weak, that is to say, of civilization” (Preston, 1980:2-3).

Such practice gave birth to mercenaries, but the practice was deemed inefficient and this led to Jacques Coeur, the merchant financier, who was also an adviser to France's King Charles VII in the fifteenth century, suggesting the creation of a standing army to take some of them into a permanent royal service (Preston, 1980:3).

Apart from that, the literature often suggested that the development of MOE is hugely influenced by technological advancement and development (Graves, 1892; Ginsburgh, 1964; Shearer, 1979; Preston, 1980; Arnold, 1993; Murray, 1999; Whiteman, 1998; Zook, 1996; Lyonais, 2003; Yeung & Gifford, 2010; Farrell, 2008; Lindy Heineken & Visser, 2008). According to Echevarria II, (1995;24), new technologies – improved weapons’ capabilities specifically - forced the Armed Forces always to head up with changes. Historically, the fourteenth and early seventeenth century Europe, with the development of shipping technology, created a need for practical training which involved “specific skills and indoctrination for a cooperative group effort in the face of battle” (Hattendorf, 2002:2). In other words, the initial practical training during this time also marked the beginning of a form of professionalism preparation. Hacker (1993) explained that “soldiering” involves the passing of “craft”, such as weapon-handling, where the teaching of the "skills are divided, simplified, rationalized, and systematized to be taught routinely, quickly, and efficiently” (5). The gun powder discovery by the Chinese during this period also marked the beginning of “The Military Revolution” as the use of it;

“...gave rise to the study of ballistics and, behind it, the need to understand mathematics and physics. The improved fortifications that countered the rise of the canon were developed on new applications of geometry. As metallurgist found the means to cast cannon as single pieces, the weapons became capable of more accurate fire and could be

adjustable in elevation. This required mathematician to design instruments to measure the inclination of the barrel and to help calculate the distances to targets. Gunners in the field and at sea needed a range of scientific education as well as, specialized training to understand and apply these concepts” (Hattendorf, 2002; 2).

Furthermore, naval science and technological advancement are also a source for the formation of special training in the military. New knowledge of astronomy, geometry and navigation gave birth to a new understanding on surveying (Hattendorf, 2002:2-3). As a result, at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, military schools began to thrive, especially in England and other European countries to train soldiers specifically on the usage of certain military weaponry and other scientific instruments (Hattendorf, 2002; Hacker, 1993; Hawkins & Brimble, 1947). In 1720, the French Army opened up the Artillery School. Then, in 1733, the Royal Academy was opened in Portsmouth and in 1741, King George II chartered the Royal Military College at Woolwich for the training of engineers and artillery cadets (Hattendorf, 2002:5). However, most of the schools were designed mainly for the education of the officer cadets who were aristocrats. As a result, in the past, education for the ‘common’ soldiers, on how to use weapons, military discipline, and physical training to toughen them up for war was still restricted. According to Hawkins & Brimble (1947), the most significant attempt to elevate the education of the soldiers took place in 1800, when selected officers were assembled at Swinley, near Camberley. This batch of a soldier, known as the “Experiment Corps of Riflemen” marked the beginning of military training accompanied with a form of general education at the time where “every serjeant was expected to be a master of reading, writing and the first four rules of arithmetic” *sic*. (Hawkins & Brimble, 1947:4). In the US, the Students' Army Training Corps experimented at the University of Illinois in 1918 for one and tried to train “men with technical know-how” as the war progressed, as “a battle of the most advanced technologies and the best-educated technicians” (Shearer, 1979:224).

The development of technology continued to transform military education dramatically in the armed forces of the nineteenth and twentieth century. As a result of industrialisation throughout the world, military institutions faced more demands and complex needs to face conventional and unconventional defence threats. More engineers, computer scientist, and several other were educated at military institutions, thus, producing new sets of weaponry like the nuclear weapons, guided missiles, fighter jets and other advanced weaponry, which influenced human development and history (Hacker, 1993:27).

Another argument on the influences that transformed MOE to its present state is the lessons learned from wars (McCormick, 1970; Murray, 1999; Jordan, 2004; Carafano & Kochems, 2005; Edmunds, 2006; Danielsson & Weibull, 2008; Heinecken & Visser, 2008; Pinch & Ouellet, 2008; Rodriguez, 2008; Segal & Ender, 2008; Strauss, 2008; Tresch, 2011; Sookermany, 2012; Broesder, Op den Buijs, Vogelaar, & Euwema, 2014 Yu, 2014;) and the reaction of armed forces towards new form of security threats (Jans, 1989; Bellamy, 1992; Murray, 1999; Emilio, 2000; Foot, 2001; Donald H. Rumsfeld, 2002; Micewski, 2003; Mckinley, 2005; Edmunds, 2006; Paschal, 2006; Lloyd & Van Dyk, 2007; Blocq, 2009; Kestnbaum, 2009; McCartney, 2010; Walter F. Ulmer, 2010; Broesder, Op den Buijs, Vogelaar, & Euwema, 2014; McGarry, Walklate, & Mythen, 2014 ). Lambert (2002) pointed out that one particular problem with military education is the absence of “practical experience”, which must be made available for the students of war. Unlike any other profession, war is not an everyday event, thus making the professional development of a soldier almost unrealistic (Lambert, 2002:85). As a result, the high and well-maintained culture of apprenticeship or on-the-job training was challenged by reformers giving birth to “military science”; a combination of the arts of war with other forms of knowledge in the eighteenth century (Hacker, 1993:6). In 1892, Colonel F. J. Graves shared his view that apart from the technological advances in the military, there is also a significant need for the training in the art of managing and leading the masses to achieve victory in wars (635). Describing this as “military intelligence”, the Colonel asserted that the knowledge can only be learned through proper training and experiences. Much earlier in 1766, General H.H.E. Lloyd, who reflected on the Seven

Year's War, reasoned that even though there is a need to master the mechanical part of the war, it is equally important for a soldier to master the art of war (Hattendorf, 2002:6). This view was also shared by Colonel Sir T. H. Holdich (1920), who reflected on the mission of the British army during the World War I, and commented that the Army was not adequate, poorly armed and was led by the new Generals (116). The Prussian Army, for example, after winning the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian war, had realized the importance of administering suitable education according to rank that included;

“...general education and initial indoctrination to military life at the outset specialised training in selected warfare specialties through mid-career, and then both broad education in theoretical issues and practical training in a specific application in preparation for senior command positions” (Hattendorf, 2002:7).

The practice of combining general education with professional military life continued until the formation of the modern Republic of Germany, where the officers' task became more complex and demanding. Bald (1981) specified that the country's General War College (*Allgemeine Kriegsschule*) founded in 1810, emphasised on professional military subjects, such as leadership, field tactics, and general staff work; and general education courses included such subjects as history, language, and philosophy. In other words, military education was not just professional and technical; it was also seen through the humanistic scope. The dual education was seen crucial in shaping the military leaders who not only know the technological and professional aspects of their profession but also the “relationship between military theory and practical application” (Bald, 1981:110). Bald further explained that this had led to the first reform of the military educational system under Eduard von Peucker, who, in 1854 had brought back the practice. According to Bald, von Peucker put emphasis on the double function of education for the officer corps; "a thorough and deep professional education," and "a higher formal education in those sciences, which provides more or less, a general foundation, as well as serves as a tool for a

professional career” (Bald, 1981:110). After World War I, the second period of the officer education system’s reform occurred under General Walther Reinhardt, the first Prussian Minister of Defence in the revolutionary period of 1919. Again, the emphasis was given to the dual concept of professional military education with the insertion of liberal arts or general education. During these periods, the subjects, such as history, literature, philosophy, political science, common and constitutional law, economics and social psychology were included in the officer’s curriculum. The introduction of the subjects was based on the problems and failures learned from the war and the strong opinion that only a mixture of military and academic courses can transform officers that are not “blindly following orders in an autocratic structure” but “independent, logical, and critical examiner and judgemental of military situations” (Bald, 1981:110). Reinhardt and Professor Theodor Heuss, who later became the first President of the Federal Republic of Germany, “envisioned a rationally-minded military personality” educated under the motto: “The higher in rank, the more intellectual and morally independent” (Bald, 1981:111). Unfortunately, the influence of Reinhardt’s education philosophy diminished in early 1933 with a rise of national socialism, and the last reform phase was initiated in 1970 by the minister of defence of that time named Helmut Schmidt. This time, military officers were expected to be educated technically, socially, politically, and militarily structured to cope with the complexities of social condition at that time (Bald, 1981:111). For example, at the West Point, military history for most of this time, or until the mid-1960’s, exposed the cadets’ operational history featuring battle accounts and the overall principles that influenced the waging of war. Also, the subjects taught the principles of war, explained the construction of fortifications and provided an understanding of tactics. The study of wars in past did not only intend to make more proficient and professional officers but also “sharpened judgment, improved perception and broadened perspectives” of the officers by providing “valuable, albeit vicarious, an experience otherwise not available” outside of the real war situation (Kleber, 1978:136-137).

## 2.3 MILITARY OFFICERS EDUCATION CURRICULUM: INFLUENCE, FORM AND FUNCTION

As mentioned earlier in the sections, the study of MOE, especially on its curriculum somewhat suffered from the practice of coping with new technologies and lessons learned from the previous conflict and wars. As a consequence, most of the research studies had either evaluated the content of the curriculum (i.e. Davis & Donnini, 1991; Bowman & Mehay, 1999; Chilcoat, 1999; Schneider, 2005; Rodriguez, 2008;), or provided description of information about the institution or system in use (i.e. Murray, 1905; Garnier, 1972; Rokke, 1995; Paschal, 2006; Hedlund, 2013; Kelley & Johnson-Freese, 2014), or provided the suitability of a subject or a course for MOE (i.e. Zook, 1996; K. C. Jordan, 2004; Kemble, 2007; Siebold, 2007; Vogel-Walcutt, Fiorella, & Malone, 2013). In this way, the research studies in MOE have ignored the learners' role in experiencing the educational process and the importance of the ontological shifts they need to go through to become officers. A direct impact of this is a lack of information on the important concepts that cadets<sup>2</sup> need to master in order to transform themselves to become officers. Despite this, there are several other notable research studies carried out on the sociological aspect of being a military person (i.e James, 1944; Dornbusch, 1955; Huntington, 1963; Roghmann & Sodeur, 1972; Elder, 1986; Snider, 1999; Kimmel, 2000; Lande, 2007; Sookermany, 2011; Johnson-Freese, 2012; and Tsygan, 2013), and on the identity of being military (i.e Harford, 1955; Bobrow, 1964; A. A. Jordan & William J. Taylor, 1973; Arnold, 1993; Moelker & Soeters, 2008; Luoma & Mälkki, 2009; Woodward & Neil Jenkins, 2011; Jackson et al., 2012; Field, 2014). However, these examinations were often superficial without justifying how the findings – or the social aspects of military training were found in the study –the 'jewels' in MOE.

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<sup>2</sup> According Forman (1965:21), the title "cadet" originally meant a younger son or a younger brother. In Europe, the title denotes a young apprentice officer who was entitled to that rank because of his social status. In the United States the word cadet was commonly accepted to mean a young gentleman with the status of a no-vitiate in the military service. In this study, the definition being used at the United States will be used throughout.

As a result, most of the institutions of MOE suffered from ‘stuffed curriculum’ as a result of the system trying to accommodate civilian degrees together with military professionalism. Even though, MOE could represent what Spencer, Riddle, & Knewstubb (2012) described as a curriculum that instils “discipline-based knowledge” at a higher education institution, there still is an alarmingly small number of literature that reviewed MOE curricula based on student learning experiences. Realising this, the following review tried to illustrate the factors that decide the form and structure of the MOE adopted by the institutions included in this study. Furthermore, the review also discussed the form and function of certain approaches in the MOE that influence cadets’ experiences in becoming an officer.

### **2.3.1 Influence**

According to Bennet (1967), three important factors influenced the development of MOE curriculum- the remarkable acceleration of scientific and technological progress, the requirement for the military to maintain a large number of personnel on overseas assignments and the increasingly large number of duty assignments requiring post-graduate education (448-449). However, these are not the real factors that influenced the form and structure of the MOE as these factors only suggest the development and changes of MOE in coping with time. Instead in this study, the factors to be considered that influenced a cadet’s experience of becoming an officer is the ‘stakeholders’ – a group of people, that are highly affected by the activity of this ‘necessary evil’ institution. A review of the literature suggested that two influences that decide the form and function to be taken by any MOE institution are the relationship between the general public with the military, and the armed forces themselves.

#### **2.3.1.1 Civil-Military Relation**

Without any doubt, one of the factors that gave structure to the MOE is the relationship between the general public and the military. As an institution that functions as a protector

of the country's security, sovereignty and liberty and independence, however, the legitimacy of the use of force has increasingly been questioned. For example, the British public has become more critical towards their armed forces, especially on the use of force (McCartney, 2010:413). In addition, Ruby & Gibler, (2010) had observed how the critics had scrutinised the education for military officers in the United States, as it was blamed to have trained some of the worst abusers of human rights – Argentina's dictators Roberto Viola and Leopoldo Galtieri, Panama's Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos, Peru's Juan Velasco Alvarado and Ecuador's Guillermo Rodriguez, the leader of the Grupo Colina death squad in Fujimori's Peru; and how other graduates from such institution had aided Indonesia's military, responsible for the violence in East Timor and even trained future Taliban leaders during their struggle against the Soviet forces (Ruby & Gibler, 2010:339-340). Tresch (2011) deliberated that before the end of the cold war, the social structure of societies was undergoing value change from being a homogeneous society into a pluralistic lifestyle society. As a result, the Western Europe and the United States saw the emergence of social movements that critically questioned the legitimacy of war (240). Thus, to make involvement in any armed conflict morally acceptable, members of the public demanded that their armed forces should carry out their duties in accordance to the public's core liberal values. A war fought in the name of a liberal society can only be justified if the soldiers fight according to a set of values (Mccartney, 2010:414). Such influence and strong relationship between society and military had also influenced the direction of MOE. In their paper, Snider, Priest, & Lewis (2001) constructed a list of ideas of what MOE should represent and imbued within the future officers of American armed forces. According to them;

The officer's duty is to serve society as a whole, to provide which society cannot provide for itself i.e. security of the nation-state. Thus, a moral obligation exists



between the serving officer and the society, an obligation embodied in the commission.

1. Professional officers always do their duty, subordinating their personal interests to the need for the professional function. Across the profession, the importance of the group (unit is emphasised as opposed to the needs of the individual – the military ethic is cooperative and cohesive in spirit, meritocratic, and fundamentally anti-individualistic and anti-careerist.
2. Called to their profession and its stewardship of the knowledge of war, and motivated by their social obligation and pursuit of excellence, officers are committed to a career of continuous study and learning.
3. Based on their professional expertise, officers determine the standards of the profession and maintain them – to measure relative competence among the officer corps and evaluate the operational readiness of units and forces. Officers police the profession, within the limited autonomy granted to them by civilian leaders.
4. The officer's honour, derived from the self-abnegating willingness to fight in mortal combat, is of paramount importance because it maintains the bond of trust between the officer and the society that he or she serves. In peacetime, such honour is more often manifested in acts of moral courage and includes the virtues of honesty and integrity, making officers always accountable for their actions and orders.
5. The officer's loyalty, legally and professionally, is to the Constitution. It also extends downward to those soldiers and families entrusted to their command during both peace and war.
6. Officers always lead by example, maintaining the personal attributes of spiritual, mental, and physical fitness requisite to the professional function of war fighting (Snider, Priest, & Lewis, 2001:256-257).

Indeed, these ideas carry within them the influences that affect the officer's identity that is formed by such education. Also, these ideas create conflict between the members of the public and the military especially, when the values clash with each other. One typical intervention of the public on the education and the training of officers is on the military's practice of 'hazing' (Dornbusch, 1955; Winslow, 1999; Maringira, Gibson, & Richters, 2014). Within a military, hazing is often seen as a training approach used to familiarise the military bureaucratic structure, branch and unit culture (Dornbusch, 1955:319), which involves the process of indoctrination into a "cult" of legitimate violence through harassment and drills carried out by the instructors (Maringira, Gibson, & Richters, 2014:30). However, outside the military, such act is seen as barbaric and uncivilised. Such public uproar was presented by Winslow (1999), who examined what was deemed as a "shocking videotaped scenes of humiliating and, at times, disgusting initiation rites" (429) taking place in one of the Canada's military training facilities. In the article, Winslow (1999) argued that there are cultural gaps between the society and the military in understanding the use of 'unconventional' methods for promoting group cohesion intended to "test loyalty and self-control" – a highly valued characteristics of a soldier (444). Such example shows that the civil society has a huge influence on the education of the officers, where the society decides and defines the 'acceptable level of violence'.

However, despite the huge influence the society has on the military, there is an absence of research, qualitatively or quantitatively, that focuses on the civil-military influence on the MOE and how it affects the whole idea of military officership. One possible reason of this might be the limited number of research studies carried out in identifying the important concepts in becoming a soldier and/or an officer that must be experienced by a cadet in their training.

### 2.3.1.2 The Armed Forces

The second patron for MOE are the Armed Forces<sup>3</sup>. As cadets are recruited, they inevitably serve the armed forces hence, granting the organisation an unchallenged locus over an education and training of their officers. It is then important for a military to tune and adjust the newly admitted cadets to the new surroundings, which according to Nesbit & Reingold (2011:67) has its own unique set of governing rules, a set of norms, values, and rules.

This is especially important for an organisation, responsible for educating and training of these 'managers of violence' to be organised in a hierarchy of command, which is not only about having power and authority, but also:

...requires the diversion of efforts into necessary but seemingly trivial activities...an officer is not only in charge of an operation but also in charge of his men. This requires keeping the company's money, maintaining discipline, giving fatherly advice, keeping records, censoring mail, and a myriad of other duties that are the cause of amazing shifts in personality and that impose new roles upon the urbanized individual (Brotz & Wilson, 1946:374).

Furthermore, joining a "commanded society" where all "procedures are uniform and ordered" (Brotz & Wilson, 1946:372), new cadets must understand that the military is a bureaucratic profession, where the institution will not only regulate the content and limitations of the profession but also decides who could serve in

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<sup>3</sup> Edmunds (2006) asserts that the term 'armed forces' can incorporate a number of different institutions and organisations associated with application of coercive force i.e the police or private security companies. For this research, the term 'armed forces' refers to regular armed forces: armies, navies and air forces. (1059)

the military (L Heinecken, 2014:630). In order to fit into this new environment, the cadets must accept that armies are strict hierarchical organisations where command and the relationship between military personnel are dictated by rank (Gresle, 2005; Huang, 2014) with:

“...clearly defined and articulated components aggregating to higher levels. Armies are commanded from the top down but are built from the bottom up. The squad is the smallest organizational unit, a group of eight to eleven soldiers led by a staff sergeant (for some specialized units, such as tanks, the analogous unit is the crew). A platoon combines two to four squads, a company three to five platoons, a battalion four to six companies, a brigade (group or regiment) two to five battalions (around 500–1,500 men), and a division three manoeuvre brigades along with a combat support brigade. Finally, at the top of the pyramid, a corps combines two or more divisions and an army, two or more corps. There is a minor variation in the nomenclature used by different nations today, but virtually all display a similar structure. In particular, for all armies, the basic building block is a squad” (Field, 2014:134).

Because of this, the military is often described as a ‘demanding institution’ or a ‘total institution’<sup>4</sup> or even a ‘greedy institution’<sup>5</sup> as their soldiers were bound to its expectations, demands, and external authority (Siebold, 2011:451). Even

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<sup>4</sup> According to Grassiani, (2003), Bondy (2004) and Nesbit & Reingold (2011), the term is used to describe the military as a place where a large number of individuals in a similar situation are separated from the larger society and subject to formally administered rules that govern all aspects of daily life.

<sup>5</sup> In their chapter Joseph et al. (2006) explains that the term is often used because of the many heavy demands it makes on members, such as being on a permanent on-call basis while on duty, being required to relocate on short notice, and having many aspects of daily life dictated by the institution.

though this might be seen as something negative, one must appreciate the military's main purpose:

“...is to fight and [to] win wars. This dictates its form, creates its methods, and explains its nature. A military organization must be flexible in structure, but inflexible in the discipline. It commands, and it must be commanded, but it also leads, and must be led. Its orders must be at once peremptory and persuasive, its authority unquestioned but open minded, not rigid” (Frye, 1949:543).

As a result, the military demands its members to work themselves constantly by mastering fatigue, suffer, and exhibit physical dexterity and skill (Lande, 2007:97). A direct association of this can be assessed through the MOE's curriculum that instil the value, culture, and norms of the military through a period spent at an institution. Nesbit & Reingold (2011) mentioned that this conjures up the practice of immersing new recruits in an extensive training program that not only teaches recruit new skills, but also continually exposes them to and surrounds them with military values and norms. According to Joseph, Winslow & Weibull (2006), the process often involves the breaking down of the civilian's status and being deconstructed, and a new identity is “rebuilt” by a constant exposure to military norms, discipline, values, and authority.

Interestingly, Wilson (2007) questioned this ‘totality’ of the military by mentioning that soldiers brought their “social baggage” with them into the military that may have little or no relevance or even go against the military (30). Such rather crude question is fundamental as a new recruit never comes from a vacuum or in a state of *tabula rasa*<sup>6</sup>. How would it be then for the new cadets who

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<sup>6</sup> An absence of preconceived ideas or predetermined goals; a clean slate. Oxford Dictionary

enter the military institution? Would they face any problems adjusting to their new surroundings? What sort of problems do cadets have to face in their transformation to become officers? The present research studies clearly suggest a gap in the study of MOE in finding out the cadet's experience of going through such education system.

### **2.3.2 Form**

The strong influence of civil-military relationship, the armies and the higher education accreditation bodies, gave the MOE, its form. Therefore, the following section presents the system and arrangement of MOE education and curriculum, and how it has evolved over the years in order to keep abreast with the change of time (Chilcoat, 1999). Apart from delineating the on-going debate on the legitimacy of educating the officers to have higher degrees and academic qualification, this section seeks to illustrate how the curriculum's form has grown from equipping the cadets with fighting skills back in the sixteenth century to becoming specialist in a particular field of knowledge and preparing them to deal with unconventional military operations like peacekeeping and policing (Moelker & Soeters, 2008). In addition, the discussion also observed the prolonged debate over the importance of educating future officers with a liberal education against imparting crucial and important military skills through training.

#### **2.3.2.1 Basic Training: An introduction to the military practice**

All MOE institutions have subjected new recruits to a basic course, where the officer cadets "learn about military culture, how to wear the uniform, how to render proper military courtesy, unique military medical regulations, and certain basic service-specific tasks" (Jaffin & Maniscalco-Theberge, 2006:405). Depending on the armies' policy, the basic course ranges from six weeks to one-and-a-half to two years (Heaton, 1980:124). Caforio (2006) described this phase

as a socialisation process, where a cadet “learns and absorb the complex rules, values, behaviour, and the culture” of military (255).

Prior to attendance in an institution, aspiring young men and women are subjected to the two parts of the evaluation process; 1) educational qualification and test performance, and 2) physical and mental evaluation test. As it is the first part of the evaluation process in any university system it assesses individuals’ intellectual capacity to become an officer. Meanwhile, the second part deals with individuals’ physical and mental ability, as they are subjected to medical check-up, aptitude test, physical screening and an interview. This part is usually directed towards determining the individuals’ capability to cope with the demands and stresses of the profession (Caforio, 2006:257). In addition, physical training, fitness, capacity, marksmanship and combat skills are considered as the core of good soldiers (Sookermany, 2011:477).

After passing through these two entrance requirements, the successful candidates receive a call to attend the basic training period; set about as a period that will change the person’s patterns of behaviour, so that they become familiar with the military’s values, culture and ethics (Bennett, 1969; Griffith, 2009; Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010). During this period:

“[The military] expectations for specific behaviours and norms are made explicit. New recruits are immersed in an extensive boot-camp program, in which their civilian status is broken down, and the new identity of military recruit is forged. Second, an incentive structure is set up that rewards recruits who fulfil the expectations of military culture and punishes those who do not. These external contingencies lead to changes in daily behaviour that, over time, are thought to promote changes in

personality traits” (Jackson, Thoemmes, Jonkmann, Lüdtkke, & Trautwein, 2012:271).

This period is also known as a period where pre-existing statuses will be suppressed through rigorous physical training, separation from parents and friends, loss of previous status, privileges, individuality, autonomy and the constant discipline are all severely taxing to every new cadet, who has no choice but to submit his own identity to that of the group (James, 1944; Brotz & Wilson, 1946; Dornbusch, 1955; Wamsley, 1972; Roghmann & Sodeur, 1972; U’Ren, 1975; Elder, 1986; Kimmel, 2000). Usually, the new cadets are given new titles and status; "swab" (Dornbusch, 1955), "plebes" (McCoy, 1995), or “raunchies” (Wamsley, 1972) – to describe their positions as a new-comer to the military/institution.

During the period, systematic form of hazing is in use to purposely make the new cadets feel fumbling, inept, helpless, and annoyed. Members of the liberal society may find this as barbaric and uncivilised, but the military is in the business of war where violence, strict order, and cold discipline are an everyday occurrence. Because of that, the practice is also designed to eliminate those who cannot withstand the pressure of the profession. According to U’Ren (1975), at least, 10 per cent of the first-year class resigns within the first two months, with a total of 18 per cent within the first year. These attritions occur due to the military service’s “unique risks that can also make the transition process seriously problematic” (Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010:182). Furthermore, the situation is much more challenging in the present era where information and communication technology (ICT) could have shaped and influenced the individuals’ idea of being in military (Flammang, 2013:31).



The importance of culture of military, confidence and self-esteem is developed and increased, as these “swabs”, “plebes” or “raunchies” master the norms and values of military. They reach a level that the abuses they have endured have enhanced their self-actualization as being a part of the military. As a result, the cadets see themselves as someone new and begin to develop pride in themselves, their class, squadron and services.

#### **2.3.2.2 From technical education to university degrees**

As mentioned earlier in this section, the education and training of military officers begins with the process of the inception process into the military. A better illustration of the next feature of MOE system is provided in a section by reviewing the progression of the curriculum being used at the United States Military Academy (USMA) West Point. Just like the formation of other MOE institutions all over the world, West Point was commissioned to educate and train future officers due to an absence of such institutions that specifically train officers and the increasing need to train officers with technical knowledge (Forman, 1965). According to Jordan (2004), prior to the establishment of the academy, initial effort to train officers was “sporadic and decentralised” (3). Furthermore, there was very little opportunity for general education anywhere in the United States, particularly for the future officers (Patton, 1937:425). This created a need to have intelligent officers who are well educated and possess well trained physical fitness, military proficiency, moral excellence and intellectual competence (Fletcher, 1874; Mitchel, 1894; Gibbon, 1895; Alspach, 1950; Forman, 1965; Bennet, 1967; U’Ren, 1975; Kleber, 1978). The USMA at West Point was established in 1802 when President Thomas Jefferson signed the “Military Peace Establishment Act” authorizing a peacetime military and formalizing education for the corps of engineers (Segal et al., 1990; Anderson, 2008).

From the day of its inception, the basic curriculum which characterised West Point as an institution for the education and training for future officers had been developed. Under the eye of Colonel Sylvanus Thayer (1817- 1833), the “Father of the Military Academy,” the institution pioneered the higher education in engineering and officers’ character development in the United States by making the *École Polytechnique*<sup>7</sup>, as a model (James, 1944; McCormick, 1970; Morisson, 1974; Segal et al., 1990; Flammang, 2007; and Anderson, 2008). Prior to their attendance at the academy, cadets’;

“...knowledge is presumed to be slight, and in the four years’ sufficient instruction with regard to what may be acquired from books, and to what results from discipline must be inculcated to make them capable of fulfilling their duties as officers. It is recognized as a principle, that the training of the mind is more important than the mere acquisition of knowledge. For this purpose, mathematics is used as the groundwork of the education, and gradually, as the cadets advance, the subjects of instruction become more technical, and, therefore, create more sense of military in their characters. A good average standard is aimed at, and an accurate acquaintance with what is taught is expected. It is a subject of regret among some of the superior officers” (Fletcher, 1874:18).

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<sup>7</sup> The *École Polytechnique* was established in Paris in 1794, as the *École Centrale des Travaux Publics*, to unite all the various aspects of training in engineering science under one roof, and to provide a general scientific education for future mining engineers, geographers, civil architects, and eventually, teachers of mathematics and the physical sciences. Now, the institution became virtually a preparatory school for the newly reorganized *d’coles d’application*, or specialist schools, preparing students for the various branches of the public services, both civil and military—the Bridges and Roads Service, Military Engineering and the Mining Service among others. The influence of this new school was to be felt not only in France but also in the organisation of scientific and technical education abroad; for instance, in Germany, Austria, Prague and Saint Petersburg. (Bradley, 1975:415-416)

According to Gibbon (1895) and McCormick (1970), it was about this time that the Academy introduced the four years' education system – a complete and well-rounded curriculum for military career was instituted and is still in use today. The first year at the academy emphasizes the aspect of soldiering – through drill and discipline – with a small portion of common school education. The second year is dedicated to the improvement of the drills through 'mental acquirements'. During the third year, drawing and higher mathematics, the duties of a non-commissioned officer, drill in cavalry and artillery, and some knowledge of ordnance matters are added. Whilst, in the fourth year, the cadets are given practical practices in the duties of commissioned officer, experience in drill as a commander of artillery, infantry, and cavalry, and instruction in the application of mathematics, and the details of civil and military engineering. Fletcher (1874), observed in his report that the institution's curriculum at the time gives emphasis on infantry, artillery, cavalry tactics; the use of swords, bayonet, and others. At the time, the education is a four year's study as being described in **Table 2.1**.

Even though, the emphasis of the curriculum is basically an engineering one; there was a shift since 1920's, where more humanities subjects were introduced into the curriculum. Alspach (1950) mentioned that nearly 40 per cent of the cadet's academic time is concerned with a study of English language and literature; of foreign languages (French, Spanish, German, Russian, or Portuguese); of the social sciences (economics, government, history); and of law (criminal, constitutional, military). The remainder is taken up with mathematics and the natural sciences (mechanics, physics, chemistry, electricity) (Alspach, 1950:163). In addition, elective courses were also introduced in 1960's, allowing cadets to explore a discipline in some depth by taking related electives. In 1977, the five areas of concentration were designated: applied sciences and engineering, basic sciences, humanities, national security and public affairs, and an

interdisciplinary management area. Furthermore, the curriculum at this time had evolved into a dual-track program, in which each cadet may choose one of five engineering options; electrical, civil, mechanical, nuclear, and general education.

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT CURRICULUM	
<b>First year:</b>	Practical instruction in infantry tactics, police and discipline; practical instruction in artillery tactics; instruction in small-arms; the first part of the course of mathematics; and the first part of the course of French.
<b>Second year:</b>	Practical instruction in infantry tactics; practical instruction in cavalry tactics; police and discipline, practical instruction in artillery tactics; the remainder of the course of mathematics; the remainder of the course of French; the course of Spanish; and the first part of the course of drawing.
<b>Third year:</b>	Theoretical and practical instruction in infantry, cavalry, and artillery tactics; police and discipline; natural and experimental philosophy; chemical physics and chemistry, the remainder of the course of drawing; practical military engineering; theoretical and practical instruction in military signals and telegraphy.

**Fourth year:** Practical instruction in infantry tactics, police and discipline; practical instruction in artillery tactics; practical instruction in cavalry tactics; military and civil engineering, and the science of war; theoretical and practical instruction in ordnance and gunnery; practical military engineering; ethics and law, mineralogy and geology; and theoretical and practical instruction in military signals and telegraphy.

### **Table 2.1: USMA curriculum**

Source: Fletcher (1874:11)

The cadets may also choose to follow the mathematics/science/engineering track or the humanities/public affairs track (Segal, Segal, & Wattendorf, 1990:157). These changes and the introduction of new courses and subjects into the curriculum is directed in producing the graduates from West Point who are able “to anticipate and to respond effectively to the uncertainties of a changing technological, social, political, and economic world” (Ender, Kelty, & Smith, 2008:49).

On top of that, a program of military professional education and training has also been included. Throughout the four-year period, considerable emphasis is placed upon the development of qualities and attributes of character such as integrity, responsibility, initiative, and devotion to duty, which are traditionally, the hallmarks of the professional military leaders (Bennet, 1967:449). The goal of combining military professional training together with high education qualification has been to produce the educated man, the disciplined mind, the career officer equipped with intellect and by training to lead men, to contribute to the Army’s mission, and to develop under the stimulus of increased responsibilities (Bennet, 1967: U’Ren, 1975). According to U’Ren (1975), the academy training centres on the academy’s “Duty, Honour and Country” moto.

“Duty” demands that a cadet [must be able] to perform to the utmost of his ability at all times, that he “willingly accept and loyally execute all assigned missions” and that he live[d] within the spirit of all regulations and directives regardless of origin. “Honour” means, “a cadet does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do” while “Country” signifies loyalty to established governmental policy (U’Ren, 1975:23).

In his article, Hansen (1985) further deliberated on the importance of this Honour Code. According to him;

“There are no ‘ifs’ or ‘maybes’ in this code, but rather an absolute standard of behaviour that demands absolute compliance. Not only [that] a cadet must be personally honest in action and intent, but he must report any other cadet whom he suspects has violated the code or committed an honour offense himself. In essence, the Honour Code requires the individual cadet to be his brother’s keeper, in order to maintain the high standards of the corps” (Hansen, 1985:57).

However, the system is not without its problem. For example, James (1944) mentioned that the cadets are very well aware of the pressure to obey the regulations and to achieve distinction as a student. This placed a huge amount of pressure on the cadet’s shoulder to perform well. A cheating incident in 1976 severely rocked the boat and brought the system in use at the academy in question (Hansen, 1985:57). In addition, according to Morisson (1974), on numerous occasions in the thirties, forties, and early fifties, army officers and boards of visitors have repeatedly criticised the excessive stress on mathematics, science,

and engineering to the detriment of other academic subjects and military science (108). One possible explanation for this situation would be the effect of stuffed curriculum, where the education system is forced to accommodate the needs to train highly skilled officers and to have them well educated by giving them a university level education. This brought us to the main and on-going debate in the curriculum structure of any MOE institution: which one is more important in MOE – higher level education or military training?

### **2.3.2.3 Education vs. Training**

In *Power, Expertise and the Military Profession*, Huntington (1963) posited that a military officer, in this new era of technological achievement needs to be highly educated and to be highly skilled. For this reason, MOE institution is relatively different from any public universities or colleges, as its purpose is to prepare the cadets for war (Magalaner, 1947). However, throughout the history of MOE, there has been an on-going debate among military education enthusiasts on the legitimacy and the significance of higher level education against the importance of professional soldiering training. Barnett (1967) asserted that the source for such debate stems from the conception of an officer of being “a fighting-man” and/or “a military manager” (17). The clash of cultures between the military and the academics is fundamental as any reforms in the curriculum deal with these two competing values (Johnson-Freese, 2012:137). As a result, more than often, the curriculum outlined for the cadets is too packed and over-stuffed with a certain level of understanding “across a broad array of topics in a relatively short period of time” (Echevarria, 2005:11).

At first, it would be better to define the term ‘training’ and ‘education’ included in this study, before moving a bit further into this discussion. According to Jordan (2004), the Army defines ‘training’ as the “instruction of personnel to

increase their capacity to perform specific military functions and associated individual and collective tasks”, which often include “learning to do a concrete task, and the product of such an endeavour is the acquisition of a skill”. Moreover, ‘education’ is “the instruction with increases knowledge and skill, and/or experience, as the desired outcome for the student” through the learning of abstract concepts (2). Furthermore, education requires thinking and reflection, which takes time, while training has right and wrong answers which allow immediate progress measurement (Johnson-Freese, 2012:138). More simply, a training program seeks to impart a mastery of the known, while an education program provides the student with the tools to deal with the unknown (Preston, 1980; Jordan, 2004; Abbe & Halpin, 2010; Ruby & Gibler, 2010; Vogel-Walcutt, Fiorella, & Malone, 2013).

At one end, there are those who are of the opinion that technical training must be built upon a strong foundation of academic achievement and the development of the intellect (Murray, 1905; U’Ren, 1975) thus resulting in the officers that are able to take on the ‘responsibility’ of being an officer (Micewski, 2003:7). As leaders, the military officers who pass through a graduate education programme are deemed to have higher thinking skills and is much more critical when facing the ambiguity and uncertainty of today’s warfare and insurgency (Carafano & Kochems, 2005; Rodriguez, 2008). Such belief in the value of education in producing better officers is so high that there are now MOE institutions offering not only undergraduate education but also post-graduate studies to their officers (Huntington, 1963; Danielsson & Weibull, 2008; Kelley & Johnson-Freese, 2014). However, this also means that the cadets in those MOE institutions are now enduring tougher academic demands which are relentless and demanding that may prove to be too much for some of the cadets’ ‘intellectual agility’ (Morisson, 1974; Johnson-Freese, 2012). At the same time, this raised a



fundamental question of the legitimacy of acquiring higher degrees and its relevance towards an officer's professional function. In his paper, Preston (1980) further argued that this supposed dichotomy is misleading as, there is no truth in believing that a standalone academic program within an MOE institution could promote the formation of better officers at the expense of "leadership training or personal athletic ability" (5).

On the other end of the table, a career as an officer is seen similar to any other professional practitioner like those serving as doctors that require specific technical knowledge (Arnold, 1993). For this, there are armies that favour training more than education (Jackson, Niday & Harrington, 2007). This is because;

"...military skill learning is becoming a type of experience-based skill-acquisition process, which is grounded in a situation-oriented epistemology. In the day-to-day practice of the armed forces, this implies that knowledge is something that is situated and acquired through the conduct of situated skill execution" (Sookermany, 2012:594).

Despite this, too much emphasis given on training would, unfortunately, sacrifice, an innate opportunity to build cadets' mental and intellectual agility that inevitably distinguishes those who actually possess intellectual ability (Johnson-Freese, 2012:137). Furthermore, Arnold (1993) problematized 'training' by saying that it is true that understanding the correct functioning of high-technology weapons systems requires extensive training. However, if this is all that is needed by a future officer, a single, intensive period of education with periodic refresher sessions would most probably satisfy the profession's needs, thus, making today's system of continuing military education irrelevant and

unnecessary. In fact, the true expertise of an officer lies not in “the generation of violence” but in the “management of violence”, which requires them to “think about, plan, organize, and conduct warfare at successively higher levels of organization and degrees of complexity” (Arnold, 1993:2).

The never ending battle of education vs. training for future officers could spell disaster because it detracts these MOE institutions from their goal – the production of a professional officer who can meet all demands made upon him in peace and war (Preston, 1980:5). Arnold (1993) argued that:

“Because of the diversity of knowledge required to meet all the demands placed on a military professional throughout his career and the virtual irrelevance of the knowledge required late in an officer’s career to the pressing demands of his early service, a single, massive dose of education (as in medical school, for example) with short, periodic updates would not suffice. Additionally, it is not economically sound to invest the resources or the time to teach every entry-level officer, the knowledge and skills of seasoned professionals, since most of them will never achieve that position. Thus, a professional development system that essentially spans officers’ career, interspersed with the periods of formal education and required field experience” (Arnold, 1993:4).

Realising that, Jordan (2004) proposed the concept of “yin and yang” between education and training because “it reflects both the tension between the two components of learning and their complementary natures” (1), where effective learning is seen as an active interplay between the two components (3). Fletcher (2009) further argued that training can provide future officers with the “knowledge and skills needed to perform military tasks and jobs” while education

may assist them to decide “when and how to apply the knowledge and skills that they acquire through training” (Fletcher, 2009:72).

Despite the availability of all arguments on education and training, I would still argue that the conflict is far from being resolved. Johnson-Freese (2012) observed that in the US:

“Neither the Joint Staff responsible for PME nor the individual military services, have seriously tackled what education for intellectual agility, as opposed to training, would entail. It is not surprising because few of those responsible for PME (individually or collectively) have spent much time thinking about the difference between education and training. Not many have reflected on what it means “to educate” or “to be educated.” Many received their undergraduate degrees in engineering, a discipline where rules, checklists, and clear, right and wrong answers prevail. They then went on to the successful careers where risk-averse answers to their bosses’ questions are standard, and the same kinds of checklists for flights, ships and reactors apply. Such personnel are well trained, but that is not the same thing as being well educated. Unfortunately, training and education are seen by the military bureaucracy as almost synonymous” (Johnson-Freese, 2012:137).

As it has been established before this, the competing importance of providing higher education and training to cadets at MOE institutions creates an enormous burden on the curriculum, thus limiting the curriculum’s ability “to educate” future officers. This is because there is a lack of literature that had actually looked of and evaluated ‘what’ is really important and really matters in the education and the training of future officers. As a result, the curriculum – despite having

numerous appointments of education committees to evaluate its standing – has become an imposed curriculum by a stakeholder who is poorly engaged. For this reason, the present research is seen as timely, as it seeks to understand not only the significant ontological shift but also the important concepts needed to be understood to facilitate a successful transformation from a civilian to an officer.

### 2.3.3 Function

The last important matter after considering the influences and the forms of MOE institution is the understanding of the purpose of the curriculum. From the literature, the system functions as a means to impart soldiering skills and also leadership capabilities of the cadets. However, a considerable number of research studies are being done by sociologists and psychologists on the matter, as they are motivated by the unique identity a soldier or an officer must possess.

The first group of researchers emphasises the transformation of soldiers: “preparing them for an unexpected operation in modern battlefields and continuous mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual training to enable them to make sense of what they do not at first understand, or what they might bypass over subconsciously”<sup>8</sup> (Mäkinen, 2010; B. A. M. Kelley et al., 2011; Perez, 2011; Woodward & Neil Jenkins, 2011; J. J. Jackson et al., 2012; Sookermany, 2011, 2012; Field, 2014; Juncos & Pomorska, 2014; L Heinecken, 2014; Maringira et al., 2014). Furthermore, apart from preparing the cadets with the mechanical part of war that can be taught, the institutions are also responsible to develop cadets’ leadership capabilities<sup>9</sup>(Emilio, 2000; Lyonnais, 2003; Paschal, 2006;

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<sup>8</sup> See also C. King, 1913; Mercier, 1917; Brotz & Wilson, 1946; Frye, 1949; Ginsburgh, 1964; Hausman, 1974; U’Ren, 1975; Weitz, 1988; McCoy, 1995; Whitman, 1995; Grassiani, 2003; Gresle, 2005; Hajjar, 2005; Reisel, Chia, & Maloles, 2005; Edmunds, 2006; Strachan, 2006; a. King, 2007; Lande, 2007; Siebold, 2007; Thomas, 2007; Wilson, 2007; Wong & Lovelace, 2008; Vitell & Singhapakdi, 2008; Burdette, Wang, Elder, Hill, & Benson, 2009; Griffith, 2009; Luoma & Mälkki, 2009; Vennesson, Breuer, Franco, & Schroeder, 2009

<sup>9</sup> See also Mockler-Ferryman, 1900; J. B. James, 1944; Brotz & Wilson, 1946; Hansen, 1985; McCoy, 1995; Garnier, 1972; A. A. Jordan & William J. Taylor, 1973

Snook, 2006; Kemble, 2007; Keith, B., Judd, T., Stapleton, j., Stoneham, M., Sweeney, P., Kruger, 2009; Luoma & Mälkki, 2009; Walter F. Ulmer, 2010; Kohn, 2013). This section provides a review of the available literature and provides some understanding of these two functions.

### **2.3.3.1 Soldiering**

According to Lande (2007), understanding what is involved in the production of a 'good soldier' requires us to appreciate the logic of soldiering and how "the corporeal schemes of the habitus are passed on from experts to newcomers within chains of interdependence" *sic.* (97). Because, officers are definitely soldiers, they are, by default, made responsible for training the soldier themselves and preparing them for war (Weitz, 1988:263). Moreover, to do so, a soldier must be able to comprehend the first idea of soldiership; the very idea of legitimised violence and their role as officers in managing it (Heinecken, 2014). In other words, armies differ from other institutions, as their primary reason for establishment involves the "readiness to take life and destroy property (Gresle, 2005; Edmunds, 2006; Wilson, 2007; Perez, 2011). Furthermore, soldiers' involvement in 'violence' is not just about fighting in the war, but also about the perseverance of peace, safety and security. (Vennesson et al., 2009; Mäkinen, 2010). As insurgencies, conflicts and chaos in the twenty-first-century can also take place in civilian areas. Hence a good soldiering enables soldiers' ability to operate in this condition (Sookermany, 2011:483).

In order to be able to fight, soldiers are required to master certain competencies representative of trained soldiers; marksmanship and the ability to use a gun (Kelley et al., 2011; Woodward & Neil Jenkins, 2011), the ability in duelling and close combat (Wilson, 2007) by going through an intense training

and drilling sessions (Weitz, 1988). In a study, Lande (2007) observed the following:

“Just as all the army cadets must be able to engage in vigorous activities requiring stamina and endurance, all army cadets are expected to have the dexterity and calm to be able to use a rifle. It is a fundamental feature of military training and a competency in which all soldiers are expected to have minimum proficiency. It is, therefore, no surprise that cadets represent this fact about their worlds regarding metaphors of the body as a ‘vehicle’, ‘platform’, and ‘weapon’ of combat. However, these beliefs about the body as weapons do not themselves generate the competency required to fire a weapon well. As with running, the martial qualities of the cadet are the result of the embodiment of the objectified practices of instructors. Even though, learning to shoot a rifle involves doctrinal texts and codified practices, the transmission of practical schemes involves a combination of imitation, direct physical contact, an array of visual and textual artefacts, and disciplinary techniques. Producing a soldier who handles a rifle well involves creating a human sensitivity that is the result of a protracted and diffuse process rather than the product of a deliberate will” (102).

As simple as it seems, acquiring these sets of skills to ‘kill’ and destroy others by perceiving it as “a protracted and diffuse process” is in actual off tangent. Weitz (1988) questioned such dry literature for these skills by describing that the available literature depicts the soldier as “an automaton, not expected to think, act, or take any personal initiative” (264). This view is understandable, as the

trend seems to exclude the psychological aspect of 'learning how to kill' or the troublesome aspect of the very idea of using violence.

For most soldiers, combat is an extraordinarily stressful experience, with fearful participants making split-second decisions about the use of force, and having to bear, or (suppress) feelings of personal responsibility for the deaths of their buddies, civilians, and in some cases (particularly in close combat) enemy soldiers (Field, 2014)135.

In other words, acquiring the 'skill to kill' as a part of obtaining the soldiers' identity is not really problematic. However, the 'act' of killing someone when the order came would entirely be something else. This fact was further realised by the present study by determining the shifts that a person must make that enable them to do what 'a soldier should do'.

The second key theme of soldiering that identifies a soldier from the others would be *Esprit de Corps* – a “fictive kinship” that denotes an idea of “strong emotional bonds between individuals and across the military institution” (Woodward & Neil Jenkins, 2011:260). According to Reisel, Chia, & Maloles, (2005), Vitell & Singhapakdi, (2008), and Juncos & Pomorska (2014), *Esprit de Corps* has occupied scholars of military studies, management, organizational psychology and other fields for decades. According to Siebold (2007), *Esprit de Corps* is generated through interactions and shared experiences among a group of people going through military activities, combat and noncombat. Brotz & Wilson (1946) mentioned that this aspect of soldiering is developed from the first day, the cadets report themselves to the institution. Being in an alien terrain and in an institution foreign to those they are used to, creates a bond as the cadets seek

psychological refuge from others that share the awkwardness and the confusions of the new life.

In the military and especially in a combat situation, *Esprit de Corps*, does not only embody the need to be cohesive (King, 2007; Vitell & Singhapakdi, 2008; Heinecken, 2014), but also the willingness to risk oneself for the benefit of many. Field (2014) exemplified this by mentioning that:

“Infantry members face the prospect of injury or death and must be and are prepared to risk their lives, in some cases with almost certainty of death, for the benefit of the group. For example, if a grenade rolls into a foxhole and cannot be tossed out in time, an infantryman is expected, depending on proximity, to cover the grenade with his body to absorb the explosive force” (134).

Notwithstanding, *Esprit de Corps* could lead to the suppression of critical thinking and self-judgement (Juncos & Pomorska, 2014:305), as an individual in the group may hold his tongue on a matter under the premise that ‘it is for the better’. Also, there is also an issue that the soldiers would ‘fight for their mates and not for their country’ (Strachan, 2006:211-212). Even though, the mutual reliance between the group members would be at its best in a combat situation, the loyalty is no longer with the organisation or the nation, as the men are now fighting for their ‘buddy’. Considering this, the present study tried to seek some clarification how *Esprit de Corps* is crucial in MOE and its importance in officer education.

The third theme in soldiering would be a discipline – “the individual’s total conformity to a prescribed role, including one’s behaviour, attitudes, values and beliefs” (Frye, 1949; Maringira et al., 2014). In the military, discipline is enforced



by the use of punishment and this enforcement is usually at its extreme during basic training. In an account of a cadet experiencing military discipline:

“Eight o'clock finds him in the recitation room. And there again, the slightest evasion from rigid prescription is impossible. Each section numbers only from eight to twelve men. Each cadet must recite every day. Just as the slightest failure to meet the hundred minute requirements of order and discipline: a paper out of place, a button missing, a piece of equipment untidy, a second of tardiness, is recorded in terms of " demerits " which means eventually serious trouble, so the slightest falling short from a perfect recitation means a loss of standing recorded in fractions of a hundred, daily, monthly, semi-annually, annually, a passing from group to group ; in case of failure, a dismissal, in any case, a final rating which will influence the whole after career“ (Mercier, 1917:721).

The above description is a classic example of how discipline is a hallmark of any credible MOE institution, where the institution aims to “instil self and collective discipline in its cadets, which enables them to accrue military capital and key life skills” (Hajjar, 2005:55). Even though, the imposition of discipline onto cadets could be found as harsh; one must appreciate that an undisciplined military is useless in war and a menace to peace (Frye, 1949:544).

In addition to discipline, the next theme – obedience – would be characteristic of soldiering that could be considered as synonymous with discipline. As the cadets enter the MOE institution, they must adjust to another aspect of military life – obeying the hierarchy of command from day one (Hausman, 1974; Maringira et al., 2014). In addition, U'Ren (1975) mentioned

that “obedience and loyalty to the established authority are considered absolute virtues for the future soldier” (24). Weitz (1988) captured the importance of obedience by mentioning that:

“Duty in combat required following orders in situations where men must act in concert, obeying commands when communication became difficult and when there is a little time to think. Frederick the Great defined it best: “Prussians' discipline renders these troops capable of executing the most difficult manoeuvres . . . advancing at close order at double time ... gaining an advantage by forced march . . . surpassing the enemy in constancy and fortitude. Obedience to the officers and subordination is so exact that no one ever questions an order” (267).

Among the other themes for Soldiership, obedience seems to be attracting the most attention, as it stereotypes soldiers as being ignorant towards their ability to think and make judgements. This situation suggests that a soldier would blindly follow any orders given by their superiors no matter how wrong and how inaccurate the orders are (Thomas, 2007). The infamous episodes of the Holocaust and the My Lai massacre in Vietnam are some among many more cases being directed towards this blind obedience. Weitz (1988) argued that this is not the case as personal historical records have shown that although [soldiers] obeyed orders and fought very effectively, they retained the ability to evaluate [when required] (283-284). Thomas (2007) further deliberated that;

“...service members must sometimes exercise discretion in evaluating the legal content of orders they are given... [Furthermore]...the defence of

“superior orders” has been widely rejected in both international law and U.S. law when the orders in question are manifestly illegal” (229).

In other words, despite the obligations on a soldier to obey orders given by the higher authority, he still retains his moral compass to make his judgement, whether, the orders are legitimate or not. However, sceptics questioned this by saying that;

“...even if the soldier has a truthful information he needs, information that would cause him to conclude his nation is partial, he may find this knowledge very difficult to act upon. A part of this has to do with the training and indoctrination; the soldier undergoes. Soldiers are taught to obey orders without much reflection or questioning. As long as the order is not blatantly immoral, he is expected to do the bidding of those appointed above him. When the military man receives a legal system from an authorized superior, he does not argue, hesitate and substitute his views; he obeys instantly. Therefore, a soldier is conditioned to obey the orders of his superiors, which is not much different from the way, the law-abiding citizen is conditioned to obey the law. Even, where soldiers have doubts concerning the justness of their nation's fight, almost everything else in their experience works to ease or erase these doubts” (Whitman, 1995:92).

Another tension in relation to obedience is on the level of ‘conformity’, which usually forbids the soldier from doing any more than he is being told. By playing it safe, the soldier would avoid any conflict with established prerogative (Brotz & Wilson, 1946).

### 2.3.3.2 Officership

The main task after soldiering is establishing a military institution for MOE – to produce future officers for service in military that have physical fitness, military proficiency, professional knowledge, moral excellence and intellectual competence (Patton, 1937; Alspach, 1950; McCoy, 1995; Forman, 1965; Bennett, 1969; Haussman, 1974; Kleber, 1978; Heaton, 1980; Cooper, 1989; Hajjar, 2005; Schneider, 2005; Pinch & Ouellet, 2008; Uyar & Varoğlu, 2008; K. P. Kelley & Johnson-Freese, 2014). Besides this, the institutions are also responsible for preparing their cadets to become the leaders that are ready to face the unpredictable and extensive spectrum of security challenges of the 21st century (Rokke, 1995; Kenney, 1996; Whiteman, 1998). Publications like, the *Sandhurst's Occasional Papers* (2011) and the West Point's *Building Capacity to Lead* (2009) are few among many documented examples that clearly state the institution's desire to develop leadership competencies by “developing leaders, one cadet at a time” through the training of “leadership schemata, repertoires, leadership skills through classroom lessons and first-hand experience” (Hajjar, 2005:51). Based on these two documents, it can be determined that the MOE institutions serve as a valuable and irreplaceable experience in becoming military leaders. As the curriculum includes some practitioner-oriented based courses and training, cadets learn “various cultures and modes of operation expanding the cadets’ military and leadership perspectives” (Kelley & Johnson-Freese, 2014:121-122).

Before embarking further into this issue of hand, it is good to comment that even though leadership is a field that has been given considerable amount of thought and attention, it is also the least understood topic in the social science (i.e. Bennis, 1959; Jago, 1982; Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). This task is especially complicated for the present research for the following reasons. First of

all, defining and reviewing 'officership' is rather challenging, as the terminology has been used interchangeably with the term 'leader'. However, the problem is not due to the ignorance of social scientists to properly define and differentiate the two terms, but rather it is due to a lack of research that appropriated the lexis. Unlike available literature on the importance of 'soldiership', as it has been presented in the previous section, there is almost none on the 'officership'. Even though, there are works by Huntington (1981) and Janowitz (1960) that properly defined and described an officer, as a 'professional in violence', the task of prolonging the discussion 'how' this professional becomes an expert in violence seems to be ignored by researchers and specialists in the field.

Secondly, as officers assume the role of a leader in their units almost automatically, the important aspects needed to become an officer is often ignored. Unlike soldiership, there is an absence of literature that gives a proper picture of officership, as most literature concerns more on building cadets' leadership capability and ethics. This could be seen through the realisation of different leadership education models adopted by the MOE institutions like officers as **Natural Born Leaders**<sup>10</sup> (see Kemble, 2007; Kohn, 2013; Snook, 2006; Ulmer, 2010), **Leaders of Character**<sup>11</sup> (Jordan & Taylor, 1973; Emilio, 2000; Paschal, 2006; Keith, et al., 2009), and the **Officers-and-Gentlemen**<sup>12</sup> model (see James,

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<sup>10</sup> According to Kemble (2007), this is a concept where the officer status as a leader is determined by God-given talent and training rather than inherited wealth and status (32).

<sup>11</sup> A leader of character is one who seeks to discover the truth, decides what is right, and demonstrates the courage to act accordingly. Character is the essential facet of Officership that allows officers to earn their soldiers' trust and to exercise influence both within and outside an organization. Personal character ensures that one's subordinates will assume with confidence that their officers' will always act in a moral and just manner that promotes the welfare of individuals, the unit, and the community. In all situations, especially in combat, leaders of character clearly establish moral and ethical boundaries and use their strength of will to ensure that the unit's operations are carried out within these boundaries. Officers who conduct operations in a moral and ethical manner preserve soldiers' moral justification for fighting, which allows them to understand and make meaning out of their combat experiences (Keith et. al; 2009:10).

<sup>12</sup> Garnier (1972) and Kemble (2007) described this model as a leadership model that gives emphasis on strength of character and commitment to duty. The word 'gentleman' does not carry gender association

1944; Garnier, 1972; McCoy, 1995; Kemble, 2007). However, these models can be seen as “imposed organizational goals” on officers’ standard and discipline used to train young officers to “motivate, lead and direct” (see Whiteman, 1998). One of the reasons for this is ‘the fact’ that military expertise has been considered as the most important aspect of military professionalism. As an example, Ginsburgh (1964) mentioned in his paper that:

“[because] expertise is the very basis of any profession, military expertise encompasses strategy, tactics and administration. The handling of battles by land, sea or air, the manoeuvring of large forces, the leadership of the man in the face of honour and death, and the development and administration of the organizations that affect these purposes are clearly not jobs for amateurs” (Ginsburgh, 1964:258).

One of the significant challenges in considering PME of the future is determining how and how much of the necessary “RMA perspective” falls *outside* of these areas. To what extent must the future war planner or battlefield commander have mastered the nuances of chaos theory or computer programming? Might a background in biotechnology or anthropology be a prerequisite for conducting future threat estimates? How might a course on successful (and unsuccessful) innovations in commercial business contribute to the development of future DOD concept developers and program managers? The future is characterised by an unprecedented interdependence of information and erosion of the “walls” between areas of knowledge. In future, increased attention would be given to PME to develop leaders who could bring to bear their education in a diversity of fields,

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with it but rather meant to give emphasis on officer's heroic commitment, responsible for his/hers subordinates; a leader, a person one could implicitly trust, and a person whose standards of behaviour, manners, and demeanour clearly identified him as a gentleman in the old-fashioned sense of the term.

including areas that may now seem well outside what has traditionally been considered as military affairs (Kenney, 1996)58.

Moreover, lastly, there is a famous saying that ‘a soldier is not an officer but an officer is always a soldier’. This conventional way of seeing the military profession is above all legitimate, but it is not without its predicament. However, the notion conjures up the idea that an officer is always a soldier and a leader to his/her men, i.e. there seems to be a ‘special group’ in the military. McCoy (1995), for example, who observed the Philippine military academy observed that;

“...each and every Cadet comes up to the standard of honour set and must maintain it, thus preserving the self-individuality of the cadet corps. The individuals merged into corps, making the corps itself an "individual" (McCoy, 1995:703).

The description that the officer corps is an ‘individual’ on its own suggests a way that being an officer is not just another identifier of a profession, but also about being in a community of practice. It does not suggest that the officers enjoy different status in this hugely hierarchal institution. Rather, these officers are part of selected group among the members of the profession entrusted to uphold the society’s higher moral conduct and ethics (Keith et. al., 2009). Thus, to be in this community, a soldier must shift his/her position and become:

“...a leader of men. He has to exert the authority to ensure immediate obedience when necessary. To do it effectively, it is essential for him to earn the respect of the men under his command. Of course, he has to show himself to be physically fit, able to do the things he asks his soldier to do. Courage is another obvious requirement, moral as well as physical. If an

officer loses the confidence of his soldiers then obviously, he is in some trouble; so he's got to have a good brain in his head, he's got to show good judgement, and he needs to be decisive, to show the men that he knows the job and can make up his mind about things, quickly if need be. However, there's another side to this too. An officer has to look after his soldiers, not in a patronizing sense, but to ensure their welfare, safety and, where possible, comfort. He is responsible for them in every aspect" (Jackson, 2007:12).

As, an officer is always a soldier; there is always a requirement for an officer to be the 'technical specialist', which, according to Lyonnais (2003) is a pre-requisite for an effective officer. Kohn (2013) further described that it is almost an obligation for an officer:

"...to be competent in the skills, roles, and duties of each job in the service: to know the duties, weapons, support services, and indeed, any technical, organizational, or interpersonal skill necessary to carry out the functions associated with their ranks, positions, or missions assigned to them at any given time" (Kohn, 2013:381).

Though, this requirement is not a straight forward one. Despite their education and training, young officers are almost always put in a predisposition, where they are made responsible for many things that they are incapable of performing (Brotz & Wilson, 1946). For this reason, cadet officers are trained to be able to learn new 'ability' with the precept of a higher academic degree in the education and training of the officers. Schneider (2005) asserted that the need to have intellectual leaders who can provide "purpose, direction and motivation to the



unconvinced, the ignorant and the uneducated—whether a subordinate, superior or peer” (16). In addition, the intellectual requirement for being an officer is directed towards having a calibre to think and evaluate the decisions critically before making any judgement and decisions, as the aftermath of wrong decision could be devastating and “potentially result in the loss of life and civilian casualties” (Cycyota et al., 2011).

## 2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of theories were used to frame the present research in terms of key ideas to be highlighted, difficulties to be addressed and suitable approaches to be used in achieving the research’s objectives. According to Walsham (1995), the use of theory in the earlier stages of an interpretive study is to create an initial theoretical framework, which takes into account, the previously known knowledge “as an initial guide to designing and data collection; as a part of an iterative process of data collection and analysis; and as a final product of the research” (76). For this research, the following theories were used:

<b>THEORY</b>	<b>BASED ON</b>
<b>THRESHOLD CONCEPTS</b>	MEYER & LAND (2003)
<b>TROUBLESOME KNOWLEDGE</b>	PERKINS (2006)
<b>COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE</b>	WENGER (1998)
<b>rites of passage</b>	GENNEP (1960), TURNER (1967)
<b>THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER</b>	JANOWITZ (1960), HUNTINGTON (1981)
<b>THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER</b>	SCHÖN (1983)

**Table 2.2 Theoretical Framework**

These theories were used in the process of developing a background and base for the study and as a guide, during the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data. For the present study, these theories were grouped into the four main areas of interest; Threshold Concepts, Troublesome Knowledge, Professional Soldier, and Rites of Passage for the Communities of Practice.

For the first set of the group, the threshold concepts theory was chosen as the main theory for its usefulness in investigating how the cadets learn to become officers by identifying the challenges they encounter (Meyer & Land, 2006). Thus, it provides a pathway to deepen existing knowledge about how learning occurs (Harrison, Clayton & Tilley-Lubbs, 2014). The fact that challenges faced by cadets in becoming officers have not been recognised properly in the previous studies has already been described earlier in this chapter other than describing how this process actually works. Because of this, here lies the strength of threshold concept as it enables discussion among the discipline's experts, students, and education experts on the challenges faced by the learners (Loertscher et al., 2014). Moreover, no research has been conducted that actually describes the ontological shifts needed to happen in order to transform someone to become an officer. As suggested by Wimshurst (2011), the theory proved to be an effective lens to examine the learner's experiences coming to grips with their sense of place in their target profession (313). For this reason, the theory suits the study, as it highlights the obstacle that a learner must encounter in order to change their world views. Unlike any other institution of higher learning, higher military education institutions provide a unique curriculum intended for producing military officers. Within this, the curriculum would promote a transformation process, which can be "protracted over a considerable period" to achieve its purpose. In the case of the present study, transformation experiences from being a civilian, later a soldier and then a military officer suggest a particular conceptual and epistemological transformation needed to be experienced by the officer cadets.

To date, based on a dedicated website created by Dr. Michael Thomas Flanagan<sup>13</sup>, a Senior Research Associate in the Department of Computer Science UCL, on development and usage of threshold concept theory in research, there has been a growing number of works on professional development and identity, ontological shift and troublesome knowledge. Furthermore, as the study involves identifying essential concepts in becoming an officer, it is also important for the research to inform the practice of the teaching and learning process.

Apart from that, the study also includes a different set of theories in order to understand and shed more light on the matter under study. It is important because “for threshold concepts to deliver on their promise, disciplines should strive to identify, articulate and agree on a set of threshold concepts that can inform a coherent approach to curriculum and the design of students’ learning experiences” (Barradell & Peseta, 2014:3). The second group of theories, the Troublesome Knowledge, is used to understand the problematic juncture that cadets would have to face during their transformation process. It is supplemented by a third set of theories, the Professional Soldiers – a set of theories that focuses on the professionalism aspect of officership. Moreover, lastly, the fourth set of theories, the Rites of Passage for the Communities of Practice, combines a broad number of theories that give shape to the ‘aspect of the journey’, thus providing an understanding of the complex process of becoming an officer. All of these sets of theories have been reviewed further in the following sections in this chapter by discussing their key principles and providing some rationale for their inclusion in the present study’s theoretical framework.

#### **2.4.1 Threshold Concepts**

Threshold – a level or point at which something is about to begin – has a distinct way of identifying “core concepts” of a subject “without which the learner cannot progress” (Land, Cousin, & Meyer, 2005; Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer & Land, 2005). The Threshold

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ee.ucl.ac.uk/~mflanaga/thresholds.html> is a dedicated resource online web page that describe the characteristics of a threshold concept and list selected references to the work of those examining its value in a broad range of disciplines.

Concepts Framework (TCF), developed by Meyer and Land (2003), provides a way of considering how students assimilate new knowledge through a process of reworking their existing conceptual frameworks (Rivers & Richardson, 2014). As the concept has been described as a “portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something” (Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer & Land, 2005; Land, 2013), the concept may prove its worth in identifying and providing some understanding of the challenges in transforming an ordinary civilian into soldier and later, a military leader. This notion of crossing through a portal represents ‘something’ that candidates ‘*need to know about or be able to do*’ in order to progress and demonstrate the capabilities that are desirable or necessary (Abbott, 2013; Kiley, 2009; Jennifer Loertscher, 2011; Talanquer, 2015; Trafford & Leshem, 2009). Cousin (2006) mentioned that:

“Grasping a threshold concept is transformative because it involves an ontological as well as, a conceptual shift. We are what we know. New understandings are assimilated into our biography, becoming part of who we are, how we see and how we feel” (4).

The new understanding may affect “epistemological transitions” (advances in knowledge and knowing) and “ontological transformations” (development in the ways of being) (Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer & Land, 2005). In addition, threshold concepts could be best defined as the web within a discipline; emphasising the connections between ideas rather than looking at a single idea in isolation (Kinchin et al., 2011:211). Examples of threshold concepts in different domains include “Cellularity” in Biology (Ross et al., 2010), “Steady State” in Biochemistry (Loertscher et al., 2014), and “Opportunity Cost” in Economics (Meyer & Land, 2003).

In addition, threshold concepts can be useful regarding identifying the ‘jewels in the curriculum’ (Meyer & Land, 2005), which are usually discipline-specific, which

students must master. As a result of identifying these ‘jewels’, the curriculum is not over-stuffed with the courses deemed important to master a certain discipline or practice (Cousin, 2006). Rodger et al. (2015) explains further that threshold concepts are discipline-specific concepts that meet particular conceptual and epistemological characteristics and require a complex understanding by students. They are ‘thresholds’ that lead to the mastery of the discipline. In addition, the concepts differ from key or core concepts. Wimshurst (2011) explains that basic concepts are building blocks while threshold concepts, once understood, “will lead the learners to see things through a different lens” (Bryan & Karshmer, 2015:251). This is because when true understanding is realised, “there is a transformed view of subject landscape, the world looks different, a repositioning of self in relation to the subject and disciplinary discourse” (Meyer & Land, 2005:373). Furthermore, this change of view could be seen as a signal that “a threshold is crossed and one’s identity has shifted” (Keefer, 2015:18).

The original work on threshold concepts arose from the enhancing teaching-learning (ETL) environments in undergraduate courses project, which aimed to improve the quality of teaching-learning experiences through the development of different conceptual frameworks (Barradell & Peseta, 2014; Harrison et al., 2014; Higgs & Cronin, 2013; Stamboulis, Jaffer, & Baillie, 2012). Since in the original paper, research studies into threshold concepts appeared in a wide range of fields and disciplines, some examples include postgraduate study (Keefer, 2015; Kiley, 2009; Trafford & Leshem, 2009; Wisker & Robinson, 2009), Biochemistry (Loertscher et al., 2014; Loertscher, 2011), Chemistry (Talanquer, 2015), Biology (Bryan & Karshmer, 2015; Kinchin, 2011), criminal justice education (Wimshurst, 2011), curriculum transformation (Rodger et al., 2015; Rodger & Turpin, 2011; Stamboulis et al., 2012), and healthcare (Kinchin et al., 2011; Stacey & Stickley, 2012). In addition, there are to date four whole volume of books published and devoted to the topic – *Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: Threshold Concepts*

*and Troublesome Knowledge* (Meyer & Land, 2006), *Threshold Concepts within the Disciplines* (Land, Meyer, & Smith, 2008), *Threshold Concepts and Transformational Learning* (Meyer, Land, & Baillie, 2010), and *Threshold Concepts in Practice* (Land, Meyer & Flanagan 2016). Despite the positive development, Barradell & Peseta (2014) warned that there is always a danger where too many threshold concepts become identified in a subject that leads lecturers and academics to overcrowding the curriculum.

Not all core concepts are threshold concepts. Moreover, not all threshold concepts can easily be made explicit. The identification and exploration of threshold concepts may pose a challenge. Identifying threshold concepts in some subject areas such as the arts and social sciences are often harder than identifying it in the sciences (Meyer & Land, 2006:16). As an example, Abbott (2013) tried to determine the thresholds that can help students in academic reading. Through the research, Abbott discovered that reading being a special process is influenced by the other factors like how the text is being viewed and previous knowledge on the subject matter (195). This situation had made identification of an important concept in academic reading, quite difficult to be distinguished. This is to show that while some concepts form the building blocks upon which a learner can gain an understanding of the discipline, Meyer & Land (2003) proposed that threshold concepts are distinguished by the five characteristics – as depicted in **Table 2.2**.

**CHARACTERISTICS****EXPLANATION****Transformative**

Understanding a threshold concept leads to a “transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even world view” (Meyer & Land, 2003:1) and to “cognitive, epistemic, discursive and ontological shifts in the learner” (Meyer, 2012:8). The transformation can be sudden or “protracted over a considerable period of time” (Meyer, Land & Baillie, 2010, p. x) and can involve changes in one’s values, beliefs, attitudes, and identity.

**Integrative**

Once a threshold concept is understood, learners come to see its interrelatedness with the other concepts, recognizing connections within and between subjects where they had previously seen disconnected fragments only and thereby taking a more integrated approach to analyse and use disciplinary subject matter.

<p><b>Irreversible</b></p>	<p>“Unlearning” a threshold concept is highly unlikely. This irreversibility means that knowledge of and ability to apply threshold concepts tend to become second-nature once the concepts have been learned, making it difficult to comprehend that someone else (e.g., our students) would have trouble understanding them.</p>
<p><b>Bounded</b></p>	<p>Each concept does not explain the ‘whole’ of the discipline but specific and related aspects of that whole.</p>
<p><b>Troublesome</b></p>	<p>Threshold concepts are often troublesome, in part because they involve moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, requiring “letting go” of the previously held beliefs (Land et al., 2005:54).</p>

**Table 2.3: Threshold Concepts Characteristics**

Source: (Cousin, 2006; Land et al., 2005; Meyer & Land, 2003; Meyer, Land, & Baillie, 2010; Rutherford & Pickup, 2015)

As a result, from identifying the important threshold concepts, Land et al. (2006) outlined nine considerations for course design and evaluation in relation to the TCF. These



considerations are greatly targeted at improving students' beliefs about the nature of knowledge and helps to illuminate students' conceptual development.

Consideration	Description
1. Look for "jewels in the curriculum"	Identify potentially transformative points in the curriculum where there are opportunities to support a student's conceptual understanding.
2. Engage students	Find ways to engage students in exploring, explaining, presenting, applying and connecting with new concepts.
3. Develop a "third ear" (cf. Ellsworth, 1997)	Learn to understand what influences a student's knowing or not knowing, recognising the pre-liminal factors that may attribute to this journey.
4. Support repositioning of selves	Be aware of how conceptual development may require a shift in one's self in relation to the concept. Consider how and why knowledge may be troublesome and the impact that new insights, once grasped, might have on a student.
5. Encourage metacognitive skills to help deal with uncertainty	Help students develop metacognitive skills for self-regulation that support their liminal

	experience during times of ambiguity and anxiety.
6. Enable recursive and excursive approaches to learning	Design learning experiences that offer “multiple takes” for grasping concepts. Think of learning as a journey with an intended direction of travel but with scope for deviation and revised direction.
7. Know more about the pre-liminal variation of a cohort	Attempt to understand how different students’ pre-liminal beliefs about a concept affect their advancement through the liminal space.
8. Evaluate generic pedagogy for oversimplification of concepts	Take opportunities to evaluate course design on the basis of whether teaching strategies are effective for threshold development within a particular context.
9. Recognise the underlying episteme of students’ conceptions	Find ways to understand alternative understandings that students may hold of different concepts and help students to understand how these different understandings may influence their ability to grasp new knowledge.

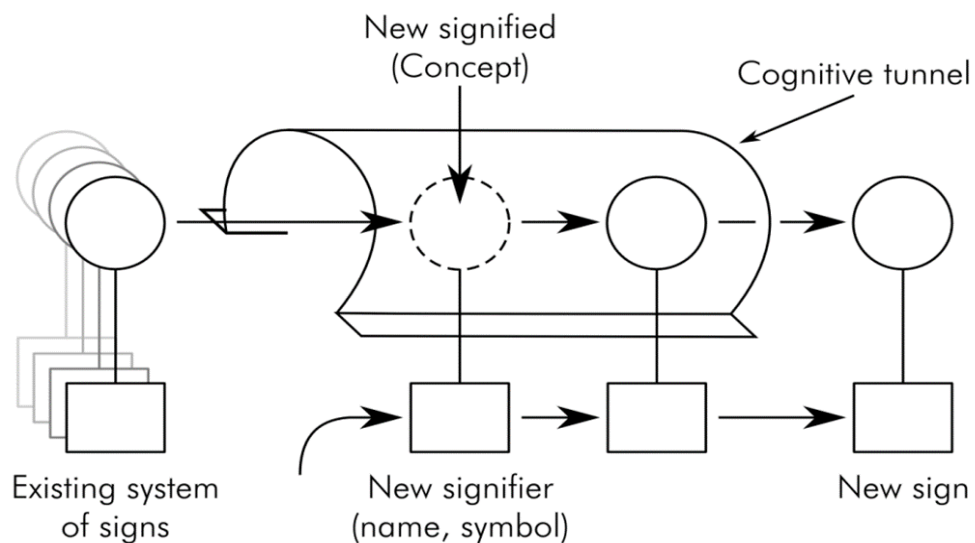
**Table 2.4: TCF considerations for course design**

Adapted from Land et al., 2006, pp. 198-204

In their works, Meyer and Land (2005) describe further that during the process of learning, students may enter a liminal space or transition period that may be exciting but also intimidating at the same time in order to transform themselves (Bryan & Karshmer, 2015; Stacey & Stickley, 2012; Wimshurst, 2011; Land, 2016; Tucker, 2016). White, Olsen, and Schumann (2016) assert that conceptual change happens through navigating liminality during the learning process. Meyer and Land (2006) borrowed the idea of 'liminality' from Genep (1960) and Turner (1967), that the situation is very much like going through a 'rites of passage' that mark a person's movement from one status to another in order to enter specific communities (Cousin, 2006:204). Evans and Kevern (2015) further explained that Genep's "rites of passage" as having a three-part structure: separation (pre-liminal phase), liminal period (from the Latin "limen", meaning threshold), and re-assimilation (post-liminal phase). The major role of the liminal period was to enable a transition in the individual from one status to another in society; and to supply a psychological, social and territorial "space" in which the individual may be prepared for their new role and status (2). One significance of the idea of a "rite of passage" to threshold concept is that it represents the education process where the learner does not gradually grow into a new role but has to first "abandon old certainties and perspectives, entering a time of uncertainty and apparent chaos before acquiring a new identity".

Meyer and Land (2005) explained that learners can get themselves "stuck" in a state of liminality and the time spent in this space can be protracted, over considerable periods of time, involving oscillation between states, often with temporary regressions to an earlier status (376) and can be characterised by high anxiety, high activity, procrastination and confusion (Rivers & Richardson, 2014; Ross et al., 2010; Ross et al., 2011). Often, experts of the threshold concepts have been using the metaphor of a 'liminal tunnel' (depicted by Figure 2.1) – a transformative state where it entails both a conceptual and an ontological shift (Land, Rattray & Vivian, 2014:1). By 'seeing' the liminal space in

this way, “not only does it resonate with the idea of modular curricula that are based on a linear sequencing of disciplinary knowledge” but also as an “intimidating or unseen cognitive and affective tunnel” that learners must enter and passed through if transformation is to occur (Ratray, 2016:72). Land, Ratray and Vivian (2014) further assert that as learners embark on their learning, they will have an existing stock of knowledge (labelled in Figure 2.1 as “signs”).



**Figure 2.1: The Liminal Tunnel**

Source: Land, Ratray & Vivian (2014:4)

As they are introduced to a new concept, a new signifier will be created thus adding new knowledge to the learners. At this moment, liminality in this domain refers to the in-between period where one is no longer who previously existed, nor has yet developed into the intended practitioner (Keefer, 2015). As liminality involves wavering between two worlds, those engaged in a transition ‘are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial (Berg, Erichsen & Hokstad, 2016). According to Land, Ratray and Vivian (2014), it will take some time for the learners to learn this new sign and when they emerge from the ‘liminal tunnel’, “their ability and willingness to use the signifier will

depend on their understanding of the signified and their feelings about the learning process” (4). Thus, when the learners learn this new sign, shifts occur along the journey and the learner is no longer the same person who entered the liminal tunnel indicating a threshold is crossed and one’s identity has shifted (Keefer, 2015; Land, 2016). Flanagan (2007) study on computer science and non-computer science students for example deliberated that the two learners negotiated liminal spaces in different ways. Kiley (2009) explained that being ‘stuck’ can be counter-productive and has an adverse impact on learners, for example, losing the will to continue learning. Meyer and Land (2006) exemplified this through Einstein at the party where Einstein had crossed the threshold into the liminal stage and could not think about the world the same way again after the post-liminal stage (Burch, Burch, Bradley, & Heller, 2014:2-4). Therefore, this story shows that if students have threshold concepts that block their learning during this stage, students must take time “to play with the knowledge, experiment with it, apply it, and struggle to resolve the conflicts in their understandings” (Higgs & Cronin, 2013:162). Cousin (2006) further explained that as this space is unstable, the process of learning can be recursive – journeying back and forward across the conceptual terrain. As a result, the time spent during the liminal experience might be protracted (Baillie et al., 2012:241), and demands a considerable amount of effort (Talanquer, 2015:4). For this reason, as being suggested by Rutherford & Pickup (2015), threshold concepts and liminality provided the present research with a framework to understand students’ experience within the liminal spaces and the pathways that cadets must cross in order to transform themselves to become a military officer.

#### **2.4.2 Troublesome Knowledge**

‘Troublesome knowledge’ was first identified by Perkins (1999) who takes a social constructivist approach to education and has been central to threshold concepts theory (Meyer & Land, 2003; Hills, 2010). Simmons, et al. (2013) mentioned that navigating

through the liminal space, the person would be confronted with troublesome knowledge “prompting profound realisations and the reconstruction of identities” (10). Building on Perkins’ (1999) description of troublesome knowledge, Meyer and Land (2005) argued that “threshold concepts lead not only to transformed thought but to a transfiguration of identity and adoption of an extended discourse” (375). As a result of participating in a ritual, the participants acquire new knowledge and subsequently, a new status and identity within the community of practice (Felten, 2016). However, taking part in a ritual can be “problematic, troublesome, and frequently involves the humbling of the participants” (Meyer & Land, 2005:376). According to Perkins, knowledge can be troublesome because it is conceptually difficult, alien, inert, tacit, or ritual (2006).

- (1) Ritual knowledge—of a routine and rather a meaningless character such as following pre-defined procedures.
- (2) Inert knowledge—not integrative nor seemingly related or relevant to (their) real lives or needs.
- (3) Conceptually difficult—what we often notice as teachers is that, in an attempt to learn difficult concepts, students mix expert views of the concept with their own less powerful conceptions.
- (4) Alien knowledge—knowledge can often be counter-intuitive to learners’ experience of the world. This troublesome situation can be caused either due to the inadequacy of academic knowledge forms, or the inaccurate observation or misinterpretation of what is seen by the student in the world, or both.
- (5) Tacit knowledge—understandings are often shared within a community of practice but less often explained or exposed. For example, a person coming into a new community may not pick up the nuances of different concepts that are ‘common sense’ to the experienced members.

(Baillie et al., 2012:243)

Questions of 'troublesome affect' seem to be a particularly important area for further investigation for scholars of threshold concepts (Felten, 2016). Identifying troublesome knowledge, especially, while being in the liminal state, is important, as it aids our understanding and identifies the conceptual transformations, which learners find difficult, thus making them 'stuck' (Meyer & Land, 2005:377). Furthermore, it also leads to the identification of the threshold concepts in itself (Rodger & Turpin, 2011:270). A few researchers already have begun to open this door. For example, Simmons et al. (2013) study on academic identity development suggests that navigating among conflicting identities can lead us into a troublesome but deeply reflective liminal space, prompting profound realizations and the reconstruction of academic identities (10). Ross et al. (2011) on the other hand had looked into the type of writing tasks research students and their supervisors find difficult and suggest that many students and perhaps supervisors in the Sciences "get stuck" in the liminal characterised by anxiety, stress, struggle and high emotion (25). Furthermore, Evans and Kevern (2015) and Allan et al. (2015) who had looked into nurse education suggest that troublesome knowledge may designate a productive period in its education process. This is especially true through Blackburn and Nestel (2014) study, where they have determined the tendency of paediatric surgical trainees to lose their awareness of the troublesomeness while taking on the mantle of a specialty trainee and feeling the increased responsibility during the liminal space.

### **2.4.3 Rites of Passage for Communities of Practice**

The military is a form of *communities of practice*, which "integrate the components necessary to characterise social participation as a process of learning and knowing" (Wenger, 1998:4). This theory has its appeal to the present study, as its emphasis is on learning from others in a particular practice. Indeed, the atmosphere in any PME institution is unique: the organisation is created to prepare personnel for a certain vocation in the military. Unlike other civilian institutions, where the end product of their

education system may end in any scope of the job market, the higher military education institutions have a designated client, the Services. It provides military education institution with a fix and decided outlook on its future practice. As a professional, the goal of military education is to produce well-educated officers, as there are concepts of practices that officer cadets must master to identify themselves as a part of the group. According to Wenger;

“Such concept of practice includes both the explicit and the tacit. It includes what is said and what is left unsaid; what is represented and what is assumed. It includes the language, tools, documents, images, symbols, well-defined roles, specified criteria, codified procedures, regulations, and contracts that various practices make explicit for a variety of purposes. Whereas, it also includes all the implicit relations, tacit conventions, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, recognizable intuitions, specific perceptions, and well-tuned sensitivities, embodied understandings, underlying assumptions, and shared worldviews. Most of this may never be articulated, yet, they are unmistakable signs of membership in communities of practice and are crucial to the success of their enterprises” (1998:47).

As a point of departure, the military can be characterised as a practice that highlights the “communal character of life in uniform”, “bureaucratic character of military life” (241) and the “compliance with rules, the acceptance of orders and authority, and the way, in which organization deals with disobedience through overt punishment” (Soeters, Winslow & Weibull, 2006:240-242). These three abstract social aspects of the military are necessary to gain *membership* in the military practice. The research claims that the learning process of becoming a soldier and an officer taking place at a higher military education institution is not always mechanised, as some features are learnt through



informal interactions with superiors, peers and subordinates. Therefore, by identifying these unwritten aspects of soldiering, the research endeavour may be useful in recognizing valuable learning experiences in enhancing the MOE.

Putting his “reflection in action” for professionals, Schön (1983) cunningly portrayed the downfall between the academic worlds with the reality of ‘professionals’. He argued that much of the knowledge being taught in many respective schools of knowledge – be it in medicine, architectural, or engineering – are somehow disconnected with the real world. According to Schön, this is due to these higher learning institutions’ bewildering tradition to become “science-based, technical practice” and discard the craft and the artistry of critical practitioner. Hence, this situation has created professionals who face problems manoeuvring their careers, where, even the most successful practitioners are experiencing difficulties to explain how they operate. He also problematized the conflict faced by the professionals regarding decision-making, interpersonal communication, and conflict resolution when he found out that no single theory can assist him to solve this problem.

By keeping it in mind, Schön then elaborated through different professions, how the practitioner can “reflect in action,” whereby problems are no longer restricted to only one fixed solution. Instead, the problem is now “framed” and seen as a unique opportunity that can lead to a discovery. According to Schön;

“When a practitioner becomes aware of his frames, he also becomes aware of the possibility of alternative ways of framing the reality of his practice. He takes note of the values and norms to which he has given priority, and those he has given less importance, or left out of account altogether” (1983:310).

By doing so, an effective reflective professional separates himself from an academic who “teaches” the theories and tools of professional activity that may have little significance

in the real world situation. In other words, a real reflective professional is a researcher in a situation called “knowledge-in-practice”.

In their article *‘The Reflective Military Practitioner’: How Military Professionals Think in Action*, Paparone & Reed (2008) coined the term “reflective military practitioner” and described the development of the Army’s professional knowledge by using Kolb’s four forms of knowledge: *divergent*, *accommodative*, *convergent*, and *assimilative*. Paparone & Reed deduced that in the US Army, *Divergent Knowledge* “is gained from reflective observations of experiences by participants who come from assorted disciplines, professions, and occupations” despite their different roles, ethics and values in order to solve a problem, whereby “old knowledge is no longer sufficient” (2008:67). The shared knowledge then creates accommodative knowledge that “entertains new assumptions and beliefs on a broader scale” by combining existing knowledge with the action research. However, at this stage, it is important for the military professional to experiment with “highly complex and unique situations” in order to “frame or make sense of the COE” (2008:68). After the framed knowledge starts making sense and is shared with the other members, it becomes convergent knowledge; whereby “highly abstract concepts transform into realisable knowledge goals and objectives that can be institutionalized as a technical comprehension” (2008:68). Now, the knowledge would be known as assimilative knowledge “after it gets transformed into the institutionalized technology; for example, in the form of records, rules, doctrine, textbooks, approved lessons learned, programs of instruction, and other structures that begin to modify roles, norms, and values within the community” (2008:68). Realising the manner of how knowledge is created in the military profession and the obstacles faced by a professional military professional, Paparone & Reed introduced “stewardship” whereby a military professional responsibility is no longer restricted to completing missions, “but also propelling the entrusted profession to new heights by setting conditions for the forms of knowledge outlined above to work eclectically, simultaneously, and without

encumbrance” (2008:73). This approach provides prospects “to experiment and fail” through “high-quality collaborative inquiry into different knowledge.” As claimed by Paparone & Reed, the approach can result in a more “thoughtful, open, and honest feedback” among professionals. Paparone & Reed further explained that a steward:

“...appreciates an uncertain nature of divergent knowledge and the need to curtail pre-emptive and hierarchical style decision-making, where it is not warranted. Stewards learn to defer to and encourage those professional knowledge explorers who have the potential to be the artful framers of a transformed paradigm. The steward’s role is to help in setting conditions for an action research along with the other professionals in an absence of clarity, accuracy, and precision so that it becomes appealing to the technically rational mind-set. Under right conditions, the professional practice of action research occurs naturally in the field during strategy sessions, operations, training, and educational opportunities. Action research, we argue, is essential to all levels for adaptation and survival in the COE” (2008:73-74).

For the matters significant to the present study, Paparone & Reed’s idea of ‘reflective military practitioner’ resonates with Schön’s “knowledge-in-practice”. As cadets spend their time and ‘learn’ how to become a soldier and later, an officer, some form of ‘reflection’ must happen to allow the needed ontological shifts to happen thus, changing the officer cadets’ worldview and identity.

One way to join this community of practice is to reflect in action while going through a ‘rite of passage’ or an initiation phase (Gennep, 1960). According to Johnson (2011), the central of this initiation rites is the subject’s change in identity through “the death of one identity and the rebirth of another” or through these three phases: *separation*, *transition (liminality)*, and *incorporation*. The separation phase involves

parting from the person's or group's previous status/identity. The second phase, the transition phase, is the liminal phase, where the person is neither who he/she had been nor who he/she is. Lastly, in the incorporation phase, the person assimilates into his new identity. McNamara et al. (2002) mentioned that each phase is marked by ritual ceremonies that “convey to the participants the nature of the process that is transforming them” (863). Barton (2007) further explained that an outcome of making a ‘crossing’ inevitably causes a “social change and gaining of new skills, abilities, status and wisdom” (339). During the transition phase of the rite of passage individuals form a unique relationship with the other initiates. This relationship makes these initiates into *communitas*, a group of people who “jointly undergo a ritual transition through which they can “experience an intense sense of intimacy and equality, which can be spontaneous, immediate, and concrete” (Johnson, 2011:201).

#### **2.3.4 The Professional Soldier**

Another realm of interest covered by the present research is officership or the professionalism of being an officer, which separates the military officers of today's world from the warriors of a previous age. On this subject, the research turned the two well-known works in military sociology: *The Professional Soldier* by Morris Janowitz (1960) and *The Soldier and the State* by Samuel P. Huntington (1957). Even though critics may argue that the reference to these works have now become outdated and flawed by today's standards, both works still possess a viable voice over the nature of military professionalism especially on the concepts of officership. Both writers' comprehension over officer professionalism can be seen as the ‘jewels’ in officer cadets' education. These ‘jewels’ are introduced through the MOE and:

“... they leave deep and lasting impressions. Although attendance at a service academy is not universal for generals and admirals, the academies set the

standards of behaviour for the whole military profession. They are the source of pervasive 'like-mindedness' about military honour and for the sense of fraternity, which prevails among military men" (Janowitz, 1960:127).

As a primary objective of this research is to find the relevant 'like-minded' concepts in becoming a military officer, the theories proved to be significant in identifying the 'rite of passage' and 'ways of thinking and practicing' in the military domain. On the same note, the theories also cover the civil-military relationship, as an important sphere where the 'totalizing effect' may grant a learner, a change of 'status for acquiring new knowledge' (Meyer & Land, 2006:22-23) in order to enter a community of practice. In other words, these works provide insight into the research of how 'an officer' is defined by 'the people from outside'.

However, it is important for the research to mention that the term *Officership* expressed here does not only carry an elitist hierarchy in the military but also its duties and roles. Huntington (1957) outlined the three important concepts, which it is claimed as important to be grasped by the cadet officers in order to make the shift to becoming an officer: (1) the expertise of officership, (2) the responsibility of officership, and (3) the corporate character of officership. The research argued that these concepts are central to what separates a normal soldier from an officer, thus any difficulty in crossing the concepts may leave a cadet officer to be in the state of liminality.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a review of relevant available literature for military officers' education significant to the present research. At the beginning of the chapter, a historical overview of how the curriculum was influenced by the technological advances and lessons learned from the war. The review then discussed the construct of MOE education system by discussing its form and function and the aim of such education. Furthermore, the chapter also presented the theoretical

framework for the present research that was used to frame the research and set about as a guide to be used during the stage of analysis. Moreover, the chapter reasoned on the gap in the study of military officers' education, which can be enriched with the use of threshold concepts in a research study.

The following chapter, Chapter III, discusses the methodological aspect of the research by presenting the research method, design, and procedure.

# Chapter III

## Methodology

*Ambition should be made of sterner stuff –  
William Shakespeare (Julius Caesar)*

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study that was conducted at two military institutions. In this chapter, the application of the phenomenographic approach to the method is first explained. It is followed by a discussion of the rationale for the selected research methodology and a discussion of the study's specific methods including details of the design of the study, data collection, analysis, and procedures to ensure the credibility and ethical issues associated with the study.

### 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1.1 Interpretivism as a Paradigm

In essence, this is qualitative research that adopts interpretivism as its paradigm that looks for understandings of the world by interpreting 'human actions in context' (Gaskins, 1982; Williams, 2000; Primus, 2009; Hay, 2011; Lehman, 2011). According to Goldkuhl (2012), the core idea of interpretivism is to work with these 'human actions in context', "to acknowledge their existence, to reconstruct them, and to understand them". In other words, to understand people, the researcher must study them in their natural context and interpret the subjective meanings to 'explain' the significance of their activities (Merten, 2005; Hay, 2011; Goldkuhl, 2012). Walsham, (1995) argues in his paper that the development of interpretivism is due to the growing critique of positivism in social sciences. He explained that while positivism considers that there is a standard pattern in

human activity, interpretivism represents the 'non-positivism' where individual's understanding of an activity depends on the culture they live in, what they do, when and how they do it (Walsham, 1995; Hay, 2011; Goldkuhl, 2012).

This paradigm affects the research methodologically, as the approach requires the research to adopt a method that enables the researcher to develop an appropriate combination between research method and the research analysis that has a concern in finding meaning by analysing human behaviour in "action-in-context" (Gaskins, 1982:316). For that, interpretivism requires the interpretation of human action to be carried out through the eyes of the actors doing the acting using methods such as unstructured interviews or participant observation (Gaskins, 1982; Williams, 2000; Primus, 2009; Hay, 2011; Lehman, 2011). As an effect, the study will be able to seek complex and multifaceted experiences in different ways as each participant will have their own, often very different, reasons for acting in the world.

### **3.1.2 Phenomenography Research**

The main goal of the present study is to find out the ontological shifts and the essential concepts in the training and education of cadet officers. Apart from that, the study endeavoured to explore the difficult experiences that affect cadets' progression to becoming officers. Having all these proves to be a challenge as the process of collecting 'experiences' is a complicated and complex process for both the researcher and those included as the respondents in this study. One reason for this is the situation where a person's evaluation of certain experiences would be different. On the other hand, the experience and the way they were remembered may transpire differently after a certain period of time. Nevertheless, the situation does not mean that the condition is not researchable, as the researcher would still be able to access the experiences through some empirical method.



This challenge was then realised in the research by employing Phenomenography as the research methodology. Phenomenography began as an experiment with the first-year university students at Gothenburg University, Sweden by Ference Marton and his colleagues who intended to explore different levels of understanding (Entwistle, 1997:127). In one of his papers, Marton described Phenomenography as “a research method for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them” (1986:31). In other words, this method does not especially emphasize the individuals’ experience, but focuses on describing the collective meaning and variations in meaning related to people’s experience of a phenomenon (Säljö, 1997; Marshall, Summers, & Woolnough, 1999; Bradbeer, Healey & Kneale, 2004; Schröder, & Ahlström, 2004; Lindquist et. al., 2006; Dearnley & Matthew, 2007; Stefani & Tsaparlis, 2009; Skär, 2010; Paakkari, Tynjälä, & Kannas, 2010; Conwill, 2012; Stenfors-Hayes, Hult & Dahlgren, 2013). According to Säljö (1997), the prime interest of Phenomenography is in finding and defining the “variation in ways of experiencing reality” through *categories of description* – a “way of describing a way of experiencing something” (175). Thus, adopting Phenomenography as an approach to this study allowed the interaction between the students, military trainers and those policymakers that have influence over “the content of learning the material, and the overall learning environment” (Entwistle, 1997:129).

Frequently phenomenography is confused with Phenomenology. **Table 3** presents the differences between these two empirical research approaches.

Phenomenography	Phenomenology
<b>The aim is to describe variation in understanding from a perspective that views ways of experiencing phenomena as closed but not finite.</b>	The aim is to clarify experiential foundations in the form of a singular essence.
<b>An emphasis on collective meaning.</b>	An emphasis on individual experience.
<b>A second-order perspective in which experience remains at the descriptive level of participants' understanding and research is presented in a distinctive, empirical manner.</b>	A nominal first-order perspective that engages in the psychological reduction of experience.
<b>Analysis leads to the identification of conceptions and outcome space.</b>	Analysis leads to the identification of meaning units.

**Table 3.1: The relationship between Phenomenography and Phenomenology**

Source: Barnard, McCosker & Gerber (1999)

An interesting point in this table is that Phenomenography places emphasis on the second order perspective, where the “first order perspective involves a researcher making statements about phenomena in the world”, while the “second order perspective involves a researcher making statements about other peoples’ experiences of the world, attempting to see the world through the eyes of people experiencing it” (Cope, 2004:7; Marton, 1981:177-178). In other words, the approach seeks to discover the “from-the-inside” perspective that sought to describe the world as the learner experiences it (Richardson, 1999:57). Furthermore, Marton explained in his paper that;

There are two related reasons for arguing in favour of the formulation of questions of the alternative, second-order kind. Firstly- and most obviously – the

author needs to consider that to find out the different ways in which people experience, interpret, understand, apprehend, perceive or conceptualize various aspects of reality is sufficiently interesting in itself, not least because of the pedagogical potentiality and necessity of the field of knowledge to be formed. Secondly, the descriptions that were articulated from the second-order perspective were free in the sense that they cannot be derived from the descriptions postulated from the first-order perspective. This means that if the author is interested in (to return to our example) how people think about school success, then he has to investigate this serious problem because the answer cannot be derived either from what we know (or will find out in the future) about the general properties of the human mind, or from what is known about the school system, or even from the combination of what is known about both (1981:178).

An introduction of such method provides researchers with the new ways of looking into the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is due to this reason that Phenomenography, as a method, in a way complements the threshold concept as;

...different students can understand one and the same text, or indeed one and the same concept, in several different ways. However, each of them does not understand it in their own unique ways; rather, a set of qualitatively different ways of understanding can be arrived at which, there is an internal logic with respect to the intended meaning of the text. This has become a corner-stone of Phenomenography research. Secondly, there are several qualitatively different ways in which students go about, or approach, the tasks of learning, namely, a *deep approach*, which is distinguished by a search for meaning in the text and a *surface approach*, which focuses instead on the words comprising the text. The third insight was into the relation between approaches and outcomes: students

who adopted a deep approach achieved overwhelmingly superior understanding of the message of the text and also retained information better than their surface studying colleagues (Booth, 1997:136).

In this way, using the method to identify these surface and deep approaches would benefit the study in identifying the learners' approaches to learning. Furthermore, scrutiny over the experiences may also unveil some troublesome knowledge that hinders transformation. This is because;

From a phenomenographical perspective, learning is shifting from not being able to do something to being able to do it, as a result of some experience. The term "being able to do something" can be interpreted widely—for example, like being able to perform a concrete task such as ride a bicycle; or apply a procedure to a sort of problem, such as using book-keeping procedures to investigate a company's finances; or see something in a particular way, such as famine as a political problem as well as, an agricultural one. The experience is necessarily a learning experience, whether it is of one falling off a bicycle and being helped by an older sister to keep balance, or reading about and discussing the problems of the underdeveloped world. The sort of learning that phenomenographic research has mostly been concerned with—and the one with which the author is restricted to follow here—is of the latter type—coming to see something in a certain way as a result of undertaking learning tasks that are met in educational settings (Booth, 1997:136).

As, the research endeavoured to find out the concepts in becoming an officer; the method would not only help to reveal the experiences of learning of the recently studying cadets but also the former cadets who are now officers and may reflect on the matter. Thus, it

provided the research with a possibility of variation in ways of experiencing a phenomenon and opened the way to a possibility for change by considering that variation. People can interpret the same events and situations in many different ways (even if we often feel that our own way is the only reasonable one). Phenomenography provides a way to investigate these differences to facilitate improved understanding and learning (Åkerlind, 2005:322).

### **3.1.3 Application of Phenomenography in the study**

It is crucial to point out how the epistemological aspect of Phenomenography was observed in the present research. This research study is a complicated undertaking as it tries to explore and identify the transformations once they have happened after going through the curriculum. According to Walsham (1995), such endeavour requires difficult task of “accessing other people's interpretations, filtering them through their own conceptual apparatus, and feeding a version of events back to others, including both their interviewees and other audiences in some cases” (77). To do so, the author was required to talk with people and engaged in a conversation about their ‘stuck places’ and their feelings about it. Such engagement would be very hard as the institution which the author was interested in is a powerful institution where being ‘weak’ is an undesirable trait. For this reason, the present research did not conform to the classic typology of Phenomenography research. Instead, the Phenomenographic approach was used to gain participants’ views of the experiences and combining it with threshold concepts as a lens to analyse and understand the data. In other words, the research was more focussed on getting to know the ‘nature of the transformation’ rather than knowing the personal accounts of experiences. Despite presenting the variation of individual experiences, this thesis aimed to represent an outcome space and conceptual transformation.

For the purpose of collecting primary data for the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted at two military institutions in Europe. According to Healey-

Etten and Sharp (2010), in-depth interviews allow researchers to discover the respondents' "subjective experiences, meaning-making, accounting processes, and unspoken assumptions about life and the social world in general" (157). Furthermore, in-depth interviews can provide crucial information on "reported behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs, and contribute to a thorough understanding of research participants' perspectives or experiences" (Dushku, 2000:763). As the study had adopted a Phenomenographic approach, the process of data collection aimed "to capture the utterances of the participants" where "there is no immersion in the culture of the researcher as in ethnography" (Cope, 2004:7). The interviews were audiotaped digitally and were then transcribed verbatim and being put at the centre of the analysis. According to Åkerlind (2005), "the set of categories or meanings that result from the analysis are not determined in advance, but 'emerge' from the data, in a relationship with the researcher" (323). An explanation was provided by Säljö (1997), who reasoned that Phenomenographic interviews;

"...should be grounded in data that account for life world events in non-institutionalised languages. The phenomenologist is not interested in people's analyses of whatever they encounter (which is what scientific concepts are good for), s/he focusses on experiences and generates data expressed in the language(s) characteristic of life world projects" (187).

Table 3.1 shows that even though, the aim of Phenomenography is to describe variation in understanding the analysis, this study did not look at one personal experience to another experience, but rather emphasised on the collective meaning of experiences. Furthermore, these experiences were not assessed independently but supplemented by the institutions' official documents (i.e. curriculum structure, course content, evaluation

forms, monuments and symbol) and personal observation that helped to interpret the phenomena under study (Walsham, 2006).

### **3.1.4 Positionality: Insider-Outsider Role**

There was also an issue of how the author positioned himself during the process of data collection. According to Dwyer & Buckle (2009), qualitative researchers are not separated from the study of the data collected from individual voices are not lost in a pool of numbers. Instead:

“We carry these individuals with us as we work with the transcripts. The words, representing experiences, are clear and lasting. We cannot retreat to a distant “researcher” role. Just as our personhood affects the analysis, so, too, the analysis affects our personhood” (61).

However, the quality of interpretation can be impacted due to the stance adopted by the researcher, thus affecting the findings of the research as a result of adopting different research styles that embody different conceptions of the relationship (Elliott, 1988; Ritchie et. al. 2009). Wegener (2014) argued that the researcher can obtain valuable information about the field under study by shifting his/her role to an insider-outsider position as an analytical point of departure (154). In addition, the researcher’s position while conducting this research must be clearly explained as “the biographical journeys of researchers greatly influence their values, their research questions, and the knowledge they construct” (Court & Abbas, 2013:480).

Dwyer & Buckle, (2009) explained that an insider refers to a researcher who conducts research with a population of which they are also a member, while an outsider is “a researcher who does not have any intimate knowledge of the group being

researched, prior to entry into the group” (Wegener, 2014:154). However, despite the clear definition of both, these two positions often turn out to be much more complex as:

“... [they] were not definitive concepts that provided prescriptions of what to see, but sensitising concepts that guided my gaze during fieldwork and the subsequent analysis of my data” (Wegener, 2014:154).

For this research, the author is occupying a position that Elliot (1988) described as “an insider as a *self-reflective practitioner* and an outsider as a *critical theorist*” (161). It is because the author was a language teacher at an MOE institution in his home country before commencing his study at Ph.D. level. However, despite this position as an insider at the institution, his lack of knowledge about military education or professional military education is evident as his official job description only entailed him to teach the academic subject without much involvement with the cadet’s ‘military stuff’. Having occupied this space, he felt to have a sense of familiarity that may lead to the “recycling of dominant assumptions” while bringing in, “a freshness of perspective” (Kelly, 2014:247). In addition, the insider-outsider role enabled the author to understand the present and former cadets’ experience, enabled reflexive interpretation of data rich with personal interaction, culture, emotion and symbolism, and enabled a detached description of their experience for others (Barton, 2007:340).

The inside identity of the author became obvious when he attempted to contact the institutions to be included in the research. The research was introduced to those institutions, and they were invited to participate by highlighting author’s position and role at his very own institution. As a result, positive feedback was received from the two institutions who agreed to participate in it and delivered their best to help with this research. Moreover, the author was perceived as an insider, which helped him with the process of gaining trust and consent by the participants during the interview session. As



an example, the author introduced himself as a member of an MOE institution in each session, which indeed had a positive impact on the participants whom he observed to be more open and hence provided, a greater depth to the gathered data (Bartunek & Louis, 1996; Walsham, 2006; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kelly, 2014). According to Dwyer & Buckle (2009), being seen as “one of us” led the group to create a level of trust and openness that would be unlikely if I am ‘just another researcher doing research’. Furthermore, such rapport with the study group resulted in greater reliability in data interpretation because of a “shared outlook or knowledge” that author had with the group (O’Connor, 2004:169). Webster & John, (2010) explained in their paper that:

“The truth [about a] claim is validated if it wins the consent of the group to which it is addressed. In critical research methodology, the validation of truth claims through consent of the group is at the forefront. Thus, the claims are valid and accepted as true only if there is the consensus from the cultural group to whom the claim is made. Thus, what becomes important here, rather than the notion of truth per se, are the conditions under which truth claims are made and either validated or not, within and between groups and the reasons why consensus is either reached or not reached” (178).

Additionally, it was also argued by the author that he was concurrently an outsider during interview sessions at the two institutions. He saw himself as an outside researcher, coming from the East with different “race and gender, culture, values and social background, origin and language, political identity, and familiarity with and knowledge” (Kelly, 2014), who had come to the West to conduct research at MOE institutions in two European countries. It is possible to say he occupied the role of a ‘stranger’ thus making him an ‘outsider’. Parker Webster & John (2010) expressed their concern that:

“...insiders may have a disadvantage, termed ‘over-rapport’ when the researcher comes to identify closely with the group being studied. In other words, this close identification may cause the researcher to miss those things that are taken for granted because s/he is unable to distance herself from the accounts of those being studied” (182).

For this reason, he also occupied the position as *critical theorist* that used threshold concepts as a lens to:

(a) provide social practitioners with explanations of ways in which their self-understandings are distorted by the ideological structures that function to maintain coercive control over their activities by powerful interests in the society;

(b) organise the processes of enlightenment through which 'the oppressed' reflect about such explanations under conditions of free and open dialogue; and

(c) facilitate an emancipatory discourse among 'the oppressed' about political strategies for overcoming unjust constraints on their social practices. (Elliott, 1988:161).

Coming from a different institution, he was able to identify the differences and associate it more efficiently in understanding how these elements could affect the overall experience in becoming an officer.

## 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

### 3.2.1.1 Choice of Institution

One of the most important parts of the research undertaking was to determine and find interested institution for the research. It was an important aspect of the research for many reasons. First of all, the institution to be included in the research must provide both academic and military training at the same time. For general information, the military would have different channels to train their officers. The first channel would be the one of interest for the present study, where the overall emphasis of the curriculum is the combination of the 'education' and the 'training' parts of an officer. On the other hand, the second channel gives more emphasis on the 'training' part, where it trains the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). It is usually carried out by the staff colleges, one stark difference between the two institutions is the absence of 'academic' requirement in the course of the training period.

Secondly, as the research involved military institution, the opportunity to gain access and do research at such institution was considerably hard. As the military force of any country stands as an organisation that guarantees the nation's safety, independence and sovereignty, which are the main aspects of the country's forces and are considered as sensitive to be shared with the outside people. For this very reason, the names of the institutions and the names of the interviewees are not revealed except for their ranks and files. It was very crucial not only to guarantee anonymity but also as an assurance for those individuals to speak without any fear that their views or comments can be traced back to them.

In addition, the research could face rejection of entry from military institutions if it had asked to evaluate their curriculum, teaching and learning pedagogy, methodology and methods of assessment. This had restricted the researcher's opportunity to do a thorough enquiry into military officers' education curriculum. As has been mentioned

before on p. 95, these institutions cater for the training and education of future officers of their country and guarantee its independence, sovereignty and security. As a result, investigating such training and education is extremely sensitive and confidential, thus making access to the institution much harder. Furthermore, the researcher's Asian Muslim background could be considered as a security risk by these institutions, thus making entry virtually impossible due to that negative effect of stereotypes and security clearance procedures that these institutions must adhere to.

Based on these three factors, the author wrote permission letters to seven institutions from which only three institutions responded, and two of them responded positively towards the application while, the other one rejected the request. Despite showing interest towards the research, the feedback also suggests that the institutions guard their officers' training method as it is considered as a delicate matter to a country.

#### **3.2.1.2 Choice of Participants**

For the study, the population included was limited to the present officials and current cadets of the said institutions. Furthermore, the respondents should be representative of the institution to which they belong. As a result, the cohort was divided into the three groups according to roles and responsibilities at their respective institution. Due to the nature of the institutions under study, the author did not have the liberty to pick and choose his own participants as the appointed liaison officers recruited them. Despite this, during the selection of the participants, he managed to maintain an active contact with these liaison officers and provided the criteria of respondents required for the research. Criteria for selecting the participants were as follows:

##### **a. Policymakers**

Policymakers are those who set the plan tailored by the government. Furthermore, those included in this group were those whose actions and opinions

had a substantial influence on the overall running and the course of engagement at the institution. The persons of interest were officially appointed to lead the organisation with a full mandate to talk on behalf of the institution. In addition, a higher ranking officer who had been appointed to fill internal leadership roles in the institution also falls into this category. It may include those appointed as Course Co-ordinator, Commandant, and other leadership roles.

#### **b. Teachers, Lecturers and Trainers**

Teachers and lecturers are those who are responsible for teaching particular course/subject at an institution. In other words, those who fit into this category are those responsible towards the cadets. Meanwhile, trainers are those involved with the military training part of the officer education at their respective institutions. Through communication with the liaison officers from both institutions, all, except three of whom are civilian, had obtained their tertiary education and military training from the same institution under study.

#### **c. Officer cadets**

Officer cadets are current students at both institutions. For this cohort, the officer cadets were selected according to their year of intake; the First Year, Second Year, and the Third Year. For this study, those chosen to be included in this study were decided in advance prior to the data collection period by the liaison officers.

Overall, the research managed to carry out in-depth semi-structured interviews with;

Type/Coding	Institution A ( <i>Ia</i> )	Institution B ( <i>Ib</i> )	Total
<b>Policymakers</b> Coding: <i>PM</i>	2	5	7
<b>Teachers, Lecturers and Trainers</b> Coding: <i>MT</i>	14	10	24
<b>Cadets (Group Interview)</b> Coding: <i>S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7</i>	First Year (Y1): 6 Second Year(Y2): 6 Third Year(Y3): 4	First Yea(Y1): 6 Third Year(Y2): 7	29

**Table 3.2: Participants and Coding**

- i. Seven (n=7) Policymakers;
- ii. Twenty-four (n=24) Teachers, lecturers and trainers; and
- iii. Six group interview sessions with twenty-seven (n=29) cadets that represent the first, second and third-year cadets from each institution.

### 3.2.1.3 Design of Questions

In Phenomenographic studies, the designing a set of questions is crucial to establish a variation of experiencing a phenomenon. According to Entwistle (1997);

“Most of the Phenomenographic studies in higher education have derived their data from interviews in which staff or students were invited to describe their actions and reflect on their experiences. It is essential that the questions must be posed in a way which allows the students to account for their actions within their own frame of references, rather than one imposed by the researcher. It is also

better to move in the questioning, from actions to experience, and from concrete to abstract" (132).

Therefore, the designing of questions used for the semi-structured interviews in the research followed the guidelines provided by Cousins (2008) in her book, *Researching Learning in Higher Education*". In her book, Cousins (2008) explained that there are typically three research questions which threshold concept research explores which are;

- a) What do academics consider to be fundamental to a grasp of their subject?
- b) What do students find difficult to grasp?
- c) What curriculum design interventions can support mastery of these difficulties?

Cousin, (2008:205-206)

Following her guidance, the author came up with the three research questions as;

- a) What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and leaders at military higher education institution from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives?
- b) What conceptual transformation and ontological shifts are found as difficult to be grasped by the cadets?
- c) How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy to further inform the development of professional military education?

Based on these three research questions, the author then developed the semi-structured interview questions for each cohort. The representation and distribution of the questions being used in the research can be found in **Appendix D**. The main advantage of approaching and discussing with each cohort is that it gets those involved with military education at the institution to put their thoughts together and “identify likely threshold concepts” within the curriculum (Cousin, 2008:206).

As, for the structure of the interviews, the author again referred to the suggestion presented by Cousins (2008), where she suggested that the conversation should begin with the participants naming “any concepts in their subject which are crucial to its mastery according to their thinking and which are found as difficult by many students” (206). Based on the participants’ response, the author then framed the feedback and opened a dialog that discussed the following issues;

- i. Why are they fundamental to grasp any subject?
- ii. To what extent is mastery troublesome?
- iii. What misunderstandings do students characteristically exhibit?
- iv. Do students offer mimick understandings rather than real mastery?
- v. What is the relationship between the various threshold concepts?
- vi. How do they help to define disciplinary modes of reasoning and explanation?
- vii. In what ways, can mastery change the learner's relation to the subject?  
When does this mastery typically happen?
- viii. How do we typically teach these concepts?

(Cousins, 2008:207)



Having approached each session with these questions in mind really helped the author to gather a rich range of opinion provided by the policymakers, teachers and trainers, and also the present cadets themselves. Furthermore, such framework has also enabled him to “open up a dialogue with the staff in a discipline that appears, in the main, to be relatively under-theorized” (Cousin, 2008:207). A much deeper description and discussion over the interview sessions conducted in this study could be found in **Section 3.3 – Research Method.**

#### **3.2.1.4 Ethical Consideration**

As the data collection involves the participation of people, some ethical considerations must be met by the research before, during and after the data had been collected. It is important, not only to guarantee the integrity and the quality of the data found but also in assuring the confidentiality of those data. In her book, Lichtman (2013) outlined that ethics in research is very crucial, as it helps the researcher to maintain an objective eye to “do good and avoid evil” (51). Likewise, a proper following of the ethical guidelines was crucial which guided the author to keep away from any inappropriate behaviour that could be considered as misconduct. In doing so, he remained cautious by taking and weighing the options that he had before, during and after the interview process.

##### **a. Pre-Interview**

The first principle that governed the research at this stage was to evaluate the **Harm and Risk** factors involved in the research. It was ensured that those participating in the research “would not be involved in any situation, in which they might be harmed” (Lichtman, 2013:52). This has been ensured by the School of Education by laying out a policy that require researchers to receive ethical clearance from the school before any fieldwork is undertaken. The procedure dictates that the researcher must first submit an online ethics evaluation form together with the first year progression paper and the

materials included in the research i.e. the interview questions, informed consent form and others. In addition, an online evaluation form includes assessment of the harms and risks of the research. The requirement must be adhered to and submitted within a minimum of three months before fieldwork starts, and the research cannot be carried out before it receives the ethic committee's clearance. In a nutshell, this is a thorough and pragmatic approach by the University, not only to make sure that the research follows the needed procedures, but also to evaluate the material to be used in the research during the phase of data collection.

#### **b. Interview Process**

Moving to the next phase of the data collection procedure, it was ensured that the participants received and understood enough information about the research. Known as **Informed Consent**, this principle warrants that the participants of the research must be well-informed about the research they are about to partake in and would never be forced to participate (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lichtman, 2013). This easy and straightforward ethical value seems problematic as presenting adequate information and giving enough time to autonomous individuals to make a conscious decision whether or not to participate may not be conscious at all. In the paper, Corrigan (2003) highlighted by saying that this "*universal standard principle*" somehow overlooks the "*cultural context within which the process of consent*" is taking place (770). In other words, participants may – without even knowing themselves – participated in the research with a poor description or explanation of the research in the first instance. One main reason for this situation might be due to the restricted amount of time that the researcher had given in the first meeting with his or her respondent.

To ensure that this research meets ethical consideration, the author was in contact with the liaison officers from both institutions who identified suitable respondents for the individual interview and the focus-group sessions through e-mail

prior to attendance to the institution. It is with great caution that there is a probability that the people selected for the interviews were not participating 'consciously', but as an act of following and adhering to the official orders from those higher in command. Hence, the email addresses of each participant were acquired to avoid such condition, and they were personally written and informed regarding all relevant documentation of the research. In addition, the email also included a consent request form to confirm participants' voluntary participation in the research. Among others, the potential interviewee was also informed of his rights of not answering any question that he does not wish to answer, and that he may withdraw himself from the research. On arrival at the institution and meeting the participants, the author took more time to explain further about the research and asked about their consent to be included as a respondent in the research. After that, this process was then followed by the respondents signing the consent form and returning it back to the author as a proof of record. Overall, this approach proved to be a good strategy. On one aspect, it allowed the author to create ample time to clearly state and provide enough information to the prospective participants of the research. By communicating through emails, he was also able to answer a few questions regarding the research. Hence, this strategy was proved to be successful as it allowed the participants to exhibit a clear understanding of the objectives of the research and the purpose of the interview on the day of the interview.

The next ethical issue to be considered was the participants' **Confidentiality and Anonymity**. According to Litchman (2013);

Any individual participating in a research study has a reasonable expectation that privacy is guaranteed. Consequently, no identifying information about the individual should be revealed in written or other communication. Further, any

group or organisation participating in a research study has a reasonable expectation that its identity would not be revealed (52).

In addition, Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2014) defined 'confidentiality' as hiding all information regarding the participants. On the other hand, 'anonymity' does not only mean to keep the participants' identities as a secret but also conceal "what is said by the participants" from the others that may lead them to harm (Vainio, 2013:688).

In this research, the privacy and the anonymity of the institutions and the individuals included in this research was highly regarded, as the research dealt with military institutions where future officers are educated. Hence, there are some security issues, and certain information that may lead others to identify the institution has been deliberately removed. However, as for a point of reference, the institutions were named 'Institution A' and 'Institution B' respectively throughout the thesis. Moreover, a considerable amount of disclosure has also been taken out to hide the involvement of the institution from one another.

Additionally, the military personnel who participated in the research were also responsible for military tactics during operations and espionage task. Thus, it made concealing their identities the most important task. Moreover, due to the nature of such organisation, concealing and covering the identity of the individual whose comments were included in the analysis becomes more central. As per the nature and objective of the research, the participants had also shared very sensitive and personal information about themselves, their colleagues and also their organisations. As, Miles & Huberman (1994) argued in their book that sometimes, when the researcher promises confidentiality and anonymity, this agreement is broken when the research fails to conceal the identity of the person to the others within the same institution and setting (293). Considering this, all the respondents for this study were referred to as 'officers' or

'S1', 'S2' and so forth for the cadets. By doing so, the author managed to conceal the identities of those involved in this study.

The next ethical issue considered during the interview session was the **Dual Role and Over-Involvement** between the researcher and the participants. From an impressive interview of Allmark et al. (2009) on ethics, the author learned beforehand that how important it was for him to maintain an objectified role as an 'interviewer' during the session itself. In each session, he realised that he was always in danger of being the researcher and a teaching staff at such institution due to his professional teaching background at his own institution. Although this effect may have a minuscule impact on the interview, he was still cautious not to 'join in' the conversation and putting in his thoughts that would be considered as leading the participants' opinions during the in-depth interview.

Apart from that, the author remained aware of the danger of over-involvement with the participants that may impact the outcome of the study. For this, he maintained a safe distance from all the participants and kept a professional relationship with them. However, it should be admitted that the study had opened up an opportunity for the author to build up a friendship with some of the military personnel that were helpful towards the completion of this study. He considered it as a beneficial relationship as there are now research colleagues who can give input towards the present research. These people were also crucial regarding validating and revalidating the findings that were found from the data collected during the research.

Litchman (2013) described **Intrusiveness**, as the researcher's action of excessively intruding the participant's time, space and personal lives (54). To avoid this sort of sentiment from happening, the interview session was designed to last no more than one hour. Furthermore, as the institution is considered as a military training zone,

there were clearance issues regarding the author's visit at a certain location of the institution. During his visit at Institution A, for example, he had this very experience where the accompanying officer brought him to the wrong location for one of the interviews. This honest mistake created a *quarantined situation* for a period of time because the author did not receive clearance to stay at the location for a long time. He was asked to wait for the driver to pick him up who brought him back to lodging again. Hence, this event proved to be helpful in not only showing the sensitivity of that place but showed the importance of not crossing a certain boundary that may affect the research. Moreover, the management of both institutions also provided a permanent venue for almost all of the interview sessions. It proved to be very helpful for the study in terms of having a 'neutral' surrounding that allowed the participants to feel ease and feel comfortable to share their thoughts.

The last ethical issue considered throughout the data collection process was on the **Research integrity and quality**. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), it is important for the study to be conducted carefully, thoughtfully and correctly and must meet certain standards (294). The author fulfilled these requirements by working closely with his supervising team that facilitated all the technical issues regarding the research instrument, method of enquiry and the way the data should be approached and analysed. Through proper guidance and coaching during this whole process, the author not only managed to guarantee the integrity and the quality of the findings but also avoided the research from "sloppy" work that may result in dishonest claims of validity. One of the most important parts of this process involved learning how to keep and stay neutral to the data without any internal influence due to own perception, the pre-conceived perception of the subject under study and author's bias. Moreover, it was also guaranteed that no attempt should be made that can affect participants' responses, discussions, or

explanations during a process of interview. According to Barnard, McCosker & Gerber (1999)

“The intention of the interviewer was to focus on the phenomenon as experienced by the interviewee and to foster a flexible interview structure, relaxed interpersonal relationship, and feeling of individual freedom. To achieve this goal of the Phenomenographic interview, the interviewer is required to adopt an accepting attitude, a relaxed (friendly) interview style, and a genuine interest in what the person has to say” (222).

These steps and measures that were taken in maintaining the integrity of the research and the quality are discussed further in **Section 3.3**.

### **c. Post Interview**

After the completion of the process of collecting data, the author then encountered another ethical issue during the analysis period and the write-up of the findings. The first one was **Data interpretation**, which required an accurate analysis of the data by avoiding “misstatements, misinterpretations or fraudulent analysis” (Litchman, 2013:55; Christiansen, 2011:66). In other words, it is critical for the author to be wary towards his prejudice and remain unbiased, as it may affect the interpretation of the data. It must be made sure during the process to represent what researcher sees and hears from the collected real data rather than presenting what he feels about it. Also, there is an issue of whether the analysis in itself is reliable or not. Being a new researcher who was performing a Phenomenographic Study for the first time, this aspect of the analysis was most troublesome for the author, as the whole research was based on the reliability of the results. As a step to do so, the supervising team also offered assistance to the author by asking him to submit ten transcribed interview sessions to them. Based on the ten

submitted transcripts, the supervising team and author came up with an initial analysis of it and the findings were then compared and discussed. Such approach during the phase of analysis helped a lot in understanding the constraints, the author was working under and understanding the way of approaching and extracting valuable information from the text. Indeed, the help and guidance provided by the supervising team were highly regarded and appreciated as their input helped greatly in understanding the task at hand. The approach for the analysis is further explained in Section **3.4.2** in this chapter.

The second important ethical part during this phase was the **use of the results** obtained through the present research. There were two important dimensions to this ethics, where the first one dealt with the way the data will be kept and how long the data can be accessed. On the same note, the second dimension for this ethical value dealt with *how* and *what* sort of findings must be shared with the others. For the first one, the University had laid out a rule that for how long the author has a right to keep the dataset. This rule is related to the validity of the data, as, the findings may no longer be valid after a certain period of time. On the other hand, the second dimension required a close evaluation and consideration by the researcher to make sure that the data being used and presented to others would not harm the participants in any way. Furthermore, this ethic dictates the need to present the findings correctly without over representing or misinterpreting the result. Inability to do so might have a negative impact, not only on the whole make-up of the study but also may have an unwanted impact on the participants.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **3.3.1 The Interview**

In each session, the interview protocol was brought by the author as a guide, and it was continuously consulted throughout the meetings. The following sections explain the experiences of the author in conducting interviews, both individual and the focus groups.



Before proceeding further into the matter at hand, there is an important issue that need to be clarified. Being a researcher and as an 'outsider', it was very important for the author to keep a clear mind and to let the data speak rather than making manipulation to support his own biased claim.

Moreover, it proved to be a very challenging task for the author to disagree with his experiences and opinions as he had also been a staff member in a defence university in his own country for more than six years. During these years, he was accustomed to the system and the environment and had created his perception and understanding of the matter under study. Furthermore, as Phenomenographic Study deals with the 'experiences' of the phenomenon being investigated, there was always a danger that the participants may be forced to say something that "author was looking for", which may, in turn, affect the findings of the research. As mentioned earlier, it was due to this reason that the interview protocol and guide were brought in each of the session as a point of reference, not only to guide how to conduct the session but also as a reminder to be objective throughout the process. In addition, notes were extensively taken during each session by the author himself, which were then used as a reference to reflect on what he had learned from each interview session.

A good example of this practice was the author's experience being at Institution A. Having a long history of training officers for nearly three hundred years, Institution A is a well-established training and education institution for the country's future officers. After arriving there and being briefed by the institution's education officers, the author soon realised that all the officers and trainers were a direct result of the institution's education system. It opens up an opportunity to tap into their experiences being a cadet themselves and having a genuine 'transformation journey' in becoming an officer. Hence, it coincides with Richardson's (1999) idea to bring the interviewee to a state of "meta-awareness" to enable them to articulate their ideas by "breaking down or bypass the interviewee's defence structures of denial and resistance" (69). It was not an expected

finding at all but knowing this ‘fact’ had made up the mind of the author to come to the decision to add a few more questions that would tap into the officers’ very own experiences being educated and trained as an officer at the institution. This experience of conducting the interviews by discussing the two forms of the interview being used are discussed later in the section – *Individual Interviews* and *Group Interviews*.

#### ***a. Individual***

The author decided to conduct individual interviews because he did not think it would be feasible to conduct and gather the intended people that he would like to meet in a group. Cousins (2008:208) described this as similar to an ‘elite’ interview where the people that are chosen to meet would be the experts and the people having the authority of the subject being researched. This type of interview was found as more intimate as it provided the opportunity to meet the people that manage the institution and whose opinions highly influence the direction and the institution’s day-to-day business. In addition, he also had an opportunity to meet those who are responsible for the teaching and training of cadets at the respective institution.

The very first session that was conducted at Institution A began with a briefing by an education officer. The briefing lasted about forty-five minutes in which the institution’s background, history, the curriculum and training system was thoroughly explained. Guided by the interview protocol and the semi-structured interview questions that were prepared earlier, the officer had got into a very deep discussion about the officers’ education and training system at the institution. It was during this session that author realised that the only way that a person can become an officer in the country is through the institution. Reflecting on this finding, a few questions were added and altered that had initially been prepared for the cadets and added to the set of questions that were designed for the officers. These new questions are as follows:

- 1) I would like to know more about your own experience. How was your first day at the Academy?
- 2) What were the things you found shocking?
- 3) What sort of challenges that you had faced during the camp that you think if anyone else had gone through it successfully would not have any problem to become an officer?
- 4) What sort of adjustments do you have to make regarding your personal life to accommodate this new military lifestyle?
- 5) Based on your experiences, which one is more challenging... becoming a soldier or becoming an officer?
- 6) Does academic education during your time help to prepare you to become an officer?
- 7) How long do you think it will take for these cadets to learn and become a good officer?
- 8) How would you differentiate a good officer to a bad officer?

These rather new questions helped a lot to reflect further at the end of the day by shedding some interesting insights over the officers' education and training at such institution. The questions were further elaborated by asking: "Could you describe it/explain it a little further?", "Could you give an example of it?", "Why do you consider it to be important?" According to Paakkari, Tynjälä, & Kannas (2010), these follow-up questions play an important role in gaining a deeper understanding of the meanings revealed by the informants.

#### ***b. Focus Group***

According to Dushku (2000), focus group discussion or group interviewing constitutes another level of data gathering perspective on the research problem that may not be

accessible through individual interviewing (765). The choice to do a group interview with the cadets is more about getting the most number of participants that the author can have for the research. Furthermore, for the threshold concept study, students focus group interviews were conducted to identify troublesome knowledge for students and to determine what concept students think is important that facilitates their transformation (Loertscher et al., 2014). Since, the author was only allowed to be at the institutions for a certain limited time period, he had to utilise that time to its full to meet and gain insight from as many existing cadets as possible. However, this created another problem as, it must be first decided that how many people the author wanted to be in a group so as to maintain a healthy conversation. Moreover, there was another problem in deciding as to whom he wanted to meet. At this point, the author successfully managed to meet the cadets from first, second and third year in both institutions.

### **3.3.2 The Analysis**

#### **3.3.3.1 Transcription**

All interviews were recorded on a digital audio tape. In total, there were thirty-seven interview sessions, where seven were policymakers, twenty-four were the teachers and trainers while the other six were group interviews with the cadets. The author transcribed all of these recordings without any assistance from any outside professional transcriber. It helped him to maintain total control over the material and the data that he has as he did not have to reveal any of its content to anyone else.

While transcribing, he made the decision to type a verbatim transcription of the sessions which included the “ums”, “ahs”, “laughs”, and the pauses. It was important for him to transcribe accurately to reflect the emotions and emphases of the participants (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). As a self-check mechanism, each completed transcription was double checked. The first round aimed to convert an audio form into a written form. The second round of transcription was a step further in identifying the “hard spots”, where

the spoken words were not clear due to certain slangs or inaudible voices of the interviewee. The last round of transcription aimed to final check the completed version of the transcription and to check that the transcription was verbatim. Overall, the approach of transcription had helped the author to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of what was said during the phase of analysis.

### **3.3.3.2 Analysis**

According to Cope (2004), phenomenographic data analysis “involves a researcher constituting a relationship with the data which acknowledges the variation in the data and the undeniable influence of the researcher’s prior knowledge of the phenomenon in the analysis process” (7). To do so, the Four Stages of Analysis described by Schröder & Ahlström (2004) in their paper was adopted which suited the present research study.

The four stages began with the reading of each transcribed interview several times to obtain an overall impression. According to Åkerlind (2005), this allows a researcher to “search for meaning, or variation in meaning, across interview transcripts and is then supplemented by a search for structural relationships between meanings” (324). This transcribed script was carefully listened to and read for at least three times by the author to establish the basic ideas and statements of the matter under study.

After establishing the basic ideas and statements, he moved on to the second phase, where each statement was labelled into specific themes. To make sure that the analysis at this phase is unbiased, a sample of ten interviews – five (5) from Institution A and another five (5) from Institution B – were selected at random and analysed by the author and the other two independent examiners. Each of them had to analyse the samples independently and discuss the findings thoroughly. It is important to note here that those two independent examiners were not involved in any part of the interviewing process; this increases the validity and reliability of the analysis process.

During this stage, the transcripts were read several times, one at a time to make sure that the author had not presented a biased result by reading earlier research findings, assuming pre-given theoretical structures or particular interpretations, and presupposing the investigator's personal knowledge and belief (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000:298). This process helped a lot in identifying and weighing the different views on the matter under study more freely. After the initial analysis was carried out, all the three analysts presented and discussed their findings. As a result, at this stage, it was concluded that:

- i. The responses gathered suggested that there were two ontological shifts in becoming an officer through the education system at the researched institutions.
- ii. The responses revealed the subjects' view on the curriculum and what the cadets must understand to transform themselves to become an officer.
- iii. There were some hardships in becoming an officer, where the responses indicated that certain concepts were just only myths.

After the three of them had come to an agreement with the preliminary study result and analysis, this process was further carried out with the rest of the data collected based on the consensus achieved through the discussion with the other supervising team.

In the third phase, deeper and new conceptions were compared to obtain an overall map of how these similarities and differences could be linked, and then were grouped into preliminary descriptive categories. These preliminary categories were then identified as the **Ontological Shifts** and the **Themes**. Hence, this led to the fourth and final phase, where the focus shifted from the relations between the conceptions to the relations between the preliminary descriptive categories. Through relations between the

whole and the parts, the eight descriptive categories emerged as the **Threshold Categories**. The representation of this analysis could be found in **Table 3.3**.

Ontological Shifts	Themes	Threshold Categories	Description
<b>Civilian to Soldier</b>	Soldiership  <i>(involves the acceptance of discipline and obedience, recognition of a framework of related ethics and values, loyalty to the unit (collective above individual needs) and a sense of obligation.)</i>	Preparedness to use legitimised violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Takes a certain mind-set to work in an environment that is stressful and dangerous</li> <li>2. Basic Military Skills: Shooting, reading maps, etc.</li> <li>3. To become an expert in certain skills i.e. shooting</li> </ol>
		<i>Esprit de Corps</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Willing to sacrifice own interest/personal interest for the group/organisation</li> <li>2. Living with other people in a small place</li> <li>3. To have cohesion among members in the unit</li> <li>4. To live in a group that have shared the same ethics, tradition and values</li> </ol>



		<p>Prompt and Unquestioned Execution of the Mission</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The completion of the mission is above all else</li> <li>2. Being prepared to work during peace-time and during military operation</li> <li>3. Obligation towards duty</li> <li>4. Authority is not questioned</li> <li>5. Discipline and regimentation</li> </ol>
		<p>Ascribing well to military ethics, tradition and values</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On duty 24/7</li> <li>2. Having a structured and regimented life</li> <li>3. Loyalty and commitment towards the organisation</li> <li>4. Sense of duty</li> <li>5. Being asked to do things that you do not like to do</li> </ol>
<p><b>Soldier to Officer</b></p>	<p>Officership <i>(Involves assuming the mantle of responsibility and acceptance of leadership role. Involves also a necessary psychological</i></p>	<p>Personal responsibility for execution of mission</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Going the extra mile to complete a task</li> <li>2. Taking initiative to plan, manage and execute the mission</li> <li>3. Committed towards the completion of the mission as a leader is at personal level</li> <li>4. To be responsible towards the outcome of a mission</li> </ol>

	<i>distancing from the troops and a preparedness to impose sanctions and punishment where necessary for mission completion / the greater good.)</i>	Obligation to put needs of troops before personal needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility towards own soldiers</li> <li>2. To put aside own interest and take in soldiers' interest as a priority</li> <li>3. Having and keeping an open mind towards the men's needs</li> <li>4. Empathy</li> <li>5. Taking care of their own soldiers</li> </ol>
		Exercise of leadership through swift decision-making and clear communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to assess problems through available information and to make the right course of action</li> <li>2. Able to plan necessary action in order to achieve the mission's goal</li> <li>3. Able to communicate clearly the plan with the subordinate</li> <li>4. Having a clear vision what they want to do</li> <li>5. Making the correct decision through clear judgement and certain decision-making process</li> </ol>

		Having the “power to command”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intellectuality is needed to become an officer</li> <li>2. Leadership skills for an officer</li> <li>3. Able to cope with different roles</li> <li>4. Living up the standards of being an officer</li> <li>5. Able to function during peace, operation and conflict</li> <li>6. To work under huge pressure</li> <li>7. Having a certain number of technical skills and being able to display them</li> <li>8. Having vision</li> <li>9. Know how the system works and exhibit the expertise</li> <li>10. Responsibility on ‘officership.’</li> </ol>
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**Table 3.3: The Analysis**

### 3.5 SUMMARY

In conclusion, the present study has utilised a form of Phenomenographic research approach as a way to form and design the present research, which enabled the process of collecting and analysing a considerable amount of interview data from the two institutions. This chapter has documented the process that was used in this study as fully as possible in order to demonstrate that the findings are credible and justifiable.

In the following chapter, Chapter IV, the first part of the findings is presented which shows the existence of the two ontological shifts – the Soldiership phase and the Officership phase. The presentation of findings for these ontological shifts are presented in Chapter V and VI. After that, Chapter VII introduces the evidence on troublesome knowledge while Chapter VIII discusses the significance of these findings.

## Chapter IV

### Going Through the Phases: From Civilian to Officer

*I am something from nothing*  
- Foo Fighters, Something from  
Nothing

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the first of four chapters presenting the findings of the research. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the research looked for the lived experiences of becoming an officer while seeking to understand the essence of those experiences. As the discussion of the thresholds continues in the following chapters, this chapter concentrates on the explanation of the two important phases or stages in becoming an officer found through the research.

To show the existence of such phases, descriptions of the relationships and variations of experienced were constructed to address and explore the policymakers, educators and military trainers' conception of being:

- a. A soldier; and
- b. An officer.

In establishing that there is such a stage in becoming an officer, the discussion first presents how the respondents define a soldier (Section 4.1) and an officer (Section 4.2). The discussion includes holistic views and reflections provided by the policymakers, current officers that serve as military trainers and academic staff. The discussion then moves on to discuss the ontological stages in

Section 4.3. However, as it was felt that the all-important ontological stage that entails the complex and complicated thresholds requires more attention; these shifts are explored further and discussed in Chapter V and VI.

The chapter begins by establishing that there is a shift of some sort from a civilian into a soldier. To do so, the following questions were asked;

- a. How would you define a soldier?
- b. Would there be any differences between a person who had been trained as a soldier and civilian?
- c. How would you define a military officer?
- d. Would you agree that there are differences between a soldier and military officer?

The following sections represent the responses which show prevalence of different concepts in becoming a soldier and an officer. These responses were grouped to form Phase I – Civilian to Soldier (Section 4.1); and Phase II – Soldier to Officer (Section 4.2). Phase I is defined as a period of time where a civilian is conditioned and trained to become a soldier while, Phase II is a period where the soldier is trained to become an officer. Despite being defined as ‘a phase’, the education processes for both phases are to be seen as related to one another and form the whole coherent structure for the MOE.

#### **4.1 PHASE I: CIVILIAN – SOLDIER**

As presented earlier in the review of the literature, the soldier – civilian phase is a crucial stage where the newly admitted cadets learn and accommodate military’s values, culture and ethics as a part of their new identities as officers. The analysis included here presents seven policymakers

(PM) and twenty-four military trainers and teachers (MT) from Institution A (Ia) and Institution B (Ib) who had reflected on the phase and their experiences in going through a system to become a soldier.

#### **a. Defining a soldier**

To further understand the phenomenon, it is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by being a soldier. From the response included in the analysis, it has been determined that soldiers are ‘well-trained professionals with a wide variety of means and capabilities for the use of deadly force and violence legally, especially during wars and armed conflict situation’. A policymaker from Institution A responded that a soldier is;

“...a person who is trained to fight as a member of a unit. So, he has to understand how the unit works, his position in the unit for him to do his job. A soldier is also mainly for war fighting, and he knows his place in the structure so to say. Therefore, he understands the people above him who give orders, and always fulfil those orders and accomplishes the mission” (PM2Ia).

Similarly, another policymaker from Institution B responded that a soldier; “can use force, be a victim of force for the international and national interest” (PM3Ib), by performing these three roles; “1) he’s a skilful expert in what he does; 2) he’s a person of character because he has to obey certain values; and 3) by being a public servant” (PM5Ib).

It is a well-understood condition that ‘violence’ connotes behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. For that, an important ‘policing’ course of action exists for these ‘managers of violence’ where their actions are always sanctioned and governed by the State. According to one of the trainers from Institution B, “the profession in itself is not a profession ‘of love’ that has limitations

as “there are laws” they must abide by” (MT10Ib). Hence, abiding by the rules brings to the second part of the discussion of being a soldier, which is ‘obedience’ – an attribute that can simply be described as one’s state of being “ready to do what one is told.” During an interview with a policymaker in Institution A, the interviewee mentioned that;

“Well... the military life, it is a... It is quite different from the civilian life... what the young people are used to before the military service. There are certain schedules; it is physically very demanding, and you have to follow the orders. Moreover, in the first phase, we concentrate on that... that you follow the orders” (PM1Ia).

Hence, this response suggests that to be a soldier, one must be able to ‘follow and obey’ it undoubtedly, which could be a huge shift for some while others will accept it. In addition, the description seemed to suggest the suppression of individual’s self-thinking, making a judgement and voicing opinions. In actual, this is not the case as it has been observed in an interview with a policymaker from Institution B who mentioned that the MOE education and training system is much more targeted towards having “a soldier who [will not only] execute without hesitation [a] given order, but also think about it” (PM1Ib). It is particularly important because as a soldier;

“We obey our political masters and we try to provide safety and security to our society which we belonged to or even, a broader entity that we belong to... NATO, EU... defending the global commerce, defending global trade, defending human rights... that is, I think the essence of our profession” (MT1Ib).

The important third dimension in defining a soldier is his ability to live and work effectively within a group. As mentioned earlier in this section, a soldier is trained to fight, and he or she must be able to do so as a member of a unit. When the participants were



asked the question 'why a soldier must be able to work collectively', the majority commented that a soldier 'has to understand how the unit works, his position in the unit for him to do his job'. A policymaker from Institution B mentioned that a soldier;

"...[must] be a team player. A soldier never works alone. So, he has to be a real team player. His personal ambition is not necessary. He has to think about the interest of the group... the most important point is that he must be able to execute an order without hesitation and to learn how to work in a group. A soldier cannot complete his mission on his own. He has to work in a group. So, if he is not a team player, he will not be a good soldier" (PM11b).

While, another policymaker from the same institution mentioned that a soldier;

"...have to work with a group of people; a platoon, a company, a brigade... to do job... a common aim. However, if everybody in a group will start thinking on his own, they will never achieve the objective. So, it is always a mix between individual thoughts and working in a group for the benefit of the group... I think it's a state of mind for sacrificing yourself for the bigger good" (PM31b).

The repeating theme of 'abandoning self-interest and personal ambition towards achieving collective ambition' and 'being able to work effectively in groups are two principal characteristics that define a soldier. Explaining further, the same policymaker reflected that;

"...in the military, there is the group thing... Yes, we have to work as a group, you have to look as a group... in French it is *Esprit de Corps*... the corps spirit. Moreover, this is something that had come totally away from the civilian society.

Fewer people are going for the Boy's Scout... away from the group thinking. People are not there for the society. They tend to be more individualistic than we were in our times. I think the change of being individual and doing everything you like whenever you like to get into the military system of having to be there to salute the flag at that time is a big issue... a big transformation from a civilian to the military" (PM31b).

Hence, it brought us to the fourth aspect of being a soldier where the person must be able to perform basic military skills i.e. using weapons, able to participate in combat training and marching in parades. In an interview, a military trainer from Institution B mentioned that;

"A soldier is any military that has been trained or performed military duties or military operations, which go from the range of non-fighting military operations to major combat" (MT51b).

Another officer emphasised that a soldier;

"...is a man or a woman who has personal skills to do the military job and that person must have a right kind of training, of course. Moreover, he or she has to be mentally, physically, socially... right kind of people. Also, of course, soldier... he or she... must have the right motivation to do whatever he or she needs to do. And also... the soldier must have the right kind of attitude to do whatever his or her superior wants to do" (MT121a).

From the onset, military training like physical exercise, fitness, marksmanship, and combat skills mentioned are the part of the profession where a soldier must equip him or herself to perform his job well.

Lastly, a soldier must understand how the military organisation is structured and understand how it functions in a certain way that may be different from civilian organisation. It goes back to the idea that a soldier 'has to understand how the unit works, his position in the unit for him to do his job'. According to an officer;

“...a soldier is somebody who can fight, physically and mentally ready to do his job. By job, I mean going out and do what the country asks. That would be a brief definition of a soldier. I could go deeper that a soldier is a specialist... has to be... somebody who can work alone, who can work in a group, somebody who can put his personal feelings away when he is doing his job. However, basically, I would define a soldier, as a man who is ready to obey orders and do as he is being told” (MT2Ib).

While another reflected that;

“For a soldier, it will be more structured. You have hierarchy... you have even a way of life. As a soldier, you are also a civilian, but it is in a different way. Whereas, for a civilian, it's the only thing you have. For a soldier, you are first a soldier then you are civilian. It means that sometimes you have to prioritise. We often say civilians have rights and little duties... and they go forth to claim for their rights, whereas, a soldier has more duties... or duties are more important than their rights” (MT10Ib).

As it has been established by the review of the literature in this research study, the military is an entire institution where the soldiers are bound to its expectations, demands, and external authority.

#### **b. Differences between soldiers and civilians**

In the event of differentiating a soldier from a civilian, the interviewees were asked to share their thoughts on the differences. To begin with, the present study raised a very plain and simple difference – a soldier wears uniforms, and they are being trained for combat. According to one of the military trainers from Institution A;

“Probably, I can [have] combat skills, and those are not common in the civilian world. So, a soldier grows from the personal level skills and then the group and then the unit level. Hence, these skills make him a soldier” (MT41a).

Whereas, another said that;

“In my opinion, there are many differences. On the outside, for example, we always work in uniforms, so that is highly different from civilians... On the other hand, we have very a challenging job, no matter what rank you have. It is what it is and in the military, on the other hand... except from the challenging job itself, from time to time we have to work in a condition that is not really... the condition that we are used to at our homes for example” (MT31b).

This conjures the idea that there exist no differences between a civilian and soldier other than their clothing and job description. This finding seems to be the case as mentioned by a higher ranking officer in Institution A, who responded that;

“In principle, there should not be a difference... However, of course, when you are a soldier, you must be fit, in a good condition, and you have to tolerate more pressure, and you are in whatever is going on... you have to concentrate on your job whatever you are doing. In that sense... you must be more tolerant. The physical pressure and mental pressure and so on... and concentrate on what you are supposed to do. So, it’s in a way... in another perspective, is more demanding to be a soldier compared to being a normal civilian factory worker. But, in principle, as a human being, there is no difference. You should be mentally as mature as everybody else is... even more perhaps” (PM21a).

Therefore, this key aspect brought up by the interviewee presents that in principle, there is nothing different between soldiers to civilians. However, it does take a certain amount of physical aptitude and a sound mind to become a soldier. Another officer also mentioned the same thing by saying that;

“I think that... there is no change that is inside the person. So, you have to be the individual that you have been... You have a backpack on your back and you learn things. You learn some tactics, you learn the leadership, and you learn languages, you learn how to make a study, you have the possibility to train with the troops – how to plan, execute, exercises. So, you put these things [in your] backpack... but there is no transformation or change to the personality in the basis. If I change my uniform to civilian clothes, I am still the same person. However, I have some skills to my profession” (PM11a).

Nevertheless, these reflections were very much contested by the other thoughts given by the other officers. To begin with, there are those who think that those who are being

trained as a soldier are much more patriotic and understand that the military represents certain values. According to one of the policymakers at Institution B;

“I think, the change of being an individual and doing everything you like, whenever you like to get into the military system of having to be there to salute the flag at that time is a big issue... a big transformation from a civilian to military person” (PM3Ib).

Furthermore, another officer commented that;

“... patriotic... the sense of responsibility. You can also find that in civilian but more values... doing not a job but... the military is not a job. I would not call it a vocation... a calling... but it is more than just a job. It is a lifestyle instead of just a job” (MT5Ib).

Even though, the interviewee is a bit reluctant to associate ‘vocation’ and to describe the profession in the military as ‘a calling’, other views given by participants in this research suggest that a career in a military also means representing certain values. One of such comments is as below:

“But, of course, there is a difference between a civilian and a normal officer. When you are thinking about... you should have a motivation and then the attitude... the values; you appreciate your own country, and you must have the feeling that this is something worth doing for your country...” (PM21a).

Another officer conjured the same idea by saying that;

“Yes, I think there are some differences of course. Especially, as an officer and soldier who works in that field of working every day... but, I think it is the commitment and readiness to do whatever is needed to defend what he stands for. You don’t know this as a civilian” (MT31a).

These reflections offer the idea that the military profession necessitates its personnel to have a high level of sense of belonging and nationalism. Having this is not only important to guarantee loyalty but also inspires the person to make sacrifices deemed essential ‘for the greater good’.

Another aspect that seems to differentiate the career in the military is its demandingness or the organisation’s selfish treatment towards its personnel. As one interviewee put it:

“Soldiers are different from civilians...Yes...because of the expectation of the society... because of a certain culture and value that we try to encourage or cherish” (MT11b).

While, another said that;

“If you are a soldier... let say, a soldier or an officer... when you live your life, you always have a role as a soldier. You are not just a civilian. Ok, when you are having your free time, everyone still accepts you as a soldier. They might ask you something, and it is always an ‘official’ opinion when you give it. So, I think it is like this. If you are just a civilian worker, you can just say whatever you want. But, if you are a soldier and if you are an officer... somebody might come to you and ask you about the crisis in the Middle East or something like that... and always when you say something, you say it as a professional” (MT71a).

He further deliberated that;

“There are differences. Because, as I said... I am an officer. I have that role of an officer even when I am having my free time. I’m always an officer. So, it’s something that I have to carry... because, yeah... at the moment I am wearing my ‘civilian uniform’, but still I am an officer. So you have to behave like an officer. When I am having my free time, I cannot just... “there... ok, I can”, but I have to carry... the things that I do, which might affect my work as an officer. I have to obey the rules much tighter than the civilians...” (MT71a).

What transpired through these three comments is rather important as it shows the demandingness of the profession, which not only comes from the nature of the profession but also from the standard set by the society. Based on the conversation included above, military personnel are demanded to follow, obey and adhere to a certain standard of living, which can be stricter than to be a civilian. Besides, being a soldier also means enjoining an organisation that requires undivided, devoted participation from its members. Some participants expressed this belief by saying that;

“Well... the military life it’s ... it’s quite different from the civilian life... what the young people are used to before the military service. There are certain schedules; it’s physically very demanding, and you have to follow the orders” (PM1Ia).

And;

“It is most of the time, not a 9 to 5 job, what many other people have. You have to be flexible as well because from one day to another you have to move for example



because you have been designated to work somewhere else for example 200 km from where you are living. So, it means that there are several implications on you, your family and your relatives as well. I am not saying that this is not the case in the civilian, but there are still some differences” (MT31b).

In the light of this, these views are mainly surfaced on the soldier’s will to make such sacrifice for the organisation. Interestingly, this correlation is interconnected to their personal commitment and attachment to the organisation that could be different from those that could be found in another organisation. A policymaker in Institution B mentioned that;

“As a person in the military... soldier or an officer... you have to be available all the time. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and every day of the year. Of course, there are holidays... but imagine if the General calls me tomorrow morning and says; “I need you” ... I have to be there for the job. No question. So that, I have things that are important all the time. We are not like civilians who work from 9 to 5. No. As a military, we have to be there all the time. Moreover, I think, is an important characteristic of being in a military. The duty often includes serving the people, so that is why, I think it is important” (PM21b).

He further explained that;

“To me, there is a clear difference between a civilian, even if the civilian works within the defence department and usually when civilian works in the defence department, they have... they occupy main support functions, which eventually include the human resources or so on. However, the core military has to be done by the military because it takes a certain mind-set to work in an environment that

is stressful, that is dangerous and so on. Moreover, this is what preparing soldiers for operations is all about. I think, it is tough to substitute that with anything else” (PM2Ib).

Being asked to explain more about this ‘state of mind’, the officer further clarified that it is;

“...the sense of responsibility... [a]nd the commitment to the organisation. And this... as I said... this can only be developed through a long lasting relationship starting quite early until now. Moreover, we have a certain loyalty towards the organisation, which is sometimes good sometimes bad. If you are faithful to an organisation, you might accept something that the organisation did to you which you (the interviewer = civilian) could not accept. But, it’s a trade-off. You give and you get” (PM2Ib).

A further explanation was provided by an officer who said that;

“For a soldier, it will be more structured. You have hierarchy... you have even, a way of life. As a soldier, you are also a civilian but it is in a different way. Whereas for a civilian, it’s the only thing you have. For a soldier, you are first a soldier then you are a civilian. It means sometimes you have to prioritise. We often say civilians have rights and little duties... and they go forth to claim for their rights, whereas, a soldier has more duties... or duties are more important than their rights” (MT10Ib).

Such a strong opinion on how important a ‘duty’ is compared to their own ‘rights’ would be another point that suggest strong internal changes from a civilian to a soldier.

Lastly, a trained soldier will have much more structure in his or her life and should be able to maintain a certain level of discipline. One of the policymakers at Institution B mentioned this transition among the new cadets. According to him;

“The main difference we can see between our students and the civilian students is that very soon they adapt to military life. It means that they are more structured than civilians. They are adapted to a certain discipline. That is what we teach them as well. They are trained to assume responsibility, which is not always the case in a life of a civilian. Of course, you have civilians who have that... as a part of themselves... we TRAIN our people for this competence. I often give this example to our students, asking them ‘when you go to for a meeting with civilians, what is the main thing you see there immediately as the main difference between what you have here in the institution against the civilian meeting’? The civilian meeting at certain time... chaos. Everybody is talking together. As this was the first thing they learned within an army, ‘Ok, there is a period where the briefer talks and afterwards there’s a time to ask question’. There is a structure, and that is what they are becoming used to. And that is just an image of what... one of the main differences between a military lifestyle and a civilian lifestyle in my opinion” (PM4Ib).

This emphasis on having rules, structure and discipline is also highlighted by another military trainer at Institution A, who said that;

“...of course, for us, it is also different from civilian life... we have our own rules... It is very... kind of ‘guided’ ways of how we deal with issues... how do we need to do things that we do? Of course, there are those in the civilian life also but it would be very different, I think” (MT8Ia).

Furthermore, having a proper structure also affects the way a soldier communicates professionally. A military trainer from Institution A mentioned that;

“Yes, there are differences. As I said, the discipline and of course, the way of communication. It is a little bit different. We have a hierarchy and you cannot... you have to work with the chain of command when you are a soldier. Of course, as a civilian, it is a little bit different. Especially, if you are a specialist... you can communicate with the different levels of the hierarchy with a little bit more ease than a soldier because a soldier has to have the line of communication and the command, as it has been said in the paper” (MT141a).

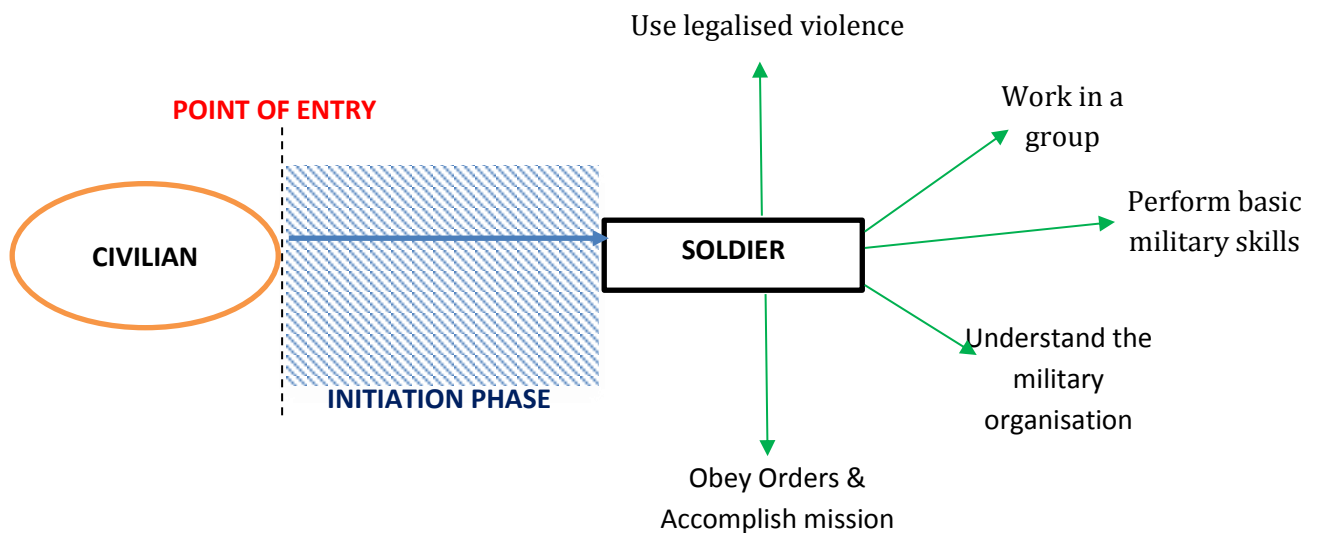
In conclusion, based on the reflections for the questions described above, the five broad themes have been developed from the analysis:

- i. A soldier is always ready to use legalised violence to fulfil the mission.
- ii. A soldier must always obey orders from his superiors and accomplish the mission.
- iii. A soldier must be able to work effectively in a group.
- iv. A soldier must be able to perform basic skills for the military – use of weapons, combat training and so forth.
- v. There is an indication that the military organisation is structured and functions in a certain way that may be different to other organisations

Therefore, these themes represent an important indication that there is a shift from being a civilian to becoming an officer. This combination of findings provides some support for a conceptual premise that there is an ontological shift from a civilian to

become a soldier. However, a note of caution is due here, since; the themes do not necessarily represent thresholds in becoming an officer. One explanation for this would be that the theme could be just a core concept in joining the military community of practice and it may not necessarily be transformative.

Figure 4.1 demonstrates the ontological shift that takes place during the period I and is described as the *Initiation Phase*. This period represents a conditioning period, where the cadets are subjected to the military ‘way of life’ that makes them accustomed to the new environment. This phase will be properly addressed in Chapter V: Soldiership.



**Figure 4.1: Civilian – Soldier Phase**

## 4.2 PHASE II: SOLDIER – OFFICER

As the first set of questions aimed to distinguish the existence of a Civilian – Soldier phase, the second set of questions aimed at identifying the possible existence of a Soldier – Officer Phase. Again, the analysis included seven policymakers and twenty-four military trainers and teachers who had given their views on the phase and their experiences in going through the system in becoming an officer.

### c. Defining Military Officer

Being asked to define “what is a military officer”, the overall response to this question would be that an officer is a soldier. One interviewee simply responded that;

“An officer has to have the same capability and professionally, he has to be much more above than a normal soldier “(PM21a).

Another higher-ranking officer indicated that;

“You must be a soldier first, and then you can be an officer. I think, it is important for several reasons. First of all, it is the basis. I mean, like self-defence; learning how to shoot... that is something every soldier has to know. Even, if you are an officer, you have to know how to defend yourself, how to shoot. So, you must learn how to shoot... if that can be the basic... So, you must learn the basic. Secondly, there is a saying in the military and I think it is right; “You must be commanded before commanding”. So, you have to know how it is... to be downstairs on the ladder. To know, if afterwards, you are the one who is giving orders, how men will react, what kind of orders... which one is accepted easily... And of course, you can get that from management or leadership courses but ‘being there doing that’ beats any course” (PM31b).

On the same note, one of the military trainers at Institution A commented that;

“For me an officer must be a good soldier. He must possess similar skills that their soldiers should have. And in our system, every officer goes through the soldier training. So, this is the one part of being an officer, but then you have to be able to see the larger, the broader picture of the things and situations...

operations and so on. And find your own place... it's a kind of parcels... and the system will be based on different pieces. You are one of the pieces, but you have to understand the meaning of the other pieces... connection in between. So, this is a part of officership at the soldier level" (PM11a).

Such definition of officers suggests that it is important for officers to understand the job, task and skills needed by a soldier. However, it does not mean that an officer must be one of the best soldiers. One of the trainers explained that this is important because;

"I know that they do not have to put in a new record in 2,400 meters running. That is not important. What important is that they must know that they can do it. Otherwise, you will have an officer who orders someone to guard for 48 hours without replacement... because they have not themselves to guard for 2 hours or 3 hours. They don't know what it is and what is happening. That is also one of the aspects... when they are playing soldier, they are playing the officers, they are playing the commanding officer... they will learn how certain things get done... how long we do it... what and why we are doing it. And, if you have never experienced that... not knowing what you are doing and why you are doing it... you will forget it very easily afterwards" (MT101b).

This opens up a new requirement of being an officer who is able to assume responsibility. In an interview, one of the higher ranking officers in Institution B mentioned that an officer should have;

"...[a]ll the criteria for a soldier... are also needed for an officer. But there is something more. For me, an officer is someone who feels responsible, able to

take initiatives, perform his duty after receiving even the smallest amount of information. He has to think about the situation and he has to make up his mind and find a solution and give his orders to his soldiers. So, it is much more than just being a soldier. It is all about taking a responsibility, using his brains for taking initiatives and finding solutions” (PM11b).

On the same note, another interviewee commented that;

“You will need the same qualities as a soldier but more sense of responsibility. Both senses (1) towards the superior: to execute what is asked and to point out the problems to the superiors and (2) the responsibilities to his men: to prepare them and also to tell them the truth to his men on certain matters” (MT10Ib).

Moreover;

“I think military officer is first of all a military... but he is ultimately responsible for his men and he has to think... to adept to resolve the problem... to get the mission done and to preserve the life of his men. It is the ultimate mix between individual and the group because he is the one who will be making the decisions” (PM3Ib).

This makes an officer more responsible in attitude to those under his/her charge, which also means;

“... giving the direction to his people. He’s assuming responsibility, he has to be an example... he should not be the best in every matter but at least he



should show the examples to his soldiers and NCOs. So, he must be a kind of an all-rounder. He is a guy who needs to think and needs to do as well. He is not just a theoretical guy; he should be a practical guy as well” (PM4Ib).

Moving forward with this, as a part of officer’s task to bear responsibility, an officer is also defined as a leader who makes decisions and takes a good care of his/hers subordinates. One of the officers explained that;

“The main point [of being an officer] is leading a lot of people. I think that officers are also firstly a soldier... but an officer also needs competence and know-how to be a leader. The main thing is that an officer leads another people. And that is the main point” (MT12Ia).

For this reason, as it is evident from both institutions, the education and training of the cadets;

...start as a soldier so they start it as an individual. They should be transformed into a leader... mainly they do not have to deal with their own problems as a soldier, they should start learning and dealing with the problems of their people, squad and platoon. So, they should and they have to be convinced of their responsibilities... not only thinking about ‘I should make sure that my work is like this’... No... I should take care of my soldier. I should also prepare my own stuff but also check the gears of my soldier. I should prepare my mission. If my soldiers are exhausted, I will be exhausted. But, still, I should be able to be an example to motivate them, to go on in order to overcome my own difficulties and meanwhile, to help my soldiers out. And, this is a process they are going to learn throughout these years during the military training. It

must be together with the technic of their jobs; tactics and all that stuffs. So, all things happen at once (PM4Ib).

This marks another difference in the training and education of an officer to a soldier. According to one of the officers;

“The basic difference is the education and knowledge of doing things... because a soldier must know and have a competence to do military things personally. But, an officer must have the knowledge to lead other people and have a different kind of know-how...” (MT12Ia).

This view is interesting as most of the officers interviewed for the research also shared the same views and most of them had strong feelings towards it. One of those interviewed strongly believed that;

“...the officer has to epitomise everything, the military stands for because an officer is also a leader and then a leader, you are leading by example. So, I think there is a lot of strain on an officer because being an officer, people will notice and observe you. And you have to be able to live the values... to live up to the values which are not always easy because at some point, I am also a human being” (PM5Ib).

In order to ‘live the officer’s values’;

“...a military officer is first and foremost, a leader. I think, in my opinion. Because a military officer, even he doesn’t have many people to lead, then, at least, he has to lead himself in the ways that society asked the military to do,

and it is a responsibility of the military officers to fulfil those. But, I also think that a military officer is someone who has theoretical knowledge and a person who can use that theory into practice. So, he can assimilate different theories and then make sense in your orders, directives and things like that. And also, I think that a military leader is an analyst... he is able to think analytically. So that, he is able to evaluate the surrounding and transform his own actions according to what is around. That is my opinion about an officer... that he is a leader and able to adapt" (MT11a).

Thus, this combination of findings provided some support for the conceptual premise that an officer may be defined as a soldier who assumes the position of a leader, responsible for making the correct judgement and takes good care of his/her subordinates. Importantly, such identification also suggests a shift which put forward an impression on the existence of a phase going from being a soldier to an officer.

#### **d. Differences between a soldier and military officer?**

Another essential factor that may suggest the existence of the phase mentioned above would be on the officer's very opinion on the differences between soldiers to an officer. A higher ranking officer in Institution A responded that;

"Yes, there are differences. As an officer, you are an example for your soldiers. You have to show that you are able to do the same thing, same detailed, soldier things... that they are doing. And then... to be respected by them, by the soldiers. By showing professionalism and that comes with the training, exercise and so on. As I told you, the officer has to understand the broader picture of things like tactical, for example. Moreover, he must be able to explain the situation for his soldiers. And then, he has to be able to give the orders and maybe he will lose...

there will be casualties, but anyhow he has to keep the task as number one when he is doing a business” (PM1Ia).

However, determining that the phase does exist, proves to be a difficult endeavour as one of the higher ranking officers in Institution B mentioned that “in principle, [there is no change] from a civilian to an officer”. One explanation for this is that;

“A change from a civilian to an officer... starts from conscript, and then you get more training on that. You can’t see the change... you already have the attitude and motivation in the conscript service because in the conscript service you have to do well so that you get the Reserve Officers Training. So, you already have a motivation, and you have to show that you can do certain things well so that you will be taken in the reserve officer school and then you graduate as a reserve officer. And then, you come to the cadet school... so in a way, the changes from a civilian to an officer... you can’t see the changes... it happens in a very short steps” (PM2Ia).

In other words, the officer meant to say that there are no more noticeable changes on the cadets once they had gone through the phase that transformed them into becoming a soldier. Despite this, the research also managed to observe that the;

” ...transformation from soldier to officer... is essentially the thinking part... So that transformation from a soldier to officer is actually from being told what to do by thinking on your own and telling others” (PM3Ib).

This reflection is interesting, as it puts the role of a soldier and an officer on a different end where one is always subjected to receive orders while, the other one must think

before commanding. An interesting and rather surprising observation on this ‘ability to command’ would be empathy – the capacity to share or recognize emotions experienced by the others. Explaining further into the question, one of the trainers mentioned that;

“...one needs to be able to think like a soldier then he needs to command those soldiers. For that, you need to know what a soldier needs to know. Moreover, a commanding officer must be able to evaluate his soldiers and evaluate what can be expected and what is too difficult. So, the system is first to become a soldier and then gradually, an officer. That is how it is encrypted in the military training here at the military school. When they come in, they have 6-weeks of military initiation... basically transforming them from civilian to military. Military in general, basic task, rifle, be able to tend camps, being able to march with the backpack, being able to fire, etc.” (MT9Ib).

In order to have this ability to command and give such orders to be followed by the soldiers, an officer must establish his/her place as a leader, which in the end, differentiates his position as an officer. But, this does not mean that an officer will occupy a “Master – Slave” position with the soldiers. One of the higher ranking officers at Institution A mentioned that;

“Maybe the most important thing is that, as a soldier, you are taking care of yourself. I am number one. But, when you are an officer, you are not the number one. Your soldier is number one. You are doing the business for them. And, you have to take care of your soldiers” (PM1Ia).

While another officer explained that;

“Of course, there is a normal command chain, but I think that an officer must bear a responsibility and make decisions. Not just act, soldiers have skills to act but the officers have to think further along. They just can’t think for the next five minutes or an hour, but they have to see the other options too” (MT131a).

Thus, it means that the officers need to think and evaluate the situation while putting the subordinate interest as utmost important, in a way, differentiate them from the soldier. As a result, this ‘thinking’ and ‘empathy’ is rather significant as, it makes the officers to “see the bigger picture” on matters in hand – another facet of being an officer which is different from being a mere soldier. One of the trainers explained that;

“...if you are an officer, you have to understand on the upper level. If you are a soldier, you have those... minor things that you have to understand or to do. As an officer, you have to understand what the Army does, what the Navy does, what the Air Force does. And, I can understand the bigger picture than a soldier” (MT21a).

Furthermore, one of the interviewees reasoned that;

“A soldier is happy with what he needs to know, and that is it. Whereas, a military officer... he gets the information, but he is curious or he has a natural curiosity to get more information and he must shift the information to his troops” (PM31b).

This brings us to the final qualities that differentiate an officer to a soldier, which is the feeling of personal commitment and responsibility. One of the interviewed officers mentioned that;

“...as a soldier, you are happy that you don’t have so much responsibility. You have a limited responsibility. You have your rifle... you have your colleagues around you and that’s it. Whereas, as a military officer, you have your rifle, you have your colleagues, and you have your subordinates... who ever works under you or for you, which you have to take care as well” (MT9Ib).

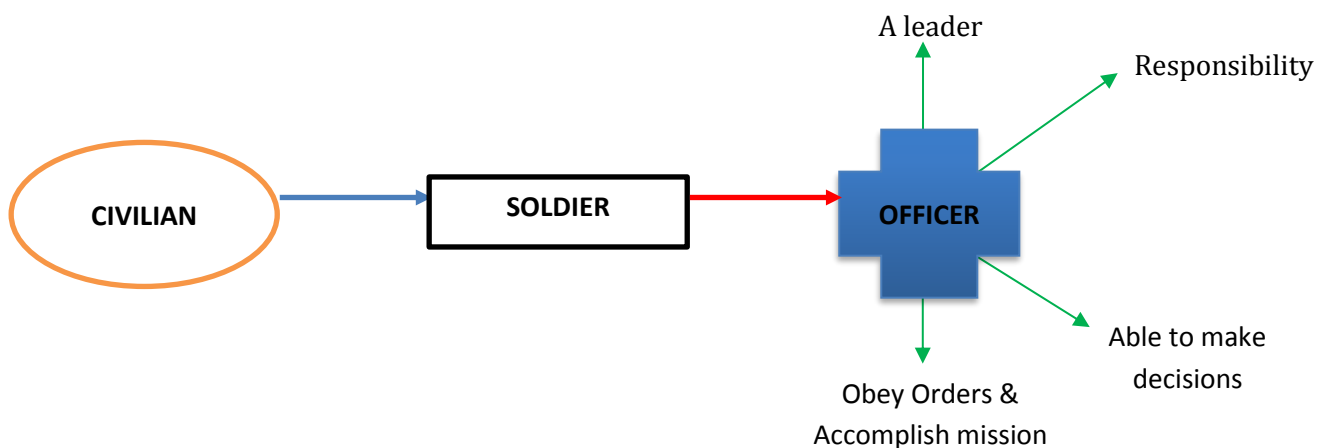
Furthermore, another officer commented that;

“The level of responsibility is much higher for an officer. He is in charge of a bunch of people and he has to make sure that his guys do as they are told. So, the responsibility... is like... the officer is the dad of a family. The level of responsibility is much higher. The difference is also intrinsic... so the officer is the one who does all this thing because he believes in it, while, a soldier does not really have this affection. He just does what he is told; he does not go further” (MT2Ib).

More to this is that there is;

“...a difference in a level of responsibility. A soldier normally... has a responsibility over his own life and sometimes, it could be about his own buddies depending on which branch you are. If you are a diver, you have a mutual responsibility for your buddy...Whereas, an officer also has a responsibility towards his subordinates and towards his chiefs as well as his higher ranking officers. It is difficult to define because sometimes you have soldiers that have better qualities than the officers that aren’t better than a normal soldier because they don’t grasp a sense of responsibility and... or they can’t put aside their own interests” ... (MT5Ib).

Thus, this combination of findings provides some support that there is a change from being a soldier to an officer. **Figure 4.2** demonstrates the shifts in this phase, which are represented as a period of officer's training. Further discussion on this phase is addressed in **Chapter VI: Officership**.



**Figure 4.2: Soldier - Officer Phase**

### 4.3 ONTOLOGICAL SHIFTS: CIVILIAN – SOLDIER – OFFICER

As mentioned previously, this chapter seeks to find and understand the stages or rather phases in becoming an officer and what is involved. With regards to discussion provided in Section 4.1 and 4.2, it is apparent that there are two important phases in the training of officers at military academies or defence universities. The next step in this analysis was to look for the important elements that facilitate the transition from being a civilian to a soldier and an officer.

However, there is a conundrum to this very idea. Despite the majority of officers included in the research having strong opinions – the education and training for an officer happens in the above-mentioned phases – the data presented must be interpreted with caution because the learning process does not necessarily happen in two phases. As the end product of the education system is an officer – which is the main subject under study for this research – the learning trajectory does not happen in a singular, linear line, going from left to right as depicted in **Figure**



**1** and **Figure 2**. Rather, described by one of the officers included in the research, the process in becoming an officer is;

“...sort of going hand-in-hand. I don’t see it as the two different things. Because, when I was being trained as a soldier, getting all the military skills... the training as an officer is going on all the time. Even though, we are doing other things, it never stops. You are... all the time being trained as an officer. So, I do not see them as different from each other. Things that we study – the military skills – the issues, the task... they may change it. But all the time... the educating part to become an officer is going on. So, it is a whole package sort of thing” (MT8Ia).

Furthermore, another officer commented that;

“I think; it is a mixture because we are dealing with very intelligent people instead of the people that we could have in the combat unit for example. We would like to make it into boxes where they move from a soldier then a non-commissioned officer then an officer but for me, it is really a mixture because we are working with the very intelligent young people and they know why they come to the school actually. We put it in the box for the people outside to see but actually it is a constant process because from the beginning, we trained them to become an officer. When we do the basic training for the soldiers, we don’t really give them the explanation why... you see... but when we transform them (the cadets) to become a soldier, we tell the explanation why this happens because they need to know what is the reason behind what we do because later on, they are going to train their own soldiers. We like to say that they need to go to all the phases in becoming an officer but it is more than that. We give them reasons why we do stuffs that are done” (MT2Ib).

In other words, the initial discussion of findings included in the previous section only established the 'boxes' that an individual must undergo to become a soldier and then to become an officer. What this brings to the research is that the learning process to become officers in institutions included in the research does not necessarily happen from point A to point B. Rather, the process is more likely a process of 'experience accumulation' rather than being transformative. One Navy officer reflected that;

“Through training and so on, we can help them to feel comfortable, but it is not because they had gone through five years of military education that out of a sudden they become great leaders and perfect managers. No... no... no... [W]e ARE civilians... and what we are born with and what our parents had brought up in us... we bring that to the military profession and we try to do the best we can. But, we are not pushed through a mould and become... well... more of the same” (MT1Ib).

While, another higher ranking officer commented that;

“Well, as an active officer, during the conscript, we train reserved officer. That is [for] twelve months. And then, you will continue after you have decided that you want to go to the institution... after you passed the test you will become a cadet for three years. So, I think that the... There is no change that is inside the person. So, you have to be an individual that you have been... You have a backpack on your back and you learn things. You learn some tactics, you learn the leadership and you learn languages, you learn how to make study, you have the possibility to train with the troops – how to plan, execute, exercises. So, you put these things to the backpack... but there is no transformation or change to the personality in the basis” (PM1Ia).

What this suggests is that instead of ‘transforming’ to become an officer, those who had gone through the education system at such military institution would just accumulate ‘experiences’ and ‘skills’ to perform their duties.

But, is this really the case?

Is the training and education for officers just a process of ‘experience accumulation’?

The author would like to respond and argue that pondering from one ‘box’ to another would include some degree of understanding certain concepts of military practice that is often translated as the institution’s curriculum. Thus, as the profession requires the person to retain certain attributes and qualities of the profession, there should be a certain shift in the person’s identity. Responding to the question, “Why is it important for an officer to be a soldier first”, one of the interviewee responded that;

“If you do not understand what we are doing in the first year, then you have a problem for the other years of course. As all the education goes on and on. There is no time to go back. And if you drop something from this system in the first year, then it’s quite hard to get... to gain in again and move into the next year” (MT2Ia).

Moreover, a military trainer from Institution B commented that;

“I think the soldier part is a big part during the first three years, but I think that the meaning – if you are searching for a deeper meaning is a deeper line that you start your transformation from soldier to an officer; you are taking a little further away from the technical stuffs... and the routine stuff, to everything behind it” (MT13Ia).

First of all, these two accounts re-establish the claim of the research that the understanding of military as a practice begins by being a soldier, as the main purpose for such establishment is to train military leaders. This stage of understanding usually takes place at the beginning of the education process. Secondly, as being described by a military trainer from Institution A;

“...understanding is a part of that transformation. I [am not] sure if, I understand all that even now... but I think that must have been the key. It’s not like a lightning bolt; ‘ahh... now I understand everything’ ... I think it’s more like a gradual transformation. And then, there are moments of doubts for everybody... there are good times and bad times... and the key is to push on despite the bad things. It’s a gradual process that happens during that period of four years” (MT9Ia).

What this means is that there are ontological shifts that happen from being civilian to a soldier and then to become an officer. However, each of these shifts takes on different thresholds that enable the learners to progress. Moreover, the transformation of each stage requires a certain period of time that may be extended beyond the time spent at an institution. One of the military trainers from Institution B responded that;

“I can tell you that the moment I can mentally tell that I am an officer when I entered my unit. As, after these 4 or 5 years at the institution – ok, we have the academic degree – but you only know what it is in the REAL Army. This is just a taste... we try to give them as much information as we can; we try to transform civilians into people who are intellectuals, who understand a bit of the organisation. In actual, when these guys quit institution, they are not military persons” (MT2Ib).

On the same note, military trainer from Institution B responded that;

“The difference that we try to make within the five years is to educate them in a way to become a leader. What is a leader? Leader is someone who can lead a team to go to work and achieve objectives. To fulfil a mission... and there are some values... there are some limitations... there are some techniques. And during the five years, it is our duty to not only give theory but also provide them with military training... military operations. That is done in a way through the one, two, three, four, five years” (MT71b).

For this reason, the two ontological shifts have been proposed that should happen to cadets as they go through their education period at an institution. Deriving from evidence gathered from the discussions above, the first ontological shift in becoming a soldier involves acceptance of discipline and obedience, recognition of a framework of related ethics and values, loyalty to the unit (collective above individual needs) and a sense of obligation. This shift would be the most important stage in becoming an officer as a failure to understand the threshold at this stage would result into the cadet’s dismissal from an institution. This shift is labelled as Soldiership and is discussed in greater detail, in Chapter V.

The second ontological shift involves assuming the mantle of responsibility and acceptance of leadership role. Preliminary data analysis for this research offers that officership involves a necessary psychological distancing from the troops and a preparedness to impose sanctions and punishment where necessary, for mission’s completion and to achieve ‘the greater good’. Unlike the first shift – where the basics of military personnel are being laid – this shift embodies the real objective of the institution under study. Another shift, labelled Officership, is also discussed in length, in Chapter VI.

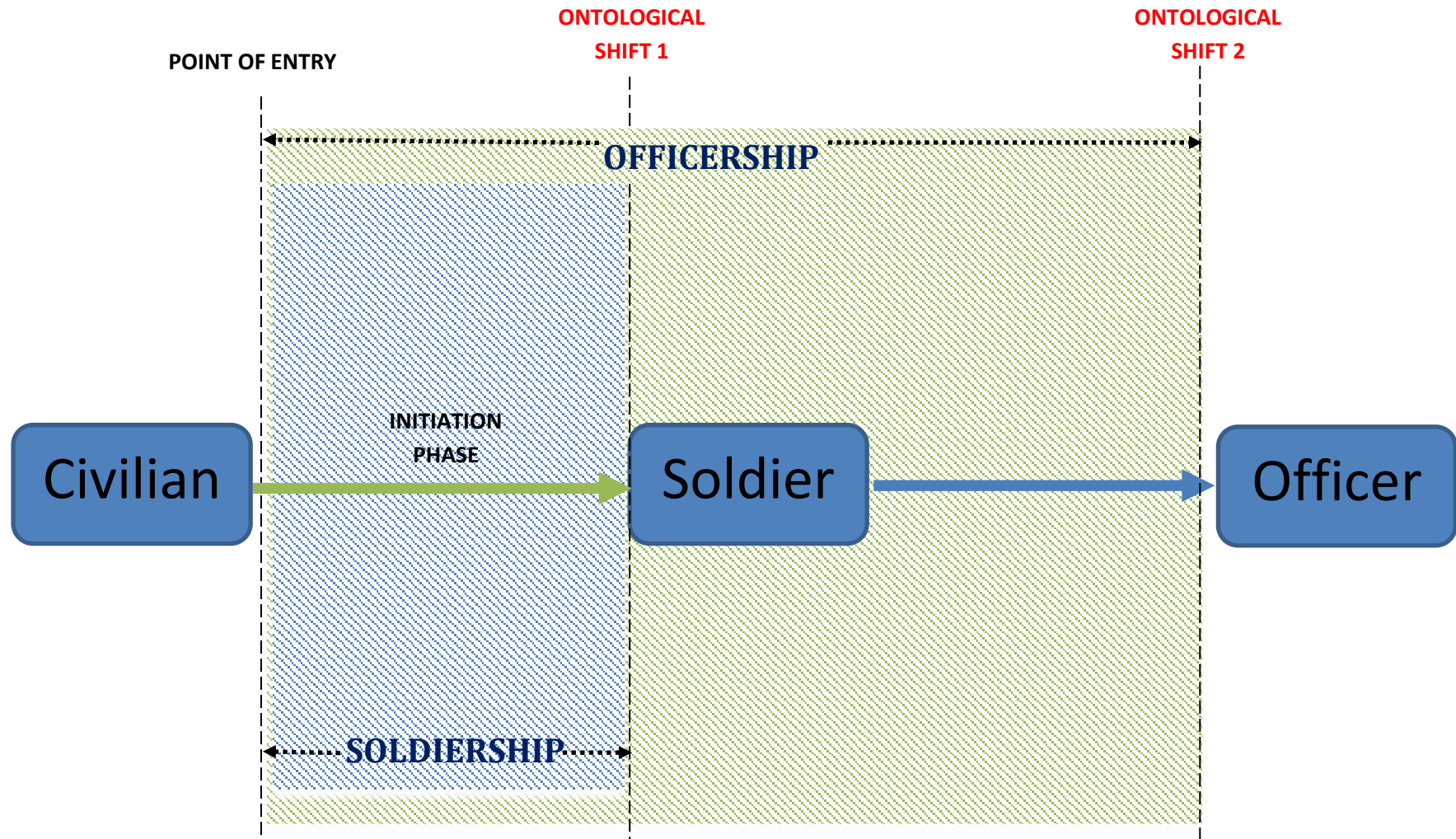


Figure 4.3: Ontological Shift from Civilian to Officer

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the phases in becoming an officer that are crucial in discovering the thresholds involved during the process. Following are the key points presented in this chapter:

- i. A soldier can be defined as someone who is ready to use legalised violence, obey orders, able to work as a group, able to perform military associated skills and understands the organisation's culture and structure.
- ii. An officer, on the other hand, is a leader who assumes the responsibility for certain mission or tasks and the people that work under him/her and makes decisions.

From these two findings, the chapter establishes that the experiences are transformative and that there are **TWO** ontological shifts that should take place in MOE which are 1) Civilian – Soldier; and 2) Soldier – Officer. Therefore, the following two chapters are intended to present the findings, discuss and elaborate further these ontological shifts. Each of these shifts involved certain thresholds which made the transformation transformative.

## Chapter V

### Ontological Shift I: Soldiership

*Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die*  
— Alfred Tennyson, The Charge of the Light  
Brigade

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

The following two chapters seek to present the first and second ontological shifts in relation to an overall transformation from being a civilian to become an officer. In due course, the pending chapters are set to answer the following research question:

What are the key conceptual transformations in the training of military cadets and leaders at military higher education institution from the policymakers, military trainers and teachers, and the cadet's perspectives?

As discussed in Chapter IV, the education and training of officers at the institutions under study would encompass the two ontological shifts; Soldiership and Officership. This chapter discusses the first ontological shift and the thresholds involved in becoming a soldier.

To begin with, the discussion of findings in this chapter is divided into two sections. Section 5.1 discusses some aspects of 'the journey' and the ontological shift while Section 5.2 highlights the thresholds involved in becoming a soldier. The analysis included in this and the following chapters places a particular emphasis on respondents' experiences of being educated

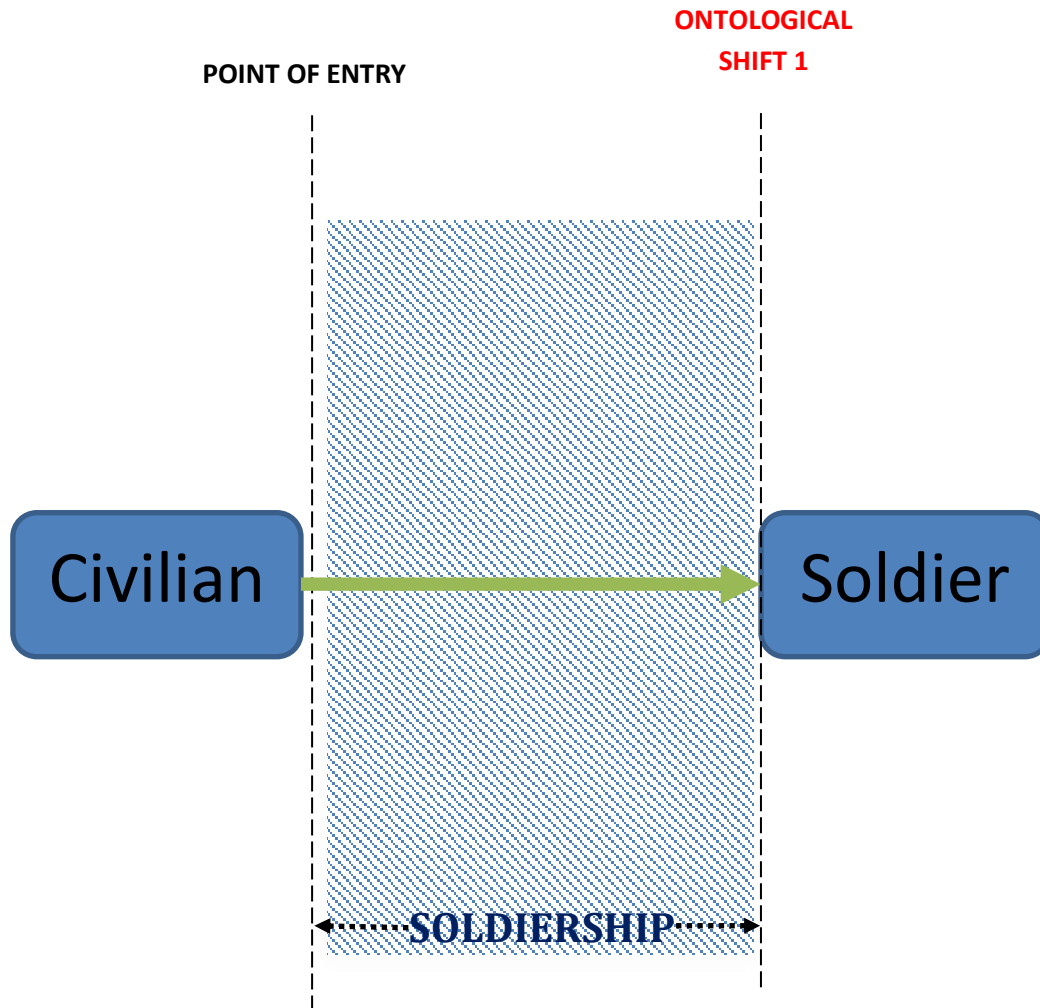


and trained as military officers. In order to do so, transcripts from interview sessions with policymakers (n=7), military trainers and teachers (n=24), and the cadets (n=27) were analysed. The inclusion of these three cohorts in the analysis enabled the researcher to not only identify the shared experiences during the transformation process but also to gain insight from the former cadets, who are now themselves, the officers at the institution.

Also, Section 5.1 presents the findings that continue the discussion previously presented in Chapter IV regarding the first ontological shift – from a civilian to a soldier. This was carried out by defining this shift and providing a discussion how learners go through a certain period that transform themselves into soldiers. The discussion will then be continued in Section 5.2, where the key concepts of the transformation are highlighted. Figure 5.1 presents a graphical representation of the discussion.

## **5.1 SOLDIERSHIP**

As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, Soldiership represents the first ontological shift in the education and the training of cadets at their respective MOE institutions. Firstly, the discussion in this section re-visits the discussed themes and then determined whether the themes are threshold concepts for Soldiership. By way of explaining further the aspect of the journey, the discussion of threshold emphasises the Basic Training period – to be known in this study as the *Initiation Phase* – where the cadets are very much ‘forced’ to acculturate themselves to the new military practice. Other than presenting the importance of this phase in MOE, the phase stands as a crucial period that affects the cadet’s transformation in becoming an officer.



**Figure 5.1: Ontological Shift I: Soldiership**

### 5.1.1 The Context of Transformation

It has been concluded in Chapter IV that there are five broad themes which have a bearing in the shifts that represent the shift from being a civilian to a soldier. These are as follows:

- i. A soldier is always ready to use legalised violence to fulfil the mission.
- ii. A soldier must always obey orders from his superiors and accomplish a mission
- iii. A soldier must express total commitment and loyalty to the group

- iv. A soldier must be able to perform basic skills for the military – use of weapons, combat training
- v. The position of soldier in the military organisation is structured in a hierarchy and functions

However, it is important for the study not to digress and acknowledge that not all of the above-mentioned themes have the qualities to be transformative – an important characteristic of threshold concepts. For example, a closer look at the need of a soldier to acquire basic skills for military – like shooting, marksmanship, map reading, survival ability, etc. – have led the author to disregard and reject this very idea as, it is not transformative. One simple argument for this is that a civilian with proper training in those skills would still be able to perform those tasks without having to be a soldier. For example, civilians who are involved in shooting sports would have to learn the skills for handling, retaining, and maintaining their shooting equipment. This would not make them a soldier but just an expert in a sport – in this case it is shooting – that assists them to become a ‘target shooter’. In other words, even though, the ‘soldiers’ and ‘target shooters’ are trained to aim and shoot, and to take care of their gear, the experience of learning ‘how to’ and ‘what and when’ to shoot hugely separates them into two. Moreover, the skills in doing a work or a chore are off to no conviction in transforming a person, but lies on the experiences, while performing those skills that impact the person’s ontological shifts. The influences of these experiences would also be as significant as it affects the person’s identity and worldviews. Having mentioned that it seems possible for the study thus far to determine that the first ontological shift in becoming a soldier involves *the acceptance of discipline and obedience, recognition of a framework of related ethics and values, loyalty to the unit (collective above individual needs) and a sense of obligation*. For reference purposes and to better represent this change, the ontological shift is labelled as Soldiership; marking as the first shift that needs to be undergone by the cadets at the

institution under study to become a military officer. Therefore, the analysis has also determined that there are three important thresholds that civilians must cross in order to transform themselves to become a soldier and to enable themselves to join the military community of practice. These three thresholds are;

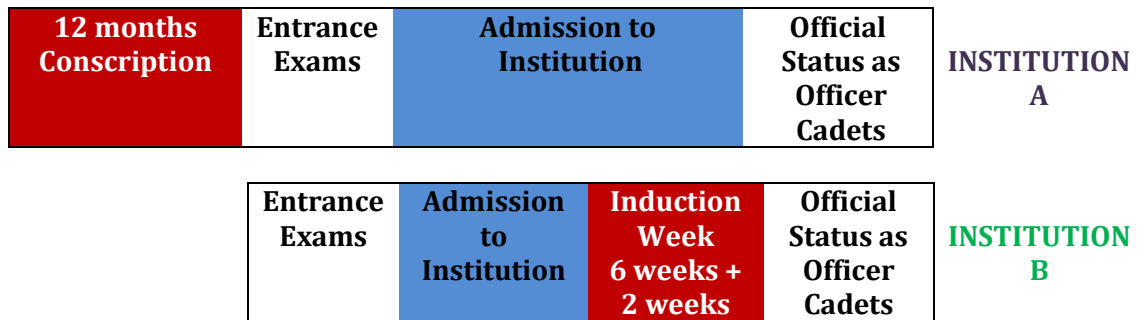
1. Preparedness to use legitimised violence
2. *Esprit de Corps*
3. Prompt and unquestioned execution of the command

It is important to note that the thresholds are not sequential. Rather, the thresholds are bonded to one another, and this mixture of experiences has been described by the learners, as an 'organised chaos'. To discuss it further, the discussion is directed to a beginning of this transformation process, labelled as *Point of Entry* as it is presented in Figure 5.1.

### **5.1.2 Point of Entry**

The *Point of Entry* represents the beginning of a transition phase where a civilian embarks on a journey to become a soldier. As established earlier from a review of previous literature, interested individuals have to meet certain academic, physical condition, and mental aptitude to qualify for a recruitment examination or an entry examination to an institution. As a person decides that he/she wants to gain entry to a military institution such as those under study, his/her transformation begins at this juncture. Based on an observation of the two institutions included in the research, the admission requirements and processes of the two institutions differ significantly, but it serves to achieve the same purpose – to select the best candidates to be educated and trained at their respective MOE institution and become officers. Furthermore, the differences between the institutions have a direct impact of the nation's defence policy and culture. It has been observed that

Institution A requires its future officers to spend a period of at least twelve months in conscription before they can apply and gain entry to the institution. This is, in effect, a difference due to the policy being in use and in motion. **Figure 5.2** represents these requirements and the period of time spent at each stage.



**Figure 5.2: Timeline for Entry**

Furthermore, according to a military trainer at Institution A, the *Point of Entry* represents the institution's self-check mechanism during the selection process that ensures that the cadets will:

“...have the same basic training, same ethics, and same starting point so to speak. From there on after the Masters, the officers have very different career paths. They can generalise, or they can focus on, for example, military engineering, or teaching, or they can go abroad and that but... to have a starting point and to make sure that all the officers have certain knowledge, certain qualities...” (MT14Ia).

Therefore, the interested candidates who want to become military officers are subjected to several tests and must fulfil certain requirements. At both institutions, the ministry of defence had laid down the basic requirements that each candidate must achieve. Both institutions require candidates to pass a set of physical and health checks, written

examination, oral examination and group interviews. These thorough examinations are adopted to make sure that the candidates have the basic qualification, physical and mental abilities, and exhibit the desire to become an officer. More to this, there are also special requirements set by the Army Branches like the Navy and the Air Force to its candidates. These special requirements are usually related to work like being able to swim and to be able to function under the certain gravitational (G) force while flying.

In the events surrounding the processes involved during these particular points, one cadet commented that the ministry of defence has rights to put candidates under close, thorough and rigorous test. According to him;

“Of course [because] they are giving us a lot of money... and I think, it would be stupid to give us money for 5 years just to study and when the military training will start, we quit just because we can’t handle it. It is better to do it right from the start so that those who cannot handle the military life must not gain entry and get the money” (S5Y1Ib).

Even though, the view given by the cadet can be seen as an act by the respective government to protect their financial investments; the response also suggests the existence of an ‘elimination stage’ where “those who cannot handle the military life must not gain entry” into the institution. As to be discussed further in the coming sections, this is a recurrent theme found out through the interviews where there is a sense of agreement amongst all interviewees that the military profession is “a profession like none other” and is not “for everyone”.

As mentioned earlier, one significant difference between Institution A and Institution B relates to a military specific requirement and induction week based on briefings given by the education officers from each of the institutions. Institution A is

located in a European country where conscription or national service is compulsory to its general population for the duration of six months. However, in order to be considered for entry to the institution, candidates are required to spend at least twelve months as a conscript. Whereas, Institution B, on the other hand, is located in a country where conscription is no longer a policy. Instead, Institution B has laid down an intensive six weeks of basic military training plus another two weeks with the institution's Year Two cadets to integrate the newly admitted candidates with the military. Despite these differences, the present study failed to determine a significant difference in the time cadets' spent in becoming officers. Moreover, the study was also unable to clarify the impact of different systems and policies implemented by the two institutions on the cadets' MOE. Despite these, the time period stands as an important frame in transforming an officer as it serves as the first 'elimination process', where unsuitable candidates are identified and eliminated – a period known in this study as the 'Initiation Phase'.

### **5.1.3 The 'Initiation Phase'**

The discussion in this section begins with an account by one of the officers interviewed for this study. Being asked how he had felt about the military prior to his admission to the institution, the officer responded that he;

“...didn't have a clear idea what the real Army was like... I hardly knew what was there... I didn't know the Air Force, the Army or the Navy. For me, Army was like digging holes, marching around... like infantry. That was the basic idea that I had about the Army... shooting, digging holes and marching... something like that”  
(MT51b).

“Didn't have a clear idea” and “hardly knew what was there” are strong views that suggest the importance of an 'initiation' phase, whose sole purpose is to introduce the newly

admitted members of the public to the military communities of practice. This made the stage as an important one to the newly admitted young civilians who may find the military environment as an 'alien' one. One of the interviewee emphasised that this period is important;

“...to break from the civilian attitude... from the civilian life. So this is the moment where you can see people who said that ‘this is not for me’ and left and there are other people who said the same thing, but they go on... motivated to go on” (MT41b).

In order “to break from this civilian attitude”, cadets are subjected to the ‘military initiation’ phase – a period where they are introduced to the life in uniform and learn to comply with the rules and accept orders and authority. As, this point of contact is the first military experience for the cadets, which makes the period more important as, wrong or unfavourable experience may influence cadets’ opinion of what military is throughout their services. A military trainer from Institution A commented that;

“I think [the initiation phase] made the basics... basics for the officers. How, what we are thinking about leadership, management and things like that. That’s the basic and the bottom of the education. If you understand that, then you can be a good officer... I think. If you [do not understand] what we are doing in the first year, then you have a problem for the other years of course. Because [the education goes on and on]. There is no time to go back. And, if you drop something from this system in the first year, then it’s quite hard to get... to gain in again and move into the next year” (MT21a).



In other words, the point of entry represents a *transition period*, where the civilians now embark on the journey to transform themselves to be a part of military by becoming officers. This transition point, if successful, put a significant effect on facilitating cadets' ontological shifts as they learn:

“...[m]aybe three things. Well, first of all, as I mentioned, the whole military discipline and code of conduct... accepting that the discipline, the rules and the norms and living by them... at least the outlook of that... that is one. Your kind of accept your position, not to rebel which will not end well. And then, there are basic soldier skills you must gain... the bits a soldier does. And then, I think, maybe the third... is to have some sort of sense of belonging and the desire to complete your service” (MT9Ia).

However, accepting a military discipline, obeying and accepting one's position in a hierarchal institution, and to build a sense of belonging has proved to be more troublesome than stress-free. In one of the interview, one of the policymakers at Institution B recalled his 'military ordeal' as:

“...a big shock... the military... adapting the military life... somebody is shouting at you... I have more problems in obeying orders than giving orders (laughing). Sometimes, it is hard for me to shut-up and not thinking about me. It was not always but sometimes. Different from now... Now there is some obedience, but we encourage people early on to engage in things and think for themselves” (PM3Ib).

This experience was also observed to take place by the officers from Institution A. One of the military trainers recalled his experience and responded that;

“I remember some sense of shock for sure, I would say. Of course... new environment... new clothes... somebody shouting in your face all the time... But, what I also remember is a key that... the guys, with whom I shared... there were twelve guys in one small room... and us sharing the experience of that ‘shock’. I think that is one thing that lot of people won’t forget easily” (MT9Ia).

This shared feeling of ‘shock’ found across the two institutions seemed to be:

“... [scary as far as I remember] ... There were people yelling at me [but] I did not know why. Everybody was running so... yeah... (Laughing)... Yes, it was. Everything was strictly timed. You had to rush all the time. We had to hurry all the time. People were yelling... we did not know how to dress, what to do... It’s a different way of living. Living in a group 24-7 is difficult as well” (MT3Ib).

From the conversations, there is a clear indication that the cadets’ initial ‘shocks’ of adapting the military life may be a result of 1) getting themselves accustomed to dress properly in uniforms, 2) working and functioning as a group, 3) being ordered around, and 4) being required to complete and do certain tasks within a specified time limit. According to a military trainer from Institution B, the experience at this stage could be;

“...harsh at first. For example, we have to live with eight other people in a room. Then, there was the inspection where they will really look for the tiniest dust which really does not matter... like our shoes... it was shiny but it is not ‘shiny enough’. These things made us realise that we must obey rules no matter what... It could be done differently nowadays, but the aim will always be the same” (MT2Ib).

From the trainer account, it has been deduced that the aim of this ‘harsh’ period is crucial in getting the cadets in-line with the institution’s roles and purpose. This feeling of

nervousness during this period is evident from the researcher's conversation with the current cadets at both institutions. In a conversation with the third year cadets from Institution A, the following 'hardships' were observed:

S1: "I think, for me, it was the, especially during the first few days of the conscript service, a sort of... the end of privacy. You are now a part of a larger unit... we have twelve men in the same room... we did everything together. So, lack of privacy and the introduction of having to follow orders, not only the possibility to discuss a situation... you are told, so you do. This is very different from the civilian world. And also, the amount of tasks that were expected from us. In the beginning, it was felt that it was more than what we can accomplish. But through that, we found out that it is possible if we just try. So, at least, that's what comes to mind now" (Y3Ia).

Indeed, S1 struggled to be and function 'as a group' at this initial stage, which further supports the other above mentioned officers' comments. Earlier in the study's literature review, it has been established in what respect the MOE form is very much influenced by the society at large. As an effect, the military's desire to train these new cadets to work in groups is becoming more than just a task as the society is becoming much more individualistic. Furthermore, a cadet of third year at Institution B deliberated that:

S1: "I think the hardest thing was adapting to a military way of life... getting up early, thinking and functioning as a group mostly when you are in camps, you do everything together, you check your turf... It's like a routine that you have to form, to make. Also... discipline, like when your friends can go home after their classes in the civilian world... here, in the academy if they say you have to stay until 6.00 p.m., you just have to stay because that is the way it is..." (Y3Ib).

This feeling was also shared by his colleague who further deliberated that:

S3: What I've learnt mostly in those 6 weeks is to respect those above you. To know that what he says, you have to do it. If he says like; "You have to stay until 6.00", you must answer; "Yes Sir". That is how it must be. There will be a time that you will be the ones who are giving those kinds of orders, and other people will have to obey you. Therefore, you have to give up some freedom to accept that" (Y3Ib).

The discussions derived from the interviews with the policymakers, military trainers and the cadets from both institutions clearly suggest the main goal of this 'initiation phase' is to get the cadets into the military mind-set. Furthermore, the reflections and expressed opinions of this phase support the researcher's opinion that there are significant changes or shifts experienced by the cadets that transform them to become soldiers and then officers. In addition, this shift also involves, to a certain degree, troublesome experiences which may affect cadets' transformation.

Overall, the results presented in this section indicated that the initiation phase is important in preparing the future officers with the needed basic professional background of the military profession. On a different note, this phase can also be seen as the second 'elimination process', where candidates that did not have what it takes to be an officer were excluded. Hence, most importantly, the phase is a turning point where the cadet learns the 'route of rights' to become an officer. As discussed in Chapter IV, "an officer is always a soldier", thus, it makes a process of learning at this stage, more fundamental. It is the study's claim that the initiation phase is a period where cadets learn the trick-of-the-trade of the military profession and make the first ontological shift by passing thresholds for Soldiership, as discussed below.

## 5.2 SOLDIERSHIP: THE THRESHOLDS

To continue the discussion from the previous section, Soldiership is an ontological shift that potentially starts with the cadet's arrival at the institution, going through the initiation phase and may continue throughout the cadet's time at an institution. However, by going through these phases, the cadets must cross the three thresholds mentioned earlier in this chapter in order to transform themselves to become a soldier. This shift is most crucial for MOE as, it would be impossible for any cadet to proceed with his education and training, which set him to be in 'stuck places' thus leading him to leave an institution.

### 5.2.1 Preparedness to use legitimised violence

As presented in Chapter IV, soldiers are legally granted with special rights to use violence and necessary force in serving their roles and job. These 'professionals in violence' are also bounded by values, ethics, and rules that govern this legal responsibility. However, the concept that 'violence is a way to solve conflict' seems to be a foreign thought as the recent modern society has grown hostile to the idea of teaching people 'how to shoot and to kill another human being even if it is necessary'. As the cadets are also a part of that modern society, hence they might arrive at an institution with the same mindset. These conflicting ideas might affect the cadets' transformation, thus restricting their abilities to make the needed shift, which inevitably have an impact on their lives. According to one of the military trainers from Institution B:

"First from civilian to soldier... the basic concepts are discipline... controlled violence or the use of force and persistence.... [W]hen I talked about the use of force, we learn how to use and how to work with dangerous elements. You work with a rifle; you learn how to shoot... basically how to kill if necessary. You learn close-combat; you learn how to use your body as a weapon could be discipline... controlled violence or the use of force and persistence..." (MT91b).

This tangent of having to learn ‘how to kill if necessary’ is also evident from one of the interviews where one of the officers mentioned that;

“...military professional... As an essence, I think... military professionals... we are the managers of violence... in essence. The least violence as possible... but if necessary, the use of deadly violence, self-defence or using a wide variety of means and capabilities as an organised group. I think, this is the essence of military profession” (MT1b).

Earlier in the chapter (**Chapter V, 5.1.1**), a point has been mentioned about a shooter being trained to shoot for a shooting competition does not transform him/her into a soldier. Even though the skills and equipment used by both of these individuals may be the same, the end-purpose of learning such skills differs significantly. If a trained shooter uses his/her ability to knock down unanimated targets being put at a distance, a soldier uses his/her skill to shoot and kill a live human being. Furthermore, a policymaker from Institution B asserted that a soldier must be:

“...somebody who is [prepared] to use force and to be subjected to force in order to preserve the national interest. Yeah... I think that is the little bit... the essence of being in a military. You can use force... you can be a victim of force for the international and national interest” (PM3Ib).

This brings us to the other aspect of this ‘legitimised violence’, where the soldier is not just an agent that administers force, but also the subject of violence. In other words, apart from administering the violence on behalf of the nation, a soldier must also prepare himself to die for the nation’s interest.

An important point to ponder here is that the nature of ‘violence’ permitted to be carried out by a soldier is governed by a certain set of value system. The system – which includes other variables like laws, statutes and ethics – would be an important feature that differentiates a soldier from a terrorist. According to one interviewee, as soldiers;

“...we have a sense of responsibility... as a doctor is responsible for the lives of his patients and supposed to help the people in need. For me, it is about the same thing with military... to help people in need, to be responsible for their lives. But on the other hand, a doctor is not supposed to take a life. Whereas we, within our responsibility, also lay violence... to protect lives, we need to be able to take lives as well. I think, this is the main difference here... Into the protection of the people because one of our biggest finality of the military is to protect population and civilians” (MT5Ib).

While, another said that;

“It is realistic to know that a soldier must be trained to... severe situations. You have to use weapons... so, I think, it is normal for a public to say that a soldier is someone who can use violence aimed at the situation that is necessary. It is not a ‘soldier of love’... you know. It’s a profession... but there are limitations... there are laws and so on” (MT10Ib).

Interestingly, this “normal views” from a public that “a soldier is someone who can use violence aimed at the situation that is necessary” does pose some contrasting and troubling learning difficulties. As a result, there are some cadets who get caught in a liminal space that inevitably forces them to leave an institution. The issue will be further discussed in Chapter VII.

### 5.2.2 *Esprit de Corps*

The second threshold for Soldiership would be *Esprit de Corps* –shared beliefs and values among the individuals within a group and their desire to achieve a common goal. Throughout the interview sessions with the policymakers, officers and trainers and also the cadets, *Esprit de Corps* was a central theme in becoming a soldier. In one of the interview, a higher ranking officer in institution A responded that;

“...a soldier is a person who is trained to fight as a member of a unit. So, he has to understand how the unit works and his position in the unit in order for him to do his job” (PM2Ia).

While, another officer brought up that;

“...in military, there is the group thing... Yes, we have to work as a group, you have to look as a group... in French, it is called as *Esprit de Corps*... the corps spirit” (PM3Ib).

Commenting on the traits of a soldier, one of the officers indicated that a soldier is;

“...a team player. He must be aware that he is always a part of the team whether, he is a team leader or follower. He is always a part of team” (MT5Ib).

Indeed, being “a team player” has been strictly emphasised during the cadet’s initiation phase. A student of third year commented that;



S1: "I think, the hardest thing was adapting to the military way of life... getting up early, thinking and functioning as a group mostly when you are in camps, you do everything together, you check your turf... It's like a routine you have to form...to make" (Y3Ib).

As mentioned in Chapter II, the cadets were new-comers to the military; they were put in a situation that forced them to integrate in such a way that it created a bond that started as shared feelings of awkwardness and the confusions due to their new lives. Over time, the cadets would have built an understanding that group cohesion comprising of different people with different expertise is crucial to accomplish a certain goal.

Through the interview session at both institutions, it has been determined that the cadets must willingly sacrifice their own personal interests and put the interest of the group or the organisation as a priority. According to a policymaker at Institution B;

"I think; it is a state of mind. If I compare myself and also the cadets here to how people think... the main difference is that the military people... they kind of... it's a mix between individualism and group affect. So, I think it is essential for a good soldier and a good officer to think individually for the benefit of a group. So, you have to work with a group of people; a platoon, a company, a brigade... to do [a] job... a common aim. In case, if everybody will start thinking on his own, you will never achieve objectives. So, it is always a mix between individual thoughts and working in a group for benefit of a group. Moreover, you can see it less and less in civilian society... I am not talking about people working in the NGOs... but in general, people are thinking individually. I think, it's a state of mind for sacrificing yourself for the bigger good" (PM3Ib).

Another higher-ranking officer in institution A commented that in order to transform and become a person that is able to 'sacrifice himself for the greater good', one;

"...has to be a team player. A soldier never works alone. So, he has to be a real team player [where] [h]is ambition is no longer important than the interest of the group as [a] soldier, on his own, cannot complete any mission. He has to work in a group. So, if he is not a team player, he will not be a good soldier" (PM11b).

It seems, based on the excerpt above, being trained to accept one's identity of being part of a group is an important concept in Soldiership. Being asked how different 'a team' is in the military to those in the civilian world, an officer responded by saying;

"I think, at a certain point, a civilian would choose to solve his personal problems before the problems of the group. I think [as a soldier] there will be a moment when you say; "Ok, first I will have to solve the problem of the group before I go on with my own problem". I think, that is the biggest difference between a civilian... where he will always try to solve his own problem before the problems of the group. So, it is always that... a soldier lives in a group, breathes in the group... actually he puts the group before him. We like to say that you are a soldier 24/7. Even, when you go home, there's always a possibility that we will be called back to do our job but, a civilian, when they go back home... that is the end of work. When a soldier goes back home, he is still a soldier" (MT21b).

Overall, these findings may help to understand the '*Esprit de Corps*', as the concept involves a great understanding of the importance of the group. Being able to do so, the cadets then gain a certain level of trust and dependency as a soldier in a group. According to one of the officers;

“For military, in a way, one is dependent on a group and group is very much dependent on this one guy. Moreover, this is something where the emphasis is given on. That’s fact whether it’s a small or bigger group. As a civilian, of course, it is same in many ways, but in military, you are always dependent on the person, or uniform, or organisation. As a civilian, you don’t... when you go out you don’t say you work with this and this department. In many ways, what you do and don’t do, it will always come back to the unit you are representing. “Ok, this soldier did this positive/negative thing on his/her free time” (MT10Ia).

This view raises intriguing ideas on *‘Esprit de Corps’*, where a soldier is “always dependent on a person, or uniform, or an organisation” that suggests a shift from being an individualistic to a person who is reliant on his group in order to function. In a conversation with an officer at institution A, he indicated that;

“I say at that time when you are eighteen to twenty-one years old like, what most of the conscript are, the biggest adjustment is that they do not have a responsibility of taking care of others or someone. So, they need to learn how to team... teamwork. And, that is usually a skill that you learn during your first few months. That’s the key factor” (MT4Ia).

One must not jump into an early conclusion that this aspect of *‘Esprit de Corps’* means that a soldier would lose his ability to function as an individual, rather he gains another functional way to achieve his goal and mission. This is crucial for soldiers as they will have to rely on each other in order to guarantee their survival during combat missions. This emphasis on ‘I can count on you’ paradigm is evident as one of the first year cadet at institution A recalled an experience where;

S1: "From the moment you stop or you are late, there are other people waiting for you, and they can get a punishment because of you" (Y11a).

This situation 'pushed' the cadets to have and create a strong cohesion among members in a unit, as being mentioned by a military trainer at Institution A who mentioned that the cohesiveness can be learned by;

"... [acting] as a part of a group... and remember that you must consider other people around you. And, that is something that some people might find difficult when they are in a military environment" (MT101a).

And;

"...taking care of each other... create some kind of cohesion within a group because you can't survive as an individual, you have to work as a group, as a team. Otherwise, we have usually seen a lot of individual people who are alone that do not survive" (MT31b).

One might start questioning the method and approach being used, but as, one of the cadets put it;

S4: "It was not always a bad pressure... because all cadets watch each other and they support each other. This is something that I think, does not exist in many places" (Y11b).

Another side of the *Esprit de Corps* would be on the importance of having and creating a group of people that share the same ethics, tradition and values. This aspect, among other, is seen as crucial for many of the interviewees where a majority of them are of the opinion that;

“...in order to become a military personnel you need to be able to think in actual and live the military. So, you live in a group, you act in group and become a team player” (MT51b).

Where, as a soldier, you will;

“[Never] give in... to be confident of your skills and to trust yourself and your teammates... to be able to do that” (MT41a).

In order to do so, most of the cadets;

“... [are here] for the whole time... almost whole time... in groups. They are used to live with their colleagues... in good times and also bad times. Especially, during the camp time; when it's cold, when it's raining, when it is not amusing. When you compare this to the civilian students, they go out a lot... they do not have a lot of colleagues. Here you will have to work together to complete the mission but, in the civilian university; I will only have just me. I won't say that the civilians are more egoists, but you can only learn how to work in a group by only be in a group and also leading a group” (MT41b).

Going through such training, especially during the initiation phase, one cadet from the first year responded that;

S5: "I think ... six weeks... are necessary to set the military mind-set. As, it is not just a job from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. These six weeks bring a huge change of how you used to live your life before. So, it is clear to everyone that it is not just another regular job that you execute during the day but a way of life. Living together in a group, living for what you do... so it is important to have a very intense adaptation period..." (Y31b).

While, another commented that;

S2: "I think it is also important to say that it is how you realise that you are not on your own, and you really need to help each other... and that some are weaker, and you have to go through it as a group and not as an individual" (Y31b).

It is recognised that there is a danger during the analysis of this data that the researcher has over-emphasised this point. One might argue that the aspect is also evident among any other civilian students in any public universities like nursing, social-work or teaching students of whom would work with their peers as colleagues to support each other through a process. As it has been mention earlier in the section, soldiers rely on each other not only to ensure their own lives, but also the lives of others. It is in this nature of 'working hazard' – kill or be killed – that resulted to in *Esprit de Corps* that is different from other professions. A nurse may lose a patient life due to a poor support for his/her colleague but it may happen in a situation where his/her own life is not at risk. This is entirely different to a soldier, whose mistakes may not only be his/her own life, but also that of others.

### 5.2.3 Prompt and unquestioned execution of the command

The third threshold in becoming a soldier would be following orders from superiors, which can simply be defined as “*doing what one is told when you are told*”. This conclusion is derived from the responses gathered from the question “what does it take to become a soldier”? An interviewee mentioned that to be a soldier, he should know that he will face things which are not ‘fun’ but he will still have to do it. Other responses to the questions included describing a soldier as “somebody who is ready to obey orders and do as he is being told”. One’s willingness to do something “you do not necessary like” suggests a whole new level of obedience, once this threshold has been crossed. Therefore, it seems to suggest that the “obedience” in the military is very much demanded as a right and is not as a favour. Another officer responded that this aspect requires;

“...a big transformation from a civilian into military... to obey orders... being put sharply. It all goes down to that. You are not your master anymore. You are in ‘a system’” (PM31b).

Description of being “in a system” suggests that the military requires a whole new and different level of obedience from its personnel. Furthermore, another interviewee mentioned that;

“Well... the military life, it’s ... its quite different from a civilian life... what the young people are used to do before their military service. There are certain schedules; it’s physically very demanding, and you have to follow the orders. Whereas, in the first phase, we concentrate on that... that you follow the orders” (PM11a).

Just like the other two thresholds, this threshold is also important to be understood by the cadets during the initiation phase. In a discussion with the cadets, one of them reflected and agreed that;

S2: "I would say that following orders is the first thing that you will have to learn because it is the same thing in the barracks or in the field. If you can't follow the orders, you can't complete your task or your mission and eventually, you will fail. All the other things; physical stuffs, shooting... come later but following orders is the first thing" (Y1Ia).

The strong opinion over having solid compliance from its personnel in the military may be explained by the fact that soldiers are ultimately responsible towards the completion of a mission entrusted upon them. According to one of the higher ranking officers included in the study, a soldier;

"...understands the people above him giving orders, and soldiers always fulfil the orders and accomplish the mission" (PM2Ia).

And the soldier must;

"...know how to take a command... to listen and obey... and who can put his personal feelings aside for a higher purpose" (MT9Ib).

Hence, it can be inferred here that taking in directives and executing the command bounded the soldiers to complete their mission as it becomes a 'higher purpose' for them to accomplish. A military trainer in institution B commented that;



“...a soldier is somebody who has to follow a specific rule in order to obtain some objectives. So, he learns to follow certain principles in order in the military organisation to obtain his objectives. He specifies means in order to resolve the conflict because the core function of the organisation is of course to try to combat operation and to serve in a certain way in a conflict or to ensure other specific objectives to defend national territory and this and that. It’s the lowest level of the organisation, but they are doing the ‘real job’ I think...” (MT10Ib).

Building this capacity to obey and follow orders will prove to be important for cadets, because once they become an officer, they are:

“...told where to go. Here, officers have to move around through different countries to different units, brigades and so on... because they are ordered to go there. ‘Now you have to go there... we have a rotation system... people are retiring... we need an officer for each position’. And that’s an order. You have to go” (PM21a).

As discussed earlier, military is a total organisation where it governs in almost every aspect of its officers. Being one, an institution requires its officers to relocate to another place or maybe to a different country where the officer is likely to obey. Apart from that, it is important for the cadets to learn that:

“[when] you receive some orders; you have to follow them. For example, when you receive some timing for you to do something... you really have to do it within a specified time period. Moreover, if there are rules and regulation on how you do something, you must do it that way. For me, the most important thing to be learned is to do things the way an organisation wants you to do, not the way you

want to do it. Because, if you do things according to how the organisation wants you to do, that is the only way to help an organisation to do things right on the bigger scale. In this way, we don't have many thousands of "solos" going on... we should play a same song" (MT8Ia).

In order to be able to do so, the newly admitted cadets must learn to accept that in the military, authority is not questioned. This is crucial because, an institution would like to produce a soldier "who can execute the given orders without hesitation" (PM1Ib). This is important because being a soldier means that a person will be subjected to work in a combat situation where he must;

"...get familiarised with the ways of the army. You have to be able to take command from someone else. When someone says to you; "You do this" ... you do it... you don't ask questions, you do it. Or you can ask a question (laughing) anyway... So, in order to be able to work in a community when somebody is higher than you and giving you instruction or orders to do something... It might be different if you are at home or at school... the atmosphere. So, you have to learn to be more disciplined in a way, so you can co-operate in an actual environment. Of course, the safety issue comes with that when you are in an environment where you have weapons. So... being in a situation when lives of others is in your hands... so you must be willing to do what you are told" (MT14Ia).

For this reason, military has put a huge emphasis on embedding obedience among the cadets during their training period. The cadet from the second year at institution A provided the following reflection.

S4: ... “in one exercise we were ordered to make a raft. Then after that, the officer came and checked and told us that we should be making another type of raft. But the order was to make a raft. It was a wrong raft but if we did not make any raft that would be worse than having a wrong kind of raft because we have disobeyed the orders. As, in military, you cannot choose which order do you want to obey because usually the lower rank does not have enough information to decide what to do” (Y2Ia).

At one level, this exercise clearly depicts how the military shaped the cadets’ attitude of obeying orders to ‘make a raft despite the possibility of building the wrong kind of raft’. On the other hand, the given accounts clearly suggest how the habit of obeying commands and orders is embedded within the cadet’s psyche. It is interesting to include another comment made by another cadet from the same institution who mentioned that:

S4: “I don’t give a damn how stupid the order is. It makes no difference. It has to be done anyhow... We may know who gives the command higher up... and going down the orders might change in a way or the utmost command may not have a clear view of the situation or the severity of the order... but when it reaches to the down level, it must be done. It does not work in a way where you question the orders and do not do something in a real combat situation... It won’t work... anyhow...” (Y2Ia).

Interestingly, such reflection leads the study to wonder how the military manages this and is able to demand such obedience from its personnel. One possible explanation would be that there is a correlation between obedience and the military’s discipline and regimentation. One of the interviewees mentioned that;

“Discipline I think... being able to accept things even if they think are not best for them...” (MT10Ib).

And it is;

... also very strict. ‘Strict’ might be a little bit ‘bad word’ but the discipline is different than any other organisations” (MT14Ia).

One of the officers explained that;

“...of course, for us, it is also different from civilian life... we have our own rules... it’s very... kind of ‘guided’ ways of how we deal with issues... how do we need to do things that we do? Of course, there are those in the civilian life also, but it would be very different, I think” (MT8Ia).

For this reason, new cadets must get themselves familiarised to the very idea of;

“...discipline. That is very important for new recruit. You are permanently under stress... It is new... Discipline... if you don’t do what they ask you, you will have a reaction on that and so on and so on” (MT7Ib).

As this is introduced to the cadets;

“...gradually... as in drill. We have several ways of saluting, parades, marching... how you look, how you dress in certain dress code... how to make the bed orderly. In the beginning, these are all simple tasks and later on those elements... how you are perceived by the other people. If I have to walk like this... with a rank like

that... (the officer is making a body gesture which refers to a badly dressed officer) it would not give me a good image. And, that is how one says, it has to be done with a discipline. You learn norms and values that are somewhat different than the ones that we are used to in our lives" (MT9Ib).

A cadet from the third year at institution B commented that;

S2: "I think, the hardest thing was adapting to the military way of life... getting up early, thinking and functioning as a group mostly when you are in camps, you do everything together, you check your turf... It's like a routine you have to form, to make. Also... discipline like when your friends can go home after their classes in the civilian world... here, in the academy if they say, you have to stay until 6.00 p.m., you just have to stay because that is the way it is..." (Y3Ib).

While, another cadet of second year in institution A reacted that;

S6: "I think that one thing that I have understood is a discipline... First, when you enter the service, you have to be disciplined. 'Why do I have to do things like this... right now?' So, you question things. After 6 months, you get back, as you become NCO and you have your own conscript to train... you really understand that without discipline, it is very hard to control them. So, it is necessary. They don't have to be comfortable in order for the group to work. So... it's the common good..." (Y2Ia).

**Figure 5.3** is a graphical representation for the ontological shift and the thresholds involved in becoming a soldier.

POINT OF ENTRY

ONTOLOGICAL  
SHIFT 1

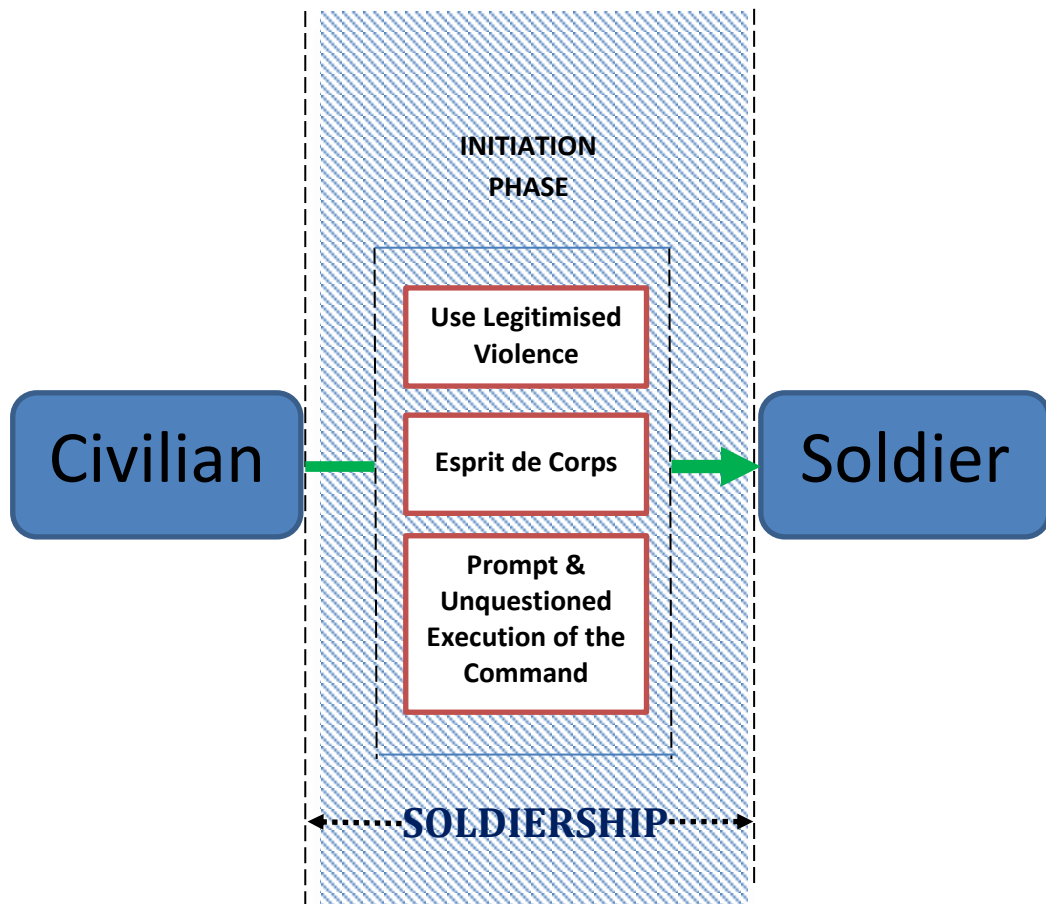


Figure 5.3: Thresholds for Soldiership

### 5.3 SUMMARY

The chapter aimed to determine the key conceptual transformations in the training of military cadets and leaders at higher military education institution from the policymakers', military trainers' and teachers', and cadet's perspectives. As presented in the previous chapter, this chapter elaborated on the findings regarding the first ontological shift known as Soldiership. Interestingly, the study had managed to describe how the transformation may take place during

a period known as the “Initiation Phase”. The chapter has also established that there would be three thresholds crossing that might happen in order to ensure transformation;

1. Preparedness to use legitimised violence
2. *Esprit de Corps*
3. Prompt and unquestioned execution of command

The Chapter VI discusses the second part of the ontological shift: **Officership**.

## Chapter VI

# Ontological Shift II: Officership

*Battles are won by slaughter and manoeuvre.  
The greater the General, the more he  
contributes in manoeuvre, the less he demands  
in slaughter.*

— Winston S. Churchill

### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

Up to this point, the discussion in previous chapters has portrayed the stages of becoming an officer at military institutions that provide higher level education. The previous chapter has explored the thresholds necessary for the first ontological shift; Soldiership. This chapter seeks to answer the study's research question mentioned earlier in Chapter V by discussing the next key conceptual transformations in cadets' MOE.

To begin with, it is important for a cadet seeking the status of an officer to undergo the phase of transformation mentioned in Chapter V, to become a soldier. In one of the interviews, one of the military trainers mentioned that the process in becoming an officer;

“...is an understanding why the military itself... why the officer corps exists... why we do what we do... and the willingness to do that work. So, I would say... it is somehow... also the understanding and the willingness to take up that responsibility and challenge and start doing it. Hence, understanding is a part of that transformation. I am not sure if I understand all that even now... but I think that must have been a key. It's not like a lightning bolt; 'ahh... now I understand everything'... I think it's more like a gradual



transformation. And then, there are moments of doubts for everybody... there are good times and bad times... and the key is to push on despite the bad things. It's a gradual process that happens during that period of four years" (MT9Ia).

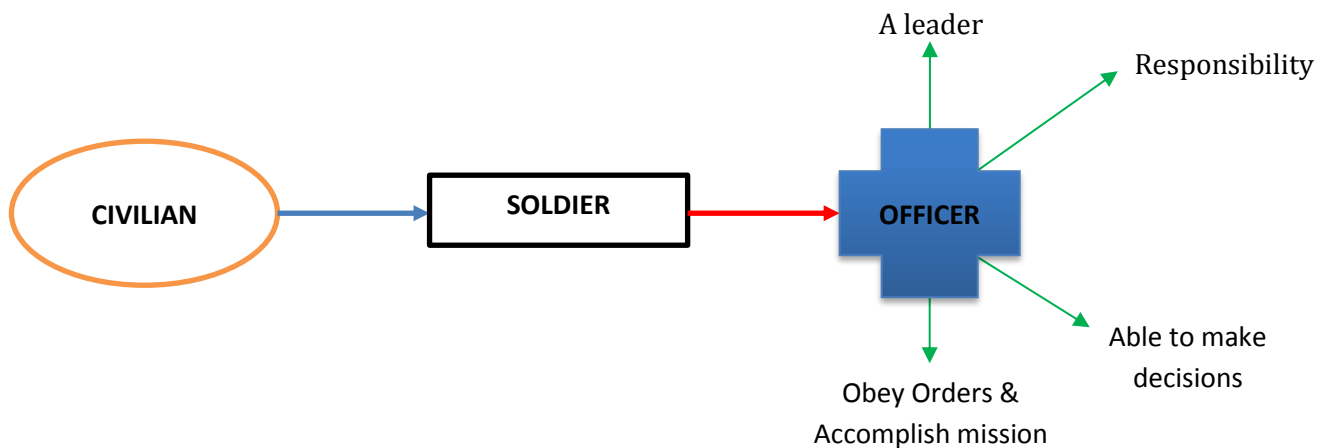
As discussed previously, there is an amount of 'understanding what being an officer is all about' – accepting responsibilities and the 'burden of leadership'. As mentioned before, cadets undergoing through transformation in institutions like those included in this study must understand what Soldiership is and be able to perform and exemplify its embedded concepts. However, the cadet officers do not have to be a;

"...good soldier, but you need to know [what you need to]. You can't choose the military lifestyle not knowing what it means... I think, the soldier part is a big part during the first three years, but I think that the meaning, if you are searching for a deeper meaning is a deeper line that you start your transformation from soldier to an officer; you are taking a little further away from the technical stuffs. And the routine stuff, to everything behind it" (MT13Ia).

Earlier, in criticism of available literature, the author argued that the study of MOE and MOE throughout the years has been an exclusive study of the mechanics of officers' education – courses needed to be introduced, leadership theories and development, what and how the military should do to cope with new forms of threats and new technological advances that require advanced technical understanding. It has been explained by a military trainer that a huge time and effort is given to develop cadets' knowledge on 'what the soldiers do'. Yet, the excerpt also suggests the 'behind the scene' part of the MOE that is more than just these 'technical and the routine stuff' to become an officer. Hence, this chapter attempts to move away from these technicalities by presenting the crucial concepts that enable cadets to make the second ontological shift – Officership.

## 6.1 OFFICERSHIP

As Chapter IV suggests that the four important themes have been identified for the second ontological shift, presented in Figure 6.1. This shift can be seen as an ultimate goal in the institutions under study, where cadet officers are given university level education with military training that prepares them as military officers, thus labelling this shift as Officership.



**Figure 6.1: Officership**

However, all the qualities presented in Figure 6.1 above found through the interviews are not transformative. The data analysis provided in Chapter IV described the process of becoming an officer as a phase that involves assuming the mantle of responsibility and acceptance of a leadership role. In addition, the phase also requires the yet-to-be-officers to learn necessary psychological distancing from the troops and prepare them to impose sanctions and punishments where necessary for a mission's completion and to achieve 'the greater good'. In order to determine whether a concept is transformative, some considerations over those found qualities are needed. To begin with, Chapter IV explained that one of the policymakers reported by saying that a transformation from soldier to officer involves a change from 'being told what to do' to 'thinking on your own and telling others' (PM3Ib). Obviously, transforming from 'being told what to do' to 'thinking on your own and telling others' is an entirely new paradigm needed to be

understood by the cadets as, they become familiar with the idea of obedience. Therefore, among others, it requires the cadets to learn how to;

“...think [before acting] ... and not acting and then thinking” (PM51b).

Whereas, this is achieved by the following kind of understanding:

“I think, if you want to command soldiers, you have to learn the work of the soldiers and start from the lowest level” (PM21b).

Based on the discussion, becoming an officer does not only require the cultivation of cadets’ ability to think critically and extending his decisions effectively to his men, but also the knowledge of the roles and functions engaged by a soldier. This is important because an officer is not only responsible for being ‘in-charge’ and for managing orders, but also accountable for all the decisions that are made and outcomes of those decisions. A military trainer from Institution B commented that this is so because;

“The level of responsibility is much higher for the officer. He is in charge of a bunch of people and he has to make sure that his guy does as being told. So, the responsibility... is like... the officer is dad of a family. The level of responsibility is much higher. The difference is also intrinsic... so the officers are the ones who do all these things because they believe in it while, a soldier does not really have this affection. He just does what he is being told, he does not go further” (MT21b).

Cultivating this sense of responsibility among the cadets is understandable as they are future officers who are expected to lead their soldiers in battles and ultimately ask these soldiers to sacrifice their own lives for ‘the greater good’. Now the questions arise that how exactly an officer

is developed and become like this? Is it enough for an officer to manage his men during peace, which makes them as effective in the time of crisis?

Putting these questions forward, the author would like to argue that cadets who have built a good grasp on Soldiership may be in a better position to move on to the next shift, which is Officership. For that, three further thresholds are suggested, which must be considered as important in transforming a cadet to become an officer. These three concepts are;

- a. Personal responsibility for the execution of mission;
- b. Putting others before self;
- c. The “power to command”

#### **6.1.1 Personal responsibility for execution of mission**

It is important to begin the discussion of Officership’s thresholds with a notion of ‘responsibility’. According to Walter F. Ulmer (2010), “the purpose of ‘leadership’ within an Army is to get the job done” (137) and in order to get ‘the job done’, someone must shoulder and bear a responsibility for making things happen. A policymaker at Institution B described his transformation from Soldiership to Officership as follows:

“...[f]rom soldiership to officership... I might exaggerate this but anyone can become a soldier, but not everybody can become an officer. There is a big difference as I mentioned in the beginning. An officer is a soldier plus all the aspects. In my case... it is accepting responsibility. As a soldier... even as a cadet... it was easy. They told us what to do; we executed it, and we got our points. But when I came to my unit, I was made responsible for my unit. Suddenly, I had 30 people... I was responsible for. I never learned this aspect at academy except

during the winter and summer camps. But, this was also happening to my colleagues...“(PM1Ib).

This notion of being ‘responsible’ is seen to be shared among the officers from both institutions. Based on the responses too, the author immediately sensed a change of the weight being put on the shoulders of these young officers as soon as they are assigned to their units, once commissioned. One clarification of this would be a fact that an;

“...officer is a leader and he or she has to take responsibility... give orders and sometimes have to make difficult decisions” (MT5Ia).

It is clear that all other professions – no matter, which field – involve the appointment of managers to manage other workers to achieve specified goals. Thus, it makes the notion of ‘responsibility’ as something general that could be found in any organisation. Nonetheless, the military’s structural essence of being strongly hierarchal distinguishes this concept from the other professions and makes it both unique and distinctive. To begin with, an officer is required to make immediate decisions that may involve human casualties. According to a policymaker from Institution B;

“An officer, for me, is someone who feels responsible, who is able to take initiatives, able to perform his duties after receiving even the smallest amount of information. He has to think about the situation, and he has to make up his mind and find a solution and give orders to his soldiers” (PM1Ib).

The excerpt suggests that an officer, once entrusted with a mission, would not just be in control, but also accountable for an outcome of the mission. Furthermore, to think about

the situation, making up a decision, finding a solution, and giving orders for concrete actions, an officer is required to;

“...[have] a right mentality. He does what is needed to be done, whether, if you are qualified or not... just do the job first then come and make complain. And, the work must be done no matter what are the circumstances. You have to respect the safety regulation but on the other hand, the job must be done” (MT3Ib).

It is this sense of ‘having the right mentality’ that differentiates the officers from other professions– their sense of responsibility happens at a personal level. This enables them to commit themselves for undertaking more intimately. In the interview with the first year cadets at Institution B, the following conversation was observed.

S6: “And, I think among the civilian, if you are stuck... it is easier for you to blame other people. But in the military, if you get stuck... everybody knows that it is you. You are responsible for your actions and decision because if you do not take the blame, then everybody else would be blamed as well” (Y1Ib).

From the conversation, the study determined that a cadet must learn to accept and bear the responsibility of an outcome of a mission from an early stage. Being asked to describe what does it takes for a cadet to develop this feeling of ‘personal responsibility’, a military trainer explained that the cadet must;

“...[developed] I would say bravery would be number one, not in itself... but it makes it possible to act. Number two would be his desire to complete the task he is given, try to complete his mission and at the same time, he must have a deep compassion and care for his subordinates. So, he must be more like a father figure

to his subordinates. So, those two compete a bit... you desire to complete the mission... the will to complete the mission must go together with the compassion to your subordinates. Then fourth... he must be able to think through quickly... to make decisions based on his decision-making process and finally, he must be fair and just in all his dealings. So, it's bravery; so that he is able to function, secondly, he must have a goal to complete his mission, fair to his subordinates, able to make sound decisions and then he must be just. It is not an easy task in a real world I must say... "(MT9Ia).

Moreover, an officer may not, even if he or she is able to do so, reject a task or mission as an effect from crossing 'prompt and unquestioned execution of the command' (Section 5.2.3 pg. 153), thus making it impossible for an officer to abandon or reject new mission and assignments. This was clearly explained by an officer who said;

"...when it comes to operations, there is a huge difference. I mean... I get a mission and I have to fulfil the mission. I cannot say, "I don't agree with this... thank you... bye-bye" ... No... The sense of obligation is far bigger and as I said, eventually this is not something you think about a lot but eventually you have to be prepared to make an ultimate sacrifice... if that's what needs to be done, it has to be done" (PM5Ib).

In other words, once this concept of 'responsibility' is grasped, the officer would never treat a mission 'because they have to, but more towards 'because they want to'. This may have its cliché, but evidence gathered on the training approach which is carried out by institutions to embed this, clearly suggests its importance. In one of the interviews with the officers from Institution B, one of them recalled his experience of going through the officers' training.

“Not only you have to think on your own; you have to be responsible. I remember, once I came late for an assembly. I was not punished but the others had to do some push-ups and say thank you to me. I can tell you that it was not a good feeling so you learn a lot quickly... specially to help each other. You will have to really think about your colleagues and not just yourself” (MT4Ib).

Even though the usage of punishment is normally seen as negative; the method is directed at teaching the cadets about the consequences of one’s decision – no matter how small it might be, it would have a significant effect to those around the person making it. As an effect, an officer would have to make an enormous amount of initiatives to plan, manage and execute the mission entrusted to him/her. A policymaker from Institution B marked out that;

“Being an officer is not only giving orders. It also involves planning, organising, commanding, leading, controlling... it’s much more. And we try to learn all that in here” (PM1Ib).

Again, one might argue that this effort in laying down action plans for a mission by an officer could be carried out by any manager of a business or any other corporate executives. This might be true for officers during peace-time but one must also consider the risk faced by these managers of violence, and the hazard involved in an officer’s job description during a time of conflict. This concern was expressed by a cadet in one of the group discussion who said;



S3: “As officers... as soldiers... when it comes to a bad decision, it is not like a company that loses millions. In military, a bad decision can cost lives. It is not something that you can take lightly. It is a big decision” (Y31b).

Considering these aspects gives the officers a harder task and a lot more to think about. This challenge seems more than real when one of the policymakers at Institution B mentioned that;

“... [there is also now] a change in mind between now and let say during the period of the Cold War. Cold War is a period what we called... ‘Detailed command’. It means, from a high level to a lower level... every order is given in detail. You have to achieve this mission, and when you want to achieve this mission, you have to do this in such a way. Nowadays, we try to teach our cadets that an officer will receive a mission and objectives, but ‘how’ is his problem. It is not a problem for the chief anymore. It’s his problem. We call this ‘mission command’” (PM11b).

Deciding on ‘how’ and the realisation that they ‘can lose lives’ makes the task of making the right decision more crucial in transforming a mere soldier to an officer that is able to function during combat.

### **6.1.2 Obligation to put needs of troops before personal needs**

The second threshold in becoming an officer involves a degree of empathy where the officer must put his/her troop’s needs ahead of theirs. Earlier, in Chapter IV, one of the higher ranking officers at Institution A emphasised how important it is for a cadet not to “just come to an officer’s rank” (i.e. enter service at officer grade). A reason for this is so that the officers;

“...know the life somewhere down there... if I can put it in this way... how they feel, how they do and how their life goes on. So must have an understanding and plan and give the orders away. You can do this in a more proper way” (PM21a).

This feeling of ‘empathy’ is an aspect which is highly regarded among cadets, who are educated and trained at the institutions under study. One of the military trainers at Institution B explained that the institution’s curriculum gives a particular emphasis on;

“...[knowing] the position of a soldier. Because, if you are later an officer, you can’t imagine in what... what situation a soldier must work. If you don’t know that, it’s very difficult to have an image of what soldier feels, think, what is the message of a soldier and so on and so on... That is very important that you start as a soldier and you... in a way of graduation, you evolve as an officer” (MT71b).

As mentioned earlier in the previous section, this concept is of particular importance because;

“...the levels of violence [in the profession may someday require us (the officers) to ask our men and women to put their lives in physical danger or even losing our lives” (MT11b).

In other words, in order to have an ability to ‘ask’ and ‘demand’ others to put their lives on the line, an officer must display the will to do the same. Moreover, as a leader, the officer must be;

“...[l]oyal, ready to adapt and love self-discipline. I think that are important... especially respect. Nowadays, you need to have a lot of respect from your people.

You can't treat them as dirt. Even though, there is a big difference between colonels to a soldier, but I will never treat them as dirt. They are my colleagues" (PM1Ib).

In the conversation with one of the officers at Institution B, an officer emphasised that;

"I think at one time when... I was a first lieutenant, and I came back for my first three weeks' course here at Institution B. They asked me to prepare for these young people who didn't know anything about what they are going to face... I told them that the most important thing is to listen and talk to people. Being able to talk to people... listen to people. Empathy. If you are able to do that, it is easier to become a good leader or a good officer. Living yourself into a situation is important... of your soldiers or your colleagues... The team spirit is very important... responsibility" (MT5Ib).

A policymaker from Institution B commented on the matter by saying that;

"... officers always work together with people especially, in a field. So, he needs to understand what is going on in his platoon. Moreover, he is living the same things as his people... and that is another main difference, in my opinion, in military/civilian life. We need to, we have to live together and there is a very strong cohesion spirit in the military because when we go abroad in operation, there is not much privacy, there is not much luxury... so the more officers know what's life amongst its people, amongst his platoon, amongst their soldier... the more better he can understand and anticipate. That is something you don't have in civilian life where people are normally working nine-to-five then they go home and off with their jobs. That is something which is not going to happen in military

life and that is also what we are training them for. Here, in Institution B; living together, helping each other, telling them right from the first day ‘Hey guys, if you are working as a stand-alone guy, isolated... it will be tough. If you start, from the first day to work together, to help each other... then you have much more chances to succeed in your training here at Institution B” (PM4Ib).

One important aspect of this threshold is that an officer must feel that he is responsible towards his soldiers’ welfare and well-being. An officer from Institution A mentioned that;

“As a soldier, one is responsible for working of a unit and the officer is probably more responsible in making the unit work together in order to get to an actual objective or filling the goal or filling the mission given to him. So basically, the officer is responsible for the whole unit; how he sees it... also the individual soldier; his responsibility is to take care of other soldiers and to make sure that the unit work as well as he can” (MT4Ia).

In an interview, a higher ranking officer at Institution A responded that;

“Maybe the most important thing is that as a soldier, you are taking care of yourself. I am number one. But, when you are an officer, you are not number one. Your soldier is number one. You are doing the business for them. And, you are taking care of your soldiers” (PM1Ia).

Furthermore;

“... I should take care of my soldier. I should also prepare my own stuffs but also check the gears of my soldier. I should prepare my mission. When my soldiers are

exhausted, I will be exhausted. But, I should still be able to become an example to motivate them, to go on... to overcome my own difficulties and in a meanwhile, to help out my soldiers. This is a process they are going to learn throughout these years during military training... together with the tactic of their job; tactics and all that stuffs. So, it all comes together” (PM4Ib).

For this reason, both institutions;

“...train cadets so that when they are eating on an exercise, for example, as platoon commander, you are the last one to eat. First, you will have to serve to your soldiers, your sergeant and then you are the last one to eat” (PM1Ia).

This is important as one of the officers included in the study mentioned that;

“For me personally, it is not important for them to know if they can shoot very well. That is not important. They have to know how to [a] handle weapon... of course. But, for me, being an officer or a military is more than just being a good shooter. For me, it’s your whole... inside. Your approach... the way you are as a human being... how you treat the others. Often, I say that an officer is not just a fighting machine. As a soldier, you are a human being... you are a gentleman. You have values... you have a role to play in the society. You should be an example. People have to be able to rely on you... that they can count on you” (PM2Ib).

It is then the study’s claim that in order to be able to cross this threshold, an officer must learn to put aside his own interest and take in his soldier’s interest as a priority. As one interviewee said:

“...they start as a soldier so they start as an individual. They should transform into a leader... mainly they do not have to deal with their own problems as a soldier, they should start learning and dealing with problems of their people, their squad, their platoon. So, they should and they are convinced of their responsibilities... not only thinking about ‘I should make sure that my work is like this’... No... I should take care of my soldier. I should also prepare my own stuffs but also check the gears of my soldier. I should prepare my mission. When my soldiers are exhausted, I will be exhausted. Still, I should be able to become an example to motivate them, to go on. To overcome my own difficulties and help out my soldiers” (PM41b).

### **6.1.3 The “power to command”**

The third and final threshold for Officership would not only entail the traits and qualities but also the ‘persona’ – described in this research as having the ‘power’ to command others – of the desired officer. Through interviews with the officers from both institutions, it has been concluded by the study that one of the reasons for the formation of such an establishment is to impart and train military officers with high standards of leadership qualities. One of the interviewees mentioned that an officer;

“...is up in the hierarchy so he has responsibilities over personnel, over equipment. He must have that leadership quality” (MT51b).

However, an officer’s main role is to;

“...lead a lot of people. I think that officers are also soldiers at first place... but the officer also needs competence, know-how to be a leader. The main thing is that an officer [leads] other people. As this is the main point” (MT121a).

This quality is so important that one of the officers at Institution A strongly believed that;

“You must have that BEFORE you go to a military school... it should be inside you... you have to be strong; you have to know how to lead humans. But I think to become an officer, you must possess these leadership skills and commitment... the things that you are doing” (MT71a).

Again, this view conjures up that this quality of having the ‘power to command’ is something ‘natural’. This may be seen to suggest that not everyone can or may transform themselves to become an officer. As for that, it would also be worthwhile to include here that the present research had also established that this quality can also be ‘natured’. In an interview, an officer mentioned that through the education and the training at the institution:

“... [the officer] obtains the ability and way to manage people, the way to lead [their soldiers] in all kind of situations whether they are normal or stressful. So they will be the people that take lead” (MT91b).

As a result, more and more military education in the like of Institution A and Institution B gives a huge emphasis and concentration in the building-up of their cadets’ intellectual strength. In an interview, an officer said that an;

“...officer must have a knowledge to lead another people and have different kind of know-how... for example, military tactics and procedures during war-time. This educational part... Like I said, when you are an officer, people expect you to know everything. You are a professional in a different way than a civilian is. So all

this educational part, you get from the cadet school. You need it... I don't know how to explain it but I think it's important" (MT121a).

And for this reason;

"...to become an officer they need to have a certain amount of education and general knowledge of how the world works and... for us to put them in the position of an officer, they have to understand what it all means... all [that] military training [do] is to test your limits. They are pushed to their limits for a reason. As if you are never pushed to the breaking point, you do not know where your breaking point is". (MT131a).

The excerpt suggests that the 'mental' training dimension in Institution A and B is more directed towards building cadets' capacity to lead by knowing their own self limitation. For this reason, such institutions adopted and incorporate higher education levels and practices under the premise that such scholarship will challenge future officers' minds. However, this may prove to be troublesome:

"Some may [not be able to] handle the intellectual [part]... they cannot come to terms with combining knowledge having the insight of a situation and taking right decisions. Even if you are a clever guy, doesn't mean you are a right person to make the right and coherent decision" (MT11b).

According to a higher ranking officer at Institution A:

"I see; it is very important that you can't have an officer who gets only military training. You must have some academic knowledge... 50/50... when we talk about



leadership and management and pedagogy and so and so... we have to understand some principles, and then you start using them and start getting the experience doing all that... abilities while doing your work. I see it as very important. There are no other ways. On the other hand, you can't have all academic officers. It does not work. As I said earlier; an officer is always an officer. So you must not only work or possess vocational military capabilities but also civilised studies..." (PM21a).

He further added;

"...when you are talking about our training system, there is much more weight on the academic stuffs. When you succeed in studies, you normally succeed in having a career in the military. But if you are very good at military; handling guns or equipment or whatever – that kind of practical things – you cannot say that you are also good in academic study. But it goes the other way. And those who are more intelligent, they succeed better. However, in the life after graduation, it's so often that you can't really see a difference. But the academic studies show that you are capable of learning new things, theoretical things and so on but at a same time, you are really good at these military issues and that is a good combination" (PM21a).

For this reason, the education system adopted by these two institutions is basically tailored to train the cadets to progress gradually as a leader. One of the policymakers mentioned that;

"...they will be trained as future platoon leaders. Leader, leadership... the main focus there is not only getting trained in tactics but also leadership... dealing with

people, 'how can I make sure that the orders that I am giving to my platoon, to my squad... that people understand what I expect them to do... how can I control this and how can I even interfere if I see that the execution is not going right'? That's leadership... or at least part of leadership. 'How can I correct some mistakes of my people'? That's leadership. So that is an important part which I call military education" (PM4Ib).

It is evident when one of the cadets of the second year from Institution A mentioned that;

S4: "We are the leaders in war-time situation. Now we are cadet officers who lead lower ranking reserved leaders. Our main task is not to shoot accurately, but to lead. Now that, we are in Army, our main task is to train the reserved" (Y2Ia).

Apart from having the necessary intelligence, an officer would need to be an example to his/her subordinates. Answering the question 'What makes a good officer?', one of the higher ranking officers responded that;

"As an officer, you are an example for your soldiers. You have to show that you are able to do the same things, same detailed, soldier things... [that] they are doing. And then... to be respected by them, by the soldiers. By showing professionalism and that comes with the training, with exercise and so on. As I told you, the officer has to understand the broader picture of things like tactical for example. Therefore, he must be able to explain the situation to his soldiers. And then, he has to be able to give the orders and maybe, he will lose... there will be casualties, but anyhow he has to keep the task as number one while he is doing a business" (PM1Ia).

This view was echoed by another interviewee who observed that:

“To be an officer is like being an idol. Soldiers, they are watching their officer and if an officer is in a bad condition and he is very weak, the soldiers may not trust him. So it is more important for young officers to maintain good physical – unlike the Generals or higher ranking staffs because the task is different. But it is not bad for a General to be in a good condition, but the requirement is different” (MT6Ia).

This view was echoed by another interviewee who said;

“Military officer, for me... if we talk about a soldier or someone who is a legal soldier... then a military officer is of course, usually superior than the lower ranking soldier. So he is always an example for his/hers subordinates. So for me, that is one thing that you as an officer must be... you must be an example to everybody else. You have to do everything, and you must do it in a right way so that you show your subordinates that you can do away with issues, no matter what. You should be a right example. I think, that is almost the most important thing for an officer” (MT8Ia).

Another account of being an example provided by another officer further digressed the importance and powerful impact it can have on the officer’s leadership. According to him;

“For me first of all, the officer has to epitomise everything the military stands for because an officer is also a leader and then a leader, you are leading by example. So I think, there is a lot of strain on officer because being an officer people will notice and observe you. So you have to be able to live the values... to live up to the values which are not always easy because at some point, I am also a human being.

So I'm not some idol, an image that... the idol image of everything that is good... no... I mean I'm still human, I can make errors, and I misjudge, make all kind of faults and so on. So I think... being in the military is not so easy and it is more difficult... because more and more... but that's also... I think it's a good evolution... Sometimes, you have time to think about it. Sometimes you don't and you have to make a decision and ask all the people to execute it. In order to be able to do that, I think the military as well as military officers have a lot of... I think that's why the function of being an example is so important because if you want to... if you are asking people to make ultimate sacrifices... you have to be damn good. Moreover, you have to earn the trust from the people. And trust is something... you have to construct, you don't get it right the way. So, for me, an officer is somebody who embodies the values that an organisation stands for and is also somebody, who assumes the leadership role, who could inspire people, who could motivate people and so on" (PM51b).

This idea that a leader must set an example by being 'a damn good officer' was also shared among the cadets. Being asked to describe what they think is a good officer, a third-year cadet from Institution A replied that;

S2: "He must lead from the front. We are talking about [the nation's] officers. You must always be an example to your underlings, and that is the most important thing" (Y31a).

While another cadet responded;

S3: You [need to] show that you are a good soldier in a practical way. Not just telling about it. And when we talk about lower ranking officer like what we have

talk before, we have to be a kind of example to our soldiers... to our minors. We have to... first we have to teach the military skills to those... to the conscript and also we have to know more than they do. But also, still they are like... they have to be able to deal with you... maybe some personal things..." (Y31a).

The same cadet officer further explained that;

S3: "...main idea is that you can't just hide behind your ranks... 'I have this rank... I can say...'. You have just to... well... should I say impress... or show that you can do those things yourself, what you order to your minors..." (Y31a).

It was recognised in earlier chapters that there is a rank system that forms the structure for the military as an organisation. The rank system provides not only the structure which defines a soldier or officer's place in the structure but also the role and the degree of responsibility. In a conversation with the first year cadets at institution A, a cadet mentioned that;

S5: I would like to bring something quite often stated here. What is a difference between a 'leader' and an 'expert'...? Usually, when you are a university graduate, you become an expert in your field. You have an understanding of Geology, Politics or something like that. Being a leader is a bit different because it brings about the person's characteristics. But how do you teach 'characteristics'? You can't teach it. It's natural. So how can you make people respect you? I think this can be done through putting a dedication in your work... what is his motivation... how he acts... This is what we call being an example... Can you inspire others by being an example...? This characteristic by being unselfish is very important. If you hide behind your rank, you can only have authority for so long. You need to have

people, motivation, and trust... their dedication for your thing. Then it is an issue of how do you lead, how do you train, how do you become a coach to their lifestyles... These are some of the qualities that a leader should have. When I am talking about a leader, not just having the characteristics, standing in front of the group and he just becomes the awe of his guys... He must have respect from the troops, and you can only do this through time and not by yelling” (Y11a).

For this reason, as soldiers and officers occupy different rank and duties, it is important for the officers to exhibit a certain manner and conduct that properly represents their ranks. One way of doing so is by living-up to the standards of being an officer. One higher ranking officer deduced that as an officer;

“...you are not supposed to swear or you have to talk using proper language with the youngsters so that you have... you are looked upon as an example. In every sense you should... look like an officer, talk like an officer, and behave like an officer” (PM21a).

Furthermore, an officer;

“...must have a correct attitude when they go to a unit. They... they know that they are officers; they should merge into the officers’ corps in their future units and start behaving like an officer and also lead the troops and handle the people there in a proper way and behave as an officer as such. That is a basic start” (PM21a).

Being asked a question ‘what sort of an example an officer should be’, an interviewee responded that;

“Some of them are very easy to describe. How you behave... you have to behave like an officer. Wear your uniform in a right way and the uniform has to be fine. You must respect your subordinates and seniors. You have to be able to behave along the officers’ corps in a right way. There are certain hierarchies, and then you have to be able to behave with every people, outside the military life. And then... this is something very easy... it’s measurable. But then, there is a grey area. You have to fulfil the expectations and you have to build up your existence as an officer to the traditions... to know all those things. And then... you have to maintain your own identity. You have to put yourself to game so to say. That is quite hard... or difficult to see. And I don’t know why it is hard to explain because it is part of [being] an officer” (PM1Ia).

In one of the interviews, a military trainer from an institution observed the following accounts;

“Our rector, right now, is very strict in appearance and behaviour. It is more strict than the previous one. So, if he finds cadets whose dress code is not perfect, he’ll lecture him on the spot. And, he is sent back to his condo or apartment or whatever you call that to change and to fix his appearance because it is not tolerated at all. He is very... I mean, he is to us a civilian, he is a funny man and a very relax man but then I can see as to officers, he is a very... he is very not easy going man when everything; appearance wise and behaviour wise is as it should be. But he does not... I’ve seen few poor cadets being lectured and taught that this is not... how an officer goes out. You must have your clothes in order, they have to be cleaned, they have to be ironed, [and] they have to be neat” (MT13Ia).

Two discrete interpretations emerged from this. First of all, the Rector's strict, direct and perhaps harsh approach in educating his cadets clearly shows the importance of being an example to others. Secondly, the Rector's intervention is in actuality, a non-direct approach being used to educate the officer's cadet in a manner and conduct which properly represents the officers' corps. Having an opportunity to meet the said Rector, the author had an opportunity to ask about his approach and the reason behind all that. He responded that it is crucial for the cadet officers to have the right:

“...attitude and the right mental attitude... in a way you understand your position, the system that you have people under you, they are looking at you, you will behave like an officer and give proper orders... behave in a good way, handle them in a good way and at the same time, you must understand that you have superiors above you, and you too must follow the orders. But at the same time, you must be a member of the military society. It's in a way... you respect yourself, and you respect everybody else. That's quite tricky to explain, but it is a mental thing” (PM21a).

This is because;

“...not everybody is suited to become an officer, I think. Be it on an intellectual side, be it on the skill side, be it on the attitude side. And I think the military as a profession is a good thing... it is good because it gives and provides an identity. Not everybody can become a military man; we are a selected club, and you have to do something in order to join in. Even within a military... the Paratroopers, they have a special beret... and in order to get it... you don't get it for free... you have to do something. The Paratroopers amongst them are always critical when they see somebody else with different colour, and they will say... “They are not a part of



the club” ... and they are very cohesive among themselves and they say... “Ok, we’ve done the same things” and that create a bond... and that is something you can use in military operations...” (PM21a).

There is also some evidence to further support this condition to properly represent and maintain a certain code of conduct for an officer among the cadets. During an interview with the third year’s cadets at Institution A, one of the cadets mentioned that;

S1: “I think when people asked about what I do and they knew what I do for a living or will do for a living, they have a certain perception of how I’m supposed to behave, and what I know. So, in that way, I am a bit more careful in all... how I behave in public... you know you have to uphold the gentlemen sort of demeanour and then of course, at the same time, a lot of my friends and family members are interested in hearing my opinion about the army related subjects. So you have to be aware of that. It’s sort of upholding who you are professionally. This has become more important to us since our conscript service” (Y31a).

Furthermore, another cadet mentioned that;

S3: “When you say in public that you are a cadet or you are an officer in military, there are many expectations on you. For example, when you are a cadet, you are expected to be the best dancer in the whole place, and you must know everything about politics in the Middle East or somewhere else. You know everything of... you know everything about the battle of Winter Wars. “You know that officer he had done this and that” ... So at least, I... I have to think, consider where and who I tell what I do. So, Ok I can say ‘I am studying in a university’ ... That doesn’t create

expectations on me. So at least I think... I don't tell everyone that I am in cadet school... if I don't know them, of course" (Y3Ia).

This opinion was shared with their counterparts at Institution B. Responding to the question; 'Have you ever being put into a situation where you have to be careful with your actions because you think, you should not do something because you are an officer?', the cadets responded that;

S5: "You just have to think about the image of Army when you are outside these walls. When you are in the city or something, you will have to give an impression of being an officer..." (Y3Ib).

Continuing the discussion, another cadet responded that;

S1: "I have the same experience. When I am in my uniform... I sit straight... I walk a bit more... (Laughing)... Not to exaggerate... for example someone is having a problem with their luggage, and you are around... you will help them quicker because you are representing something that is bigger than yourself. You are representing the Army and it is just another way of thinking. When I want to cross the road... even when I am in a hurry, and it is red... I would not cross the road as it is something respectful to the general rules and people around you will look at you" (Y3Ib).

This idea was further explained by another cadet who argued that;

S3: "I think; it is like that in any organisation. When you wear the organisation's uniform, when you do something... the people do not see you. They see the

organisation you represent. When you do something wrong, they do not see it as something being done by the wearer. They will say it was done by a soldier. So it is like... when you did something wrong, the fault fell on the Army, not on the person. So you have to give a thought before you want to do something even when you are in your civilian clothe and even more when you wear the uniform” (Y3Ib).

Looking at the feedback given by the officers and cadets, it is evident that the officers are not only expected to meet the demands of the military but also of the members of general public. Inevitably, this finding suggests that the cadets’ rite of passage to become an officer lies not only in the communities of practice but also derived from the general public that award them the legal rights to enforce rules through violence.

The next facet that influences an officer’s leadership persona is to have a proper vision in leading others; or simply being put by one of the higher ranking officer at Institution A as being “able to see the larger, the broader picture of the things and situations”. An officer at Institution A noted this shift from being a soldier to an officer by commenting that an officer;

“...has to think in a little bit different way. When you are a conscript, you are only living during that time. But, when you are officer, you have to think ahead... what you are doing next” (MT2Ia).

On a similar note, another officer at Institution B mentioned that;

“An ideal military officer is a leader of men and a manager of equipment, budget, and personnel. The leader is someone who inspires people, motivates people... who can take people through difficult period... who can make difficult decisions... the one who have a vision” (MT1Ib).

This view was shared by a cadet of second year from Institution A, who said that, in order to become a good officer;

S1: "You need to have some physical skills, but you do not have to be the best athlete. You should be able to watch your surroundings and make observations and draw conclusions from those. You must be able to think on your own and figure out things on your own... you must get things going by yourself... and of course, you need to strike a balance between your private and military life. If you are just trying to get adjusted to military, you will become a narrow-minded person. Your views would be narrowed down... just military... while, you need to see what is happening outside, and you need to get some influences from the people outside... what they think and discuss with them and draw conclusions... what is good about our system, what is wrong with our system... and make suggestions from that" (Y2Ia).

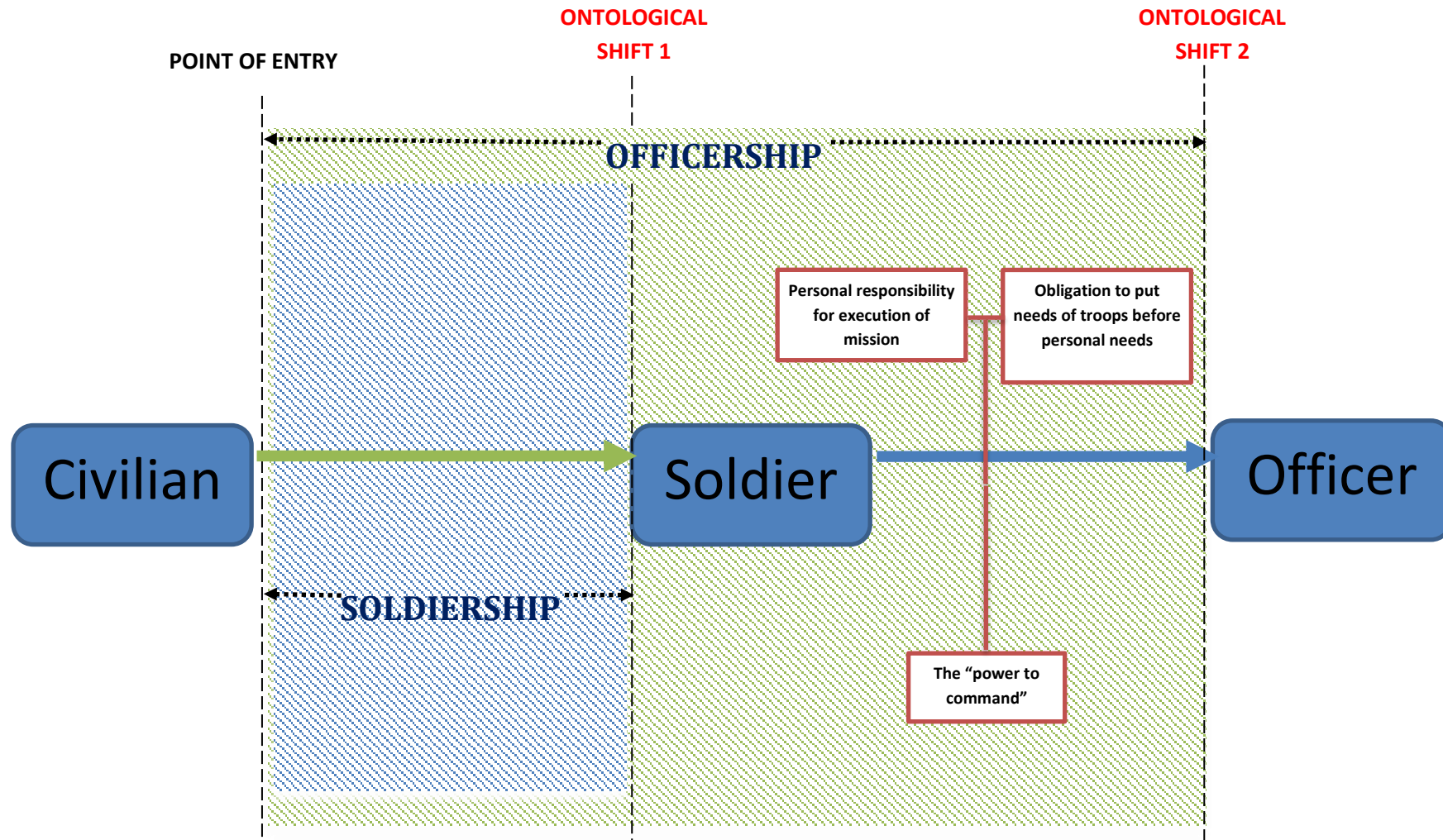


Figure 6.2: Ontological Shift from Civilian to Officer

## 6.2 SUMMARY

The chapter aimed to discuss the second ontological shift in becoming an officer and the thresholds involved during this stage. Returning back to the question posed at the beginning of Chapter V, it is now possible to state that the second ontological shift involved assuming the mantle of responsibility and acceptance of leadership role. More to this, the analysis offered an understanding that Officership involves a necessary professional relationship between the officers and the soldiers, where the officer is very much committed towards the safety and the well-being of their troops. In addition, an officer must occupy a commanding position in order to maintain order and ensure a smooth execution of orders during missions.

Thus, at a glance, the study has presented the ontological shifts and the thresholds needed to be crossed in order to become an officer. Having discussions with the participants included in this study, it has been determined that these thresholds are also troublesome which often lead the cadets to get stuck in some places. Realising this, the following chapter, Chapter VII, discusses the troubles faced due to these concepts and the difficulties that may affect cadets in their passage to become officers.

## Chapter VII

### Troublesomeness in Professional Military Education

“War means fighting, and fighting means  
killing.”

– Nathan Bedford Forrest

#### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant discussions of threshold concepts is the issue of liminality; “a suspended state of partial understanding, or ‘stuck place’, in which understanding approximates to a kind of ‘mimicry’ or lack of authenticity” (Meyer & Land: 2003: 10). Applying this condition to the present study, the cadets may “oscillate between old and emergent understandings” as an effect of understanding or misunderstanding the thresholds presented in Chapter V and VI. Hence this chapter in particular examines the following research question:

What conceptual transformation and ontological shift do cadets find difficult to grasp?

Understanding the troublesomeness experienced by the present and the former cadets of the institutions is crucial as, it may lead the study to recognize the problems in transforming officers for the twenty-first century. These challenges would definitely be different from those faced by the institutions in the 60’s, 70’s, or 80’s as each decade brings about new challenges as the military would have to cope with a new role of engagement. In an interview with the higher ranking officers at Institution B, one of them mentioned that;

“I think the military should be capable of facing any potential threat. These threats have multiple forms, and they can be, for me, still typical military threats, armed forces or armed groups. There is also the threat of terrorism which is less organised. More and more, we are advancing towards cyber threats and so on. So, I think in the future, the military should be very skilled more than ever in a number of areas” (PM51b).

This is due to the current situation where institutions such as those included in this study must deliver a new breed of officers. According to a military trainer at Institution B;

“They (the officers) must be able to be flexible for everything. It is not only about responsibility because the young officers who are coming out from Institution B or the young NCOs... they have a lot more responsibilities over human life, over personnel and over equipment. During my time, we [were] faced with the challenge of war... but that was a static Cold War. We have a responsibility of certain place and personnel. But now, those guys who came out from the academy and when they report to their units... they are deployed to Afghanistan, deployed to Lebanon and they get REAL responsibilities over personnel, equipment, and even lives... real lives. Every day, they will have to make a decision and if they make a wrong decision that could cost lives. So, there are a lot more risk involved in the young officers’ careers nowadays. It is also about accountability... legal accountability. They can be held legally accountable for something that went wrong and that was not so obvious 30 years ago. So there are a lot more responsibilities and legal responsibilities” (MT51b).

Furthermore;

“...as the society is changing so you need officers who can adapt to the changing society. Of course, I think the society today is much more complex than how it was 30 years ago.



The whole system in the world has changed. The threat is not just from the East. It is everywhere now. The threat is not visible anymore. So, I think we ask more from our cadets nowadays. Because as a young officer, they need to do some task that is way beyond their experiences. So in that way, I think it is becoming more difficult. For example, in the past, you do not have so much freedom but they have a lot of certainty. I mean a son of a baker will become a baker. It's a family tradition. You do not have that choice of possibilities. You are safe and easy... you just follow. Even in marriages... in a lot of things they were fixed. So you had a lot of certainty but little freedom. Nowadays, in our society, you have so much freedom... too much freedom I think... so many question marks. I think, it is so difficult to find your way as a young people in our society... much more difficult than two to three hundred years ago and that is applicable to the cadets nowadays" (PM21b).

This has made the institutions similar to;

"... a refinery... and we put the heat on, and there is something happening. And at the end, after five years, this results into the goods. If you change the composition, you are not sure to get the same results. As I said, sometimes just changing the infrastructure going from fourteen persons in one room to two persons has an impact on how people work and how they communicate and so on. So, we have to access it in a very good way because you have these people; this is an opportunity... you have people that stays here all week long... it's not like a student who goes to class from eight to six and say "that's it, I am going home". No. This is a complete, total organisation..." (PM51b).

The first part of the discussion (Section 7.1) discussed the troublesome knowledge that a cadet would have to face during the Initiation Phase. It was argued that this 'first contact' space is vital as it leaves a long lasting impression of the military among the cadets. Having established the

ground for the ‘source’ of that troublesome knowledge, the discussion continues to discuss the troublesomeness through the phase of Soldiership (Section 7.2) and then Officership (Section 7.3). The findings in this chapter provide some important insights into the difficult concepts involved in becoming an officer and also provide some suggestions for the ways to improve a learning experience.

## **7.1 RITES OF PASSAGE: GOING THROUGH THE INITIATION PHASE**

Before we delve even further into the troublesome territory, it would be worthwhile to discuss the findings over the participants’ overall experiences of professional military education at their institutions. This section has been included for several reasons: at first, it is important to distinguish the overall feelings about the education system as; it is set as a background to the research phenomenon. Experience and opinion over the PME will help the study in illustrating and describing the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ for certain experiences and ‘how’ it may be troublesome. Moreover, the discussion in this section will also establish the existence of such troublesome knowledge. This is because the time spent during this period

“... is a very different life for the younger boys. That is a very different one. [T]hey are... taken out from their usual surroundings and being put to a training centre that they are assigned to... I say that is a very different life” (MT91a).

One higher ranking officer at Institution B mentioned that;

“So we have... this is the first military initiation... these are 6 weeks spent outside of Institution B somewhere in the east of the country where they get a real basic military training. This is their first transformation... they put on a uniform, they do physical education, they shoot at ranges, basic tactics and so on. For many of them this is the first ‘culture shock’” (PM51b).

This feeling was duly shared by one of the cadets at Institution A, who described the experience of going through the phase as;

S3: "... basically, it goes like a pipe... it's like you are pushed into the system" (Y2Ia).

Furthermore, one new cadet from the first year commented that an experience of going through the phase of initiation was

S1: "...a bit confusing. Because you just get yourself in and a sergeant comes and take our group, and you take your equipment and you go to your barrack and you start to learn how to live in that environment. It's pretty much information shoved down your throat on that first day and there was always hurry in that new place" (Y1Ia).

In addition;

S5: "I thought, it was a very difficult initiation... to come from nothing to what they expected at the end... capable of doing military stuffs. Those who had been prepared for a year... they had a smoother time... they understood more and understand what is behind each exercise. So, for me, it was difficult from nothing to 24-hours military things" (Y3Ib).

Even more, there was one cadet who saw this transformation process as similar to;

S5: "...learning a new language. At the beginning, you can just differentiate between the new letters and new sounds, and then, after that you can use grammar and build sentences..." (Y3Ib).

And the experience of learning a new language seems to be;

S4: "At first. I was not comfortable... people were yelling at me... which I had a lot. For me, it was exactly like 'Full Metal Jacket'. So, some people got along with it... and some will never. Maybe it was because I watched the movie a week before I came here that made it a little bit harder. You just have this impression that the instructors are just like that, but then you realise that they just want to help you... to make you tougher... and also about sleep... When I was in high school, I got panic if I didn't get 6 hours of sleep. But now, I know that it is alright" (Y11b).

One of the explanations for this is due to limited information that the person had about the military, as expressed by an officer at Institution B. According to him;

"I didn't have a clear idea what the real Army was like... I hardly knew what was there... didn't know the Air Force, the Army or the Navy. For me, Army is like digging holes, marching around... like infantry. That was the basic idea that I had of the Army... shooting, digging holes and marching... something like that. Let just say that was the basic training I had doing those kinds of things" (MT51b).

As a result, there is a strong consensus among the officers that had undergone the same initiation phase that the period;

"...was a big shock... the military... adapting the military life... somebody is shouting at you... I have more problems in obeying orders than giving orders (laughing). Sometimes, it is hard for me to shut-up and stop thinking about myself. It was not always but sometimes. Different from now... now there is some obedience but we encourage people early on to engage in things and think for themselves" (PM31b).

One possible source of this 'shock' would be the ritualised knowledge which exists within a military where the very idea of;

"...structure comes directly ... I would not say like a smacking on your face... but it is there all of a sudden. People with uniforms, parades, greetings, ranks, names, contracts... you get your clothes. It is new. You need to adapt" (MT9Ib).

These findings further support the idea that there is the troublesome knowledge that may put cadets in 'stuck places'. Being asked to describe the sort of challenges the cadets have to face in becoming an officer, one of the military trainers responded that;

"...the real challenge, I guess, is a whole environment of military discipline. As that is a challenge because the very junior NCO's are not professional soldiers but they are older conscripts who have been in the service maybe 6 months more. Moreover, they might be younger physically... That idea of having a 20-year-old bossing around a bunch of 20-year-olds... that actually leads to people over-doing it and not understanding why they are doing it... how... well... young males will do crazy stuffs. So I think that was a part of the shock of whole military discipline and ... how it was possible for guy who is basically younger than me to have such a position of authority. Well initially, I would say and the same with the other guys... Living under strict rules and so on, which of course, looking back, they are not really that much strict. It's the environment that is more of a shock... aggravates it a bit" (MT9Ia).

He then further explained that;

The main challenge that is generally encountered in educating the cadets and transforming them into officers is a society itself. In a broad sense, as we are in a peacetime society. The attitudes, values and the world views of society at large, are at least partially in contrast to that of the military. And bridging that gap, I guess it is our number one challenge. The world view, the values are different... things like self-sacrifice or concepts about honour, willingness; are pretty foreign to our individualistic, materialistic culture. Bridging those different values is... a challenge and making young generation to do the conscript as their choice despite of the surrounding society during a time of peace. As, the society does not really need us during peacetime” (MT9Ia).

As a result, the research has managed to find strong evidence that suggested that most of the attrition happens during this period. An officer at Institution A mentioned that;

“...most of our drop-outs, if we use that word, happen within the first three weeks. First month or two months after the programme starts because that’s when those who noticed that... “Wait, this is not for me” ... “I’ve made a wrong choice” ... and “I don’t want to be an officer” ... because of military lifestyle... and the strict schedule, and then the... kind of the set of mind you kind of need to have when you come in” (MT13Ia).

This description that the cadets ‘might have made a wrong choice’ in joining military was also shared by the current cadet. While conducting group interviews with the cadets, one of them mentioned that;

S1: “...they have realised on the first-day ‘wait, this is not for me’. They sort of have confirmation, this is not a lifestyle” (Y3Ia).

One of the officers at Institution A provided an interesting discussion regarding this matter. According to him;

There [are those] who almost, at the beginning know that this is not the place to be. Because... of course, the... even if they have been already in conscript, they see that differences or things in the military that they think is not for them. So basically, they seemed... I guess in other university is also the same... somebody just decided that this is not his subject, and he will go and seek something else” (MT111a).

Moreover, there are also issues of the burden of responsibility of being an officer. With reference to what has been described in Chapter VI, one of the military trainers mentioned that;

“If you look at a responsibility that an officer has, you will understand why they quit. As, if you really want to do these things, it means you are ready to do very big things so it will affect your life... so... And the first 8 months are very crucial because there are long days where you have lessons in classroom, practising at the terrain and forest... practising and there is also a school on weekends. So, if you manage yourself in the first 8 months, I believe, you will have a good basis to succeed the rest of the education programme. So, you can see the first 8 months as a room where you decide whether you want to become an officer or not” (MT51a).

What emerges from the discussion is a realisation – a transformation experienced by the cadets – who later realized that the profession, as an officer is not for them as, they can never handle the burden of responsibility that an officer has to carry. Apart from that, there is a possibility that there are cadets who came to the institution without having proper information on what is expected thus making an experience much harder compared to those who have some background knowledge. As it has already been established before; there is now a huge gap in civil-military

relations that makes this initiation phase a more 'shocking' experiences. A policymaker from Institution B described that;

"We have cadets who entered the academy that spent the first 6 weeks and then came to a conclusion that they are not fit. They thought they are not fit... and they made the decision too fast because you cannot decide what the military is only after 6 weeks. But of course, they can decide and if they decide to leave the Army then they can leave. Many cadets... especially in our society... at these times sometimes... many of the youngsters, they do not have any more a "leading hands" at home. They have so much freedom. The parent of today... they have to work of course, so they don't have time for their children. There are no more guidelines ... so when they come here to an academy, we give them more direct guidelines and it can be simple things like being polite, talking with two words: "Yes Sir, No Sir" ... They are not used to it anymore" (PM2Ib).

As discussed by another policymaker who said;

"Well... the big challenge is to make soldiers out of them. To give you an example; they start with the 6 weeks of military training... very basic military training. After first week, a guy comes to the commander and says "Sorry, I want to leave". Why...? "It has been 1 week and I haven't seen my friends and I cannot live like that... totally isolated" ... "Isolated? What do you mean? You are living here with 20 people in a big dormitory" ... "Yeah... but I have my Facebook friends... I cannot talk to them... it's like that in the military... I want to go out". If it was 20 years ago, the guy would be put away from the community because he will be considered as dangerous... is ill. You see, we have a big task now of getting the people into the military system. I think that is the biggest challenge now. Of course, also... in all there is a gap between the civilian and military universities. It's bigger on the military part..." (PM3Ib).



Thus, this combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that there are some forms of challenges that the cadets must overcome in order to become officers.

In addition, the period also involves a certain tradition of rituals, or 'rites of passage' that may be a source of troublesome knowledge. In a conversation with an officer at Institution A, he recalled his experience and explained the whole idea of such ceremony where;

A: "... [it] was not always fun but that is the way that I proved that I am willing to be an officer".

I: Would you share with me a bit more of this?

A: "It is not in the books. You are proud... Actually, it was fun... You are doing something which is not nice, but you are still proud after you have done it. Maybe this is a sign that you are committed to do something... that you are willing to become an officer. As if you don't take it... if you can't do it... you are not ready to become an officer. It is something to be proud of".

I: Would you give me one example?

A: "One example... (Laughing). When you [are asking for] the permission to be a cadet... you [will be asked to] stand in the middle of the night. There is a drummer, there is an older cadet and they serve you [with] a 'drink'... [that personify] the life as an officer is not [always] good, it's not always taking alcohol, being a part of a celebration or things like that. You drink the ['drink'] which taste like shit, but you still have to swallow it. It proves you that some... yeah... in some day of your career, you have to face things that

you have just to swallow. You just have to be proud to be an officer and you have to take it as a man” (MT71a).

The accounts included above support what has been described in the study’s literature where such occasion is directed toward dismantling previous construct of self-identity in order to motivate the cadets to incorporate an officers’ identity. On a different note, there are also findings that raise an intriguing question regarding the nature and extent of the military education system and structure, where it has been portrayed to be “too didactic”. Even though, this opinion was expressed only by a small number of those interviewed, because its significance as a form of troublesomeness could not be ignored. While having a discussion with a second-year cadet at Institution A;

S5: “I felt like I’d been pushed forward and I have no responsibility in a sense. Everything has been taken care of. I have no worries in that sense. Like a small child – I was fed and clothed. (Laughing). I received an instruction and went... (Laughing)” (Y21a).

While, another cadet responded that;

S4: “And we do not have to think a lot... studies included. They are decided for us... the major subjects. And after that, it’s already written. So answering your question... it is actually really hard to answer... how we adjust our lives as a soldier and coming home... Somebody might keep their military roles because they are comfortable with it. As being kids at home, basically people have a different role. So you just need to adjust with your own roles... so when you take off your cadet clothes, you are just a civilian and everybody expect you to act the same” (Y21a).

Moreover, some of the cadets felt that;

S1: "...we are not still a part of Army [while being trained at the institution]. We are just student officers or are being prepared to join the Army as officers and lead. So, you are not really a soldier or an officer yet... you are just students" (Y3Ib).

This situation could create and be a source of problems for future officers. A Navy captain explained that during the education period at Institution B, the cadets are not really being exposed to the 'real world' experiences of being an officer. He explained that the present system;

"...cannot expose [the cadets] to the experience of being in an extended period being away from homes... in faraway theatres... in difficult situations. Everything is planned... programmed. They know a-year-and-a-half in advance... "Next year I will go in that ship... then I will do this and this... and then after that I will come back here and I will study this course so and so" ... But in the Navy, life is very unpredictable. One day you can be on ship A, two weeks later you'll be in ship B... and [then you] can be on assignment for three months in Africa. So... the unpredictability... the long absence from home especially, when you have girlfriend... social life..., wives... that's a problem. The confined spaces... living with 170 people in a space just as big as a soccer field. On a frigate for example... you can have 170 people... living, working together on a surface as big as a soccer field" (MT1Ib).

The situation clearly suggests a huge role an institution plays for the cadets and how their actions and activities are very much decided for them. Knowing exactly what would happen to them for the next 'a-year-and-a-half in advance' took out an element of uncertainty and unpredictability of the profession, which seems to be an important element of the vocation. The Navy captain further clarified this situation that it is unavoidable on the student part because:

“As a student... on this part... they ARE students. There is always somebody on top of them... taking responsibility on whatever they do... correcting them... helping them... coaching them. But as soon as they leave in the 6<sup>th</sup> year, they are on a bridge... in charge. The Captain has to be able to trust them... they have to make decisions. However, some of them do not manage or manage poorly. So we cannot put them in a situation where they can experience that. It only comes after 6 years, which in my opinion is too late” (MT11b).

By the way of explaining, this goes back to the organisational nature of the institution as a hierarchal institution where the cadets always have superiors on top on them that control and govern their everyday lives. As a result, according to a conversation, the cadets seem to lose out on developing their abilities to practise decision-making skills and professionalism. Hence, this problem is due to the MOE system being used at institutions that are described as to be too:

“...academic. We want them to have masters... Intellectually they are ok... they pass... they are able to absorb a lot of information, analyse it, process it... but that does not make an officer. That is a student in uniform. That is why, I think, there is not a big difference between students here, who wear uniforms to a student in civilian universities. We made them do a little bit of sports. A normal, healthy and young teenager does that as well. We asked them to get up at 6.15 in the morning, to be punctual, to be on time... ok... but the drawback is that everything is so organised. So, an expectation of organising yourself is more prominent in a civilian university than here. Whereas, the people also expect officers to have a lot of self-discipline. Here we teach them discipline, but it’s not enough. Something you need as an officer. Because the system had put them in a situation when they have to get up when they have to do this, when they have to do that. Whereas, as a civilian student... you have to organise yourself thus it makes you to gain a higher level of self-discipline” (MT11b).

In a way, the discussion solicited an old-age affair in MOE education – the clash between developing officer’s intellectuality versus the need for professional and skilled training. Being asked to clarify whether he is suggesting that the education system at the institution somehow creates an officer who only knows how to follow orders, the Navy captain responded that;

“There is a risk... there is a risk. Too much academic... no leadership. Not enough exposure to a working environment. If you ask any student here why they join the military, they will answer; “Because you said it is an adventure... full of actions... I will see the world”. And what do we do? We put them in a small place like this, in a confined space for 6 years with no action, having no chance of seeing the world... It is quite opposite to what we offer them... it is different from why they joined. So the expectation for many guys entering here, spending 6 years... is different from what they have expected” (MT11b).

As a matter of fact, military is one of those unique professions which are fortunately not an everyday occurrence. This rather peculiar aspect of the MOE means that real practice for such situations is not often encountered as that requires real combat conditions which governments are often at pains to avoid. So a cadet in today’s environment might spend his entire military career in a state of prolonged simulation where he can only practice and perform his profession while he is at training camp. Hence, this statement is true as one of the cadets interviewed for the study commented that;

S1: “I think you have changed a bit mentally but it takes more years if you want to change your personality. The mind-set has changed a little bit and in that situation, you have to be like that... but when you come out of that six weeks’ situation, it starts to fade away. It only comes back when you come back to camp. For me, it is just for a few days I have to come back to camp, but when I came back, I came back to my academic sessions. But you

will change from each camp and the more years, you have here at the Academy, the more it will change your personality” (Y3Ib).

The condition of having a ‘changed mind-set’ while being at camps and to have it ‘fade away’ during academic sessions somehow suggests that a transformation as an officer may not happen during their time spent at the institution but much later. An example of this was provided again by the Navy captain who said that;

“I did not realise what it is to be an officer until I left the extra training and I was sent straight away to the Gulf War. Yeah... it was potentially life threatening situation... and then you see the sailors look to the officers for guidance, directions. That is when you have to pull everything together and basically become an officer. I didn’t notice it during the education... not this form of education” (MT1Ib).

Even though the excerpts have suggested a problem with an education and training system at the institutions, the descriptions of this situation describe the contrary. What emerges from the experiences is that there is a point in the cadets’ experience, ‘moment of integration’ – where previous unrelated and hidden knowledge is ‘revealed’ and understood. ‘Pulling everything together’ suggests the officers’ action of recalling what they learned during their time at the institution –regardless if it is academic or solely based on their military training – to complete a particular mission or completing a task.

## **7.2 TROUBLESOME KNOWLEDGE IN SOLDIERSHIP**

As presented in Chapter V, Soldiership is the first and important phase needed to be crossed by cadets in their transformation to become officers. The three concepts presented in the chapter are crucial as they set the very foundation for a successful journey to become an officer. In addition, the concepts are also deemed as central in the MOE, without which a cadet is left in a

suspended state and stuck in the liminal space. Therefore, the following discussion in this section discusses the aspect of this concept and how it can be troublesome for some, if not many.

### 7.2.1 Preparedness to use legitimised violence

The current study found that there were some learners who struggled with the military's legitimate standing in the use of violence. Even though the research did not manage to find a respondent who can explicitly express his problems with permitted violence, hence a discussion of the matter suggests that this threshold can be troublesome. Recalling his experience while being trained at Institution B, an interviewee recollected that;

“There is this one person... as we start to work with weaponry that said; “Oh... this is not for me. I cannot handle weapons.” She was afraid of the violence... yeah... those things” (MT9Ib).

The officer description of his former colleague who “could not handle weapons” because “she was afraid of the violence” is a clear example how troublesome this threshold would be. In this instance, the person could not get over the idea that ‘a soldier must kill people’. One possible explanation for this would be the;

“...a very sharp contrast to what a soldier is supposed to do, the practice and so forth compared to the society life where war and conflict are foreign... not seeing it as likely altogether. So that contrast, I think, gives rise to a lot of problems, which you can say to some degree, we as a system might not focus on the right things. I think... trying to navigate that is one challenge” (MT9Ia).

In other words, the civil society may encounter some problems in understanding the nature of the military profession where ‘taking lives and being subjected to the same rule

is a reality. However, this opinion is not entirely correct, as one of the officers who have made the transformation commented that;

“I always say that people think that soldiers are a fighting machine or something like that. I don’t agree with that. I am not in the Army because I want to fight. I am a part of the Defence Forces to prevent people to start a fight. That is completely different. I won’t say that every colleague has the same point of view but that is mine, and I am convinced with that. I’m not in the Army to fight because I like to fight. There is no one soldier who likes to fight. Of course, there will be people who say that they want to fight. They don’t know what they are talking about. I can’t believe that there are people who like to go for war. That is a crazy idea. Of course, I will be ordered to go... I will have to go and I have to perform my duty. But there is no reasonable soldier who likes to fight. That is crazy. So I am in the Army to help to protect and help to keep the peace and that is why I am in the Army... and that is why we need military officers and military leaders” (PM21b).

Being asked the question: How much do you agree with the definition that a soldier is a ‘professional in violence’; a policymaker from Institution B responded that;

“I think it’s a... I could refer to Von Clausewitz that says that ‘war is merely a continuation of diplomacy but by using force and weapons’. I think it’s a... formulation maybe is a bit harsh because we talked about violence... I mean what we see nowadays is certainly trying to limit violence as much as possible. But if violence has to be applied and for me that is a political decision, which some people brought to fulfil a mission... I would say quite clearly that the military is the one who says “Ok, how are we going to approach this, what do we need, what can we do” and so on. But more and more and I think it’s a good evolution, violence



is questioned, and people are looking for other means to resolve conflicts. But unfortunately, for some people, there is only one language. They do not understand this language of force. Basically, I think, this is something that has been shifted in the last thirty-years. I was brought up before the wall fell. We had a quite... very fixed vision on what armed conflict would be. We are in the West; our enemy comes from the East. it is already planned... you do this and this. Once the wall came down and breaking down the Warsaw Pact... military forces to defend new mission for them. So it evolves towards peacekeeping and peacekeeping is completely... some people said that peacekeeping is... I think it was the Secretary General of the United States who said 'peacekeeping is not for the military, but they are the only one who can do it'" (PM51b).

He later added that the contemporary world's security and conflict:

"...is no longer [limited to] defending the nation's border. The task is now in Afghanistan, in Syria maybe... in Libya... and that's a problem with the military" (PM51b).

This condition means that the military has become "a necessary evil" that must be able to deter potential threats and to even cope with potential threats far away from home. This could pose a source of problem where a soldier must train themselves not to become;

"...a violent person. But, under certain circumstances, I will be subjected to use violence. It has to do with control... it has to do with well-defined roles... If you deploy military forces, usually it's to win a conflict or to deter it from escalating, which is completely different from the policing mission. We have blue tactics, and green tactics. Blue tactics refer to an operation when we work for the UN. Also, we

have the green tactics... the classic operations. In green tactics, we try as much as possible to avoid detection... camouflage and so on. In blue tactics it is quite opposite... you show the flag... you really show the people that you are there. But, many soldiers have lot of problems with this shift. As interesting enough, much of the basic military knowledge is same. I might organise a checkpoint when I am doing a blue tactic and also, when I employ a green tactic” (PM5Ib).

This is due to the fact that the armed forces of the twenty-first century are no longer restricted to the old age types of military operation, rather;

“The military operations are not clear military operations anymore. In the past, the war was somewhere, and now, the operations are everywhere. Moreover, the military and civilians live in an era where operations are mixed in between” (PM1Ia).

A cadet of the third year at Institution A mentioned that;

S2: “...and when they heard about that... I am studying at Institution A, they behaved differently... you know. Some are; “Hey that is a great job” ... they respect it. But, some people are against. They have this need to challenge me... some guys... I’m the root of all evil; because of me, there are wars and so on. And that’s one reasons you have to think before you can say ‘I’m an officer’ or ‘I will become an officer’. As this behaving... this is so different among people” (Y3Ia).

Being portrayed and labelled as the ‘root of all evil’ clearly suggests the uncomfortable confrontation experienced by the cadets due to a nature of violence surrounding the

military profession. With regards to the education and training of cadets to become officers, one of the interviewee commented that;

“I can say in terms of transformation into an officer or into a soldier; I would say that is... well, the essence of the courses lies in understanding the world... the essence of military action which is... which of course is maximum violence... at the very end of the mind as you might say. That, I think is very much the essence of all the different courses... understanding what we are about... that, unfortunately, it is about violence and how to deal with that... how to survive it, how to deal with them all... complication and the whole nine yards. I would say that is the essence behind all the training. So, learning how to handle weapons or learning how to handle exercises is not enough. What we are looking for is for the young men to understand what we are actually doing... when we pulled the trigger and why more ethical check and balances is necessary” (MT9Ia).

### **7.2.2 *Esprit de Corps***

As being presented in Chapter V, becoming “a team player” is an important threshold for Soldiership. However, in the upcoming section, it is shown as troublesome. Recalling back what has been presented in earlier chapters, those cadets who entered the institution;

“...as an individual and you have to make some sort of transformation and work as a team. So, you have an individual who becomes a member of a team... of a group. As, I think, that is also the first problem for some individuals. If you are not someone who likes to work in a team, to do all things for weeks, months... it’s very difficult, I think” (MT7Ib).

This thought was also shared by another officer who mentioned that, as a new cadet arrives at an institution;

“... [t]he biggest shock is to live within a group. [During my time] we had a room with 12 people. So, the fact that [you have your] own room and suddenly you have to share a room with 12 other people together... You were never alone in the shower... it was an open shower. Your colleague is snoring and your night is ruined... it’s like that” (MT11b).

Another officer mentioned that;

“...[some] cadets didn’t like to be together all the time because that is what it is. If you are the only child, and from day one you arrive in a group of 30 people, and you have to do everything... ABSOLUTELY everything with that 30 people, that creates some kind of culture shock as well... so they leave” (MT31b).

Further deliberation with officers on the matter have led the study to research that one aspect of *Esprit de Corps* that made it troublesome, the condition where;

“...[you] must consider other people around you. As, this is something that some people might find difficult when they are in a military environment. Especially, when they are young, and they are not mature enough” (MT101a).

As a result, based on an observation of one of the cadets at Institution A;

S6: “I think, I had a social shock or some kind... because most of the men have to go to conscript service. So, you can see strong men... they are not so strong

anymore. They have to get themselves in line. They can't represent themselves. And, in the other part... for a quiet person... who is not familiar with social activities like that – must stay in the same room and he has to answer question while standing in front of the others – it's hard for those people and the strong people. Everybody must blend in... in a kind of same role" (Y21a).

The officers responsible for the first year cadets at Institution B said;

"I am responsible for those who are at their first year... They were civilians and after a few weeks, they are in uniforms. Here, few students have stopped very soon in the process. And, the main reason was in fact that they could not live in a group and under pressure. Meaning... the basic training... they live together... they have to work together... and also, there is a tight schedule. So, time for hygiene... time for cleaning the room they are sleeping... time for eating... time for physical training... there is no time-off. That is very difficult sometimes for people who don't have a mind-set. Also, the fact that they do not have Facebook all the time... they do not have their play stations... there were four who quit because they really miss their mother, family... and most of them stopped during the first few days. However, some of them stopped for emotional reasons... emotional problems... they didn't fit in the group... they can't work together... So, that's the main reason" (MT81b).

Furthermore, another officer mentioned that;

"Yes. Sometimes, we encounter cadets who actually put themselves before an organisation. The main problem is that they are used to being served... like I told... by their parents. The biggest difficulty for the new cadet is actually to give up

their privacy... that is one of the main difficulties. To give up their luxury like... mobile phones... which they can have but they are so used to use them constantly... you know. I do not like to say that it is something typical to the new generation, but we can see now like Facebook... new mobile phones... which make these new cadets behaved differently than our times. For example, when we went for our first training, we had our phones which we can use in the evening to call... maybe once or twice a week to call home to say; "Hey... this is going on." But now we can see the new cadets have their phones constantly with them... constantly on Facebook... updating their status and their social networks... things, which I don't really know and we see that when we take that away... they cannot live without it. We had people who quit... who stop the training just because they are not able to be on Facebook, Twitter during the training. This thing is very difficult for the young people. We try to transform these people to become a soldier and to be able at a certain period, to put aside either their social lives and become a part of the organisation... so putting the organisation before them like I told before in my definition of a soldier... it is somebody who puts his personal life... I am not saying it has to be always like this... but to put the organisation first before himself. Now, we can really see that it is difficult for the young people to make that switch. So, I would like to say that our contribution in this is that we make them to be a part of an organisation before their own needs" (MT2Ib).

In other words, apart from learning to work together as a group, the cadets must learn how to put their group's interest before their personal desires. Failing to understand the importance to do so leaves a person to be in a 'suspended state' and unable to transform themselves to become a soldier. One such example is provided by an officer at Institution A, who described that:

“The feeling that you live with guys in tents, in a small room like this... It prepares you like I said, commitment. If you are not motivated to do these things in school, you won’t manage when you graduate. So, you have to be sure what you are willing to do in the future. So... When you decide you want to go to military school and you become a cadet, it is not easy. Last week, I was in X for a cadet exercise... life fire exercise. And, there was a guy... who has been studying now for almost one year. That was the first time he went to Y... he went to tent... he said ‘Owh shit, I didn’t know I have to sleep in a tent’. And took a train, and he was away” (MT71a).

This view was also observed among the third year cadets from Institution A when they were asked to share, what they think is the hardest experiences in order to become a soldier. Answering the question, S1 reasoned that;

S1: “I think, for me, it was especially during the first few days of the conscript service, it was a sort of... end of privacy. You are now a part of a larger unit... we had twelve men in the same room... we did everything together. So, lack of privacy and an introduction of having to follow orders, not only the possibility to discuss a situation... you are told, so you do. This is very different from the civilian world. Also... the number of things that were expected from us. In the beginning, it was felt that it is more than what we can accomplish. But through that we found out that it is possible if we just try. So, at least that’s what comes to mind now” (Y31a).

This opinion was further supported by S3 who said that;

S3: “... I must say that becoming a soldier demands physical and mental growing. From mental growing, I mean that... in some cases... in many cases in the military, you have to let go your selfish personal goals and set some goals for a team. So, of

course, each person has his own personality, you can't deny that. As all cadets have their individual personality but in the military, the military group or platoon doesn't work if it's... if it is owned by individuals. There is no 'I' in 'team'" (Y31a).

Interestingly enough, this view was also found and shared by the first year cadet from Institution B. Being asked the same question, one of the cadet responded that;

S6: I think, for me, the biggest challenge was... like for example, if you are in a normal school, you have to make sure that you are ok... and your grades are fine so that you can continue to the next year. But during the military initiation camp, if one person in your group is not in order, all the people in that group will be in trouble. You are not just checking yourself, you want to check that everyone is ok and you want yourself to be ok. I think, that's the biggest challenge for me... have to check that everyone is ok" (Y11b).

While another cadet officer mentioned that;

S6: "... because here, you have to learn to work together. There is no other option. You can't do it on your own. You have to really work together, help each other in order to get through 5 to 6 weeks" (Y11b).

In addition, an older cadet from the same institution commented that;

S2: "I think, it is also important to say that it is when you realise that you are not on your own and you really need to help each other... and that some are weaker and you have to go through it as a group and not as an individual" (Y31b).



Another aspect that may increase the experienced difficulty is the fact that the military training may involve some form of punishments to alter the cadet's undesirable behaviour. An example for this would be mentioned in Chapter VI, where an officer from Institution B described his experience of coming in late for an assembly. The imposition of 'punishment' in the training of military personnel is not something alien as this approach is not unique to an organisation that requires its people to behave in a certain way. However, as the member of public – the 'civil' society – may find this experience new and troublesome, which requires the cadet to alter their perspectives and shift their views to better suit the military.

### **7.2.3 Prompt and unquestioned execution of the mission**

This threshold – simply defined as "*doing what one is told when you are told*" in **Chapter V** – requires an unparalleled compliance with commands given by an authority. As, it has been distinguished in the previous chapter, the kind of "obedience" merited in the military is very much demanded as a right and not as a favour. However, a closer look at the data of the study suggests that the amount of 'authority' demanded by a military may be subjected to further scrutiny. A policymaker at Institution B responded to the question, 'Do you think that cadets nowadays somehow question the authority?' by saying;

Actually, they are not questioning an authority... they are looking for further explanation. They know that you are in charge... but if you want an officer to execute the certain mission, and you want to give him freedom, the possibility to take initiatives... you have to explain everything... you have to explain about this mission. If he does not know why, he will not be able to take initiatives. As, he must know a whole picture. For example, let say if he has to attack and destroy enemy... and you don't explain to him everything... he will attack the enemy... probably... but perhaps his actions would also have other consequences. If he has

been explained a whole picture... the general picture... he will take the right decisions. Because he will know his actions and the consequences of those actions on other people, especially when we are working with civilians. Our enemy is no longer a military... it can be a terrorist. So our action can influence the local populations. Therefore, the people of today, if they ask 'why', it is not because they want to know 'why', it is because we have to tell them 'why'. As they know that we have to explain it to them. That is why they say 'why'. They expect from their leaders, from their boss... the whole picture. You have to tell them everything. It is expected from you, and we try to promote this. It is not about questioning the authority. It's questioning an ability of a good chief... of a good leader. Is he a good leader? They are young... they are testing their company leaders... they are testing their battalion commander... my battalion commander is testing me. While, I am giving my directives, they expect me to explain to them "why do I have to do this" ... If I don't say this, they will ask me" (PM1Ib).

It may therefore be the case that this threshold would continue to be troublesome as the military;

"...have these rules... and these youths do not really like rules. It is not cool to have rules. It is not cool to have to listen to somebody. It is cool to do what you want. So, less and less people are interested in becoming an officer in the military which means that we have less people that take the exams and we have less people to choose from to fill in the quota that we have" (PM1Ib).

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, military is not an independent entity which is free from societal influence and change. In this account, an officer from Institution B commented;

“I think; it is difficult to compare what I had experienced to what the youngsters are living right now because they have different mentality throughout the year. For instance, when I came [here]... and they told us “Jump”, everybody jumped because that is what we were told to do. Right now, if you tell a young guy “Jump”, he will ask you “Ok... how high do I have to jump... how long do I have to jump... why do I have to jump...” So, they have much more questions than what we had twenty or thirty years ago. So, there are different mentalities. But... ok, you can explain some of the things but in the end, they will learn to accept that they will have to do something without further explanations... at least not at the beginning. So, this is one of the challenges that they will have to overcome these days, I think ... Accepting things. It does not mean that we do not explain to them, but they need to learn to accept which is not easy” (PM4Ib).

Additionally, a military trainer from Institution A mentioned that;

“The cadets... they are getting wiser with the time and this might be due to a rapidly changing atmosphere because, back in the days when an officer used to say something, that was the law. It was true. Now, we have the cadets, they are wise, they are not afraid when they challenge you. If you say something, you have to be sure that it is like that or otherwise you will be shamed because the cadets, they are wiser than those present in the previous days. They are not afraid to challenge you. I think” (MT7Ia).

This situation proves to be a problem on its own as one of the officers at Institution B mentioned his experience when he was asked to share his encounter with the first year cadets at his institution, he responded by saying;

“Another thing is they must learn to accept remarks when I said something without resisting it and just accept it. They had to be quiet and listen and accept what I was saying. And, this was not easy for the first year cadets because they came from a civilian environment which is different from the military environment. The second and third-year cadets did not have too much problem accepting my remarks or the other officers because they knew that it is for their own good. But I think, it is not the same for any 18 years old... who just thinks that he can do everything” (MT4Ib).

Such situation was evident as, the second year’s cadets at Institution A mentioned during an interview session;

S3: “The most challenging part, for me is ... when I was told to do something, and I asked; “Why”? I had no answer. So, that was probably, the hardest part. Because you are so used to reason... but I’ve been told that this is how things are done” (Y2Ia).

In addition;

S6: “At first, I was kind of a rebel... because I had this negative attitude and I wanted to get out. I had to learn to respect the authority... If you try to stand against them, it is going to get very hard. So... you have to learn how to let go some of your own interest and just believe that someone who has high rank... he knows better... and just do what you are told to do” (Y2Ia).

These descriptions given by the officers do not necessarily mean that military is losing the needed obedience from its people in order to function. Rather, the current situation

somehow suggests that the person of authority is now in question. Being asked to comment on this, a higher ranking officer at Institution B mentioned that;

“I think... I talked to somebody two days ago... We talked about the good old days, during our time here, when things were easier... You have already got a certain degree of obedience, a certain degree of followership by the education, people have had until they attended [this institution]. Now, this is no longer the case. The military commander has to explain... but it is not a bad thing, I think... But you have to invest far more in convincing people because some of the values we hold dear are now very, very far away from the values of society. So, the gap is going bigger. Culture gap between the military, I think, and society is bigger and if you want to train and educate military, you have to bridge this gap... which takes a lot of time...” (PM51b).

This would mean that at the end of the day, a cadet must;

“... [be] able to take command from someone else. When someone says to you; “You do this” ... you do it... you don’t ask the question, you do it. Or you can ask question (laughing) anyway... So, in way to be able to work in a community when somebody is higher than you and giving you instruction or orders to do something... It might be different if you are at home or at school... the atmosphere. So, you have to learn to be more disciplined in a way so you can co-operate in an actual environment” (MT141a).

During one of the group interview with the cadets of the second year from Institution A, one of them shared his experience during the first few days at the institution. In his account;

S1: “The feelings were mixed. I was eager at the same time but... it felt weird. New place and you did not know what to expect and what would happen next and... When somebody said to you that; “Hey you, go there” ... you went there and you just stay there until the next person came and said; “Hey now we are going to eat”. And, it went on like that” (Y2Ia).

Another cadet when asked, also mentioned that;

S2: “It’s kind of same with what S1 said. From 6 a.m. until 10 p.m., you just go, and someone else tells you what to do... but you don’t really know what’s next. I think that makes it... a little bit scary or something. But, you get through it. The experience is... you get used to it very quickly but on the first day, it was like that. Not knowing what is next and the other guys know, but they don’t tell you... you just go...” (Y2Ia).

Interestingly enough, this view was also shared among the first year’s cadets from the same institution. One of them mentioned that;

S4: “The one thing that comes into mind is getting used to of being told what to do. In the beginning, you really don’t control anything... what you do or where you go. Everything is told. When you wake up... when you to eat. Some people don’t get used to that and they often drop-out” (Y1Ia).

Answering the same question, another cadet responded that;

S2: "I would say following orders is the first thing that you will have to learn because it is the same thing in the barracks or in the field. If you can't follow the orders, you can't complete your task or your mission and eventually, you will fail. All the other things; physical stuffs, shooting... those come later but following orders is the first thing" (Y1Ia).

Moreover, another cadet had also described the experience as similar to;

S3: "...losing the right to choose for yourself. Like they said... you have someone else telling you when to get up, when you go to eat and when you have to come back. So, you lose the right to choose for yourself" (Y1Ia).

This view was echoed by another officer cadet who said;

S5: "For me... it is not just an 'order' but also the authority behind it. If a person says something in the first few days, and you do not know the person and all you hear is yelling... you have a sense that you have to do it. But, when you have people who already have a background... an education level... there should be a way how these orders are given out. That is the thing. You cannot yell out something... clean the toilet with a toothbrush... that does not work. People will start questioning. There are a few things that are easily being taught. You will have a leadership training later on but all orders must be fair, clear and must be capable to be fulfilled by the subordinates. As it should be done with an example. It cannot be something that he himself could not do. He cannot exclude himself just because of the authority that he has been given. For instance, in the first week, when we start to learn how to do these things... some people leave. They have their own choices... they might have medical issues; they just can't follow... they have the

option and some of those who leave; they focus on this yelling and tyrannical situation. Of course, it can be an exaggerated example, but later you realise that if these guys don't really have reason to yell, they won't do it... because it only works for a certain period of time. So you, from the first week... you start to realise that things are done in this distinct way, how senior officers do their task and they are usually very strict and they have to be fair... they have to be able to do what the troops can do" (Y11a).

It is somehow surprising that the same condition was also evident among the first year's cadets from Institution B. Answering the same question, one of the cadets indicated that;

S4: "I think, the thing that created trouble within the first week was the authority. You will always have to do what you are told to do. For the first time, you are away from your family... and that becomes harder when you only have like 4 or 5 hours of sleep. Plus, the impossible timing... that puts you under a lot of stress... to evaluate how you perform under stress. But as you are still new to the military, you do not know that. But after a few weeks, you understand how they operate and why they operate in that way. Therefore, it will make things much easier" (Y11b).

Furthermore;

S3: "Something that struck me is that... in civilian life, you can say "No" to a party or to someone. However, in military, you have to do it and you will do it. There are no other options. When they say you have to do it, you have to do it" (Y11b).

Whereas, another cadet from the third year mentioned that;



S3: “What I’ve actually learnt in those 6 weeks is to respect those who are above you. To know that what he says, you have to do it. If he says like; “You have to stay until 6.00”, you must answer; “Yes Sir”. That is how it must be. There will be a time that you will be giving those kinds of orders, and other people will have to obey you. Moreover, you have to give up some freedom to accept that” (Y3Ib).

The discussion between the cadets included in the study also shows that there are those who have had managed to cross this liminal state and understood this threshold. In one of the conversation, a cadet of the second year at Institution A mentioned;

S4: “I don’t give a damn how stupid the order is. It makes no difference. It has to be done anyhow... We may know who gives the command higher up... and going down the orders might change in a way or the utmost command may not have a clear view of a situation or severity of an order... but when it reaches the down level, it must be done. It does not work in the way where you question the orders and do not do something in a real combat situation... It won’t work... anyhow...” (Y2Ia).

One of his colleagues also agreed with this and said;

S1: “Yes... and in combat situations... if everything is questioned, it does not work anymore” (Y2Ia).

The same cadet further deliberated that;

S4: “You can have question in your mind... and maybe your friends too... but that is done when everything has already been done. As, everything that is done... it has to be done. For example, in one exercise we were ordered to make a raft. Then after that, the officer came and checks and told us we should be making another type of raft. But, the order was to make a raft. It was a wrong raft but if we did not make any raft that would be worse than having a wrong kind of raft because we have disobeyed the orders. As, in the military, you cannot choose which order do you want to obey because usually the lower rank does not have enough information to decide what to do” (Y2Ia).

On a different note, there is also another side of this ‘obedience’ and ‘authority’ within the military that may be a reason for its troublesomeness. In the previous section, it has been well established that the military is a ‘profession of violence’. Adding to the equation is this notion that a soldier must be prepared to give absolute compliance to the orders given by their superiors, which may be a crime against humanity. The Holocaust, for example, during World War II done by the German Army towards the Jewish people, is one of those examples where the unspeakable act of violence was carried out by the German Army on the ground that they were just following ‘orders’. Being asked to deliberate on this, a higher ranking officer at Institution B gave his thought on the matter by saying that;

“...there is a saying in Latin... *Si vis pacem, para bellum*.... If you want to have peace, prepare for war. So, I think, even now, what we do in training is preparing soldiers for worst case scenario. Hence, we try to do this to the best of our abilities. We try to educate people; we try to train and so on. That’s one point. We have to be skilful as I said; the military is a technical expert. Of course, on the use of that, for me, is

political decision and of course we are bound by an oath... that is a tricky question..." (PM5Ib).

He then continued;

"I think... because if you see what happened in Syria... people from the military who were commanded to commit acts of war crime, at certain time thought this is not right so they joined the rebels and so on. I think, this might... I think this is on individual level, not being in agreement with the political level. I think, as the military, we should consider ourselves... "Ok, what do I do with this? I quit? I execute or not?" For me, partly, this is an individual decision because if you don't... if you instil too much critical thinking towards the military, I think, again, you might and can't read a situation where the military has its own interest; they want to stay in power... which is like Egypt... they want to stay in power... and if the politicians do not want to play along... (made sounds to indicate execution) ... we can look for another one" (PM5Ib).

He further deliberated that;

"So, there is a thin balance between what to do, how you fill in your obligation towards public... to serve the needs of public and to say if the public is well represented by the politicians and if the politicians represent the public. This is something that lives and happening now in Kiev. It is a fantastic example to what has happened. As a police officer, you are commanded to act, to shoot... do you do this or do you... Histories have shown afterwards the war crimes in Tokyo and Nuremberg of the military... that "in the law of armed conflict the commanders are responsible" ... I think, this is something that every military must consider. I

think, I would, up to a certain level, if I cannot find myself in what I'm doing, what I'm told to do... that's the moment I would say... "Ok, I would quit" (PM51b).

Furthermore, the higher ranking officer mentioned that;

"There is, in "laws of armed conflict", a paragraph to the commander: you cannot use as an argument 'I was told to do this' if you knew that something is clearly against regulation. It's also in our code of discipline. If your boss asks you to do something which is clearly illegal, you have to say 'no'. If you say 'yes'... ok... you have to proof afterwards that you didn't know that it's against the law. There are some systems... in the system... be it in the disciplinary regulation... but far higher up also in the law of armed conflict, you say, ok... if you know that what is asked to you is clearly war crime, you cannot say 'I was asked'... whatever this goes... 'I was asked to do so'... No. The public opinion will not accept this as an excuse" (PM51b).

In a nutshell, the discussion has led the study to conclude that apart from obeying, the soldiers must also think and evaluate those instructions given by their superiors and deliver their own judgements whether to follow certain orders or not.

### **7.3 TROUBLESOME KNOWLEDGE IN OFFICERSHIP**

The next ontological shift, as presented in Chapter VI, is Officership. This can be described as the main purpose of higher learning within military. However, the task of identifying the troublesome knowledge within this period proves to be a complex attempt. It was considered during the analysis stage that the available data would demonstrate a certain degree of troublesomeness at this phase. This did not prove to be the case as; there was an absence of sufficient data, which indicates the troublesomeness encountered during this experience. In another way, this absence

of evidence perhaps portrays a less difficult transformation compared to the Soldiership phase. On possible explanation to this is the strong foundation being imparted during the Initiation Phase – where those who had made it have now the needed background knowledge and experience that assist them hugely for the next phase of transformation. It is also likely that they might develop a strong degree of commitment to Officership by the end of the Soldiership phase and *prior to* entering the Officership stage. Therefore, this is a better explanation as to why evidence of troublesomeness is hard to find – they (the present officers included in the present study) have already made the ontological shift to a great degree that it is impossible for them to recall what has become ‘a second nature’ to them. Nevertheless, there are still interesting junctures at this Officership phase that can present a degree of troublesomeness.

### **7.3.1 From obeying to thinking: Receiving orders and commanding**

Earlier in Chapter VI, one of the officers reportedly said that;

“...transformation from a soldier to officer is actually from being told what to do by thinking on your own and telling others” (PM3Ib).

This task of transforming officer cadets from ‘obeying’ to being prepared to produce directives to be followed by other soldiers seems to be a daunting task. While having a conversation with a policymaker at Institution A, who commented that;

“If you are private, then you have a lot of superiors above you. So in a way you... it might be difficult for some people to understand that this job is to do something very simple in the way. And then, just to obey orders... and then in a way, a normal civilian would not take the orders in an everyday business like the military. The soldiers in military ... they are used to get orders and obey orders and fulfil the mission that they have been given... So, you are, for example, you are a company

commander, and then you are the platoon leader... then you have the pressure coming from here (pointing up-down) and from here (pointing down-up). Moreover, the higher up you are coming in a way you have more pressure from both sides and that... because you have to obey the orders and fulfil the task you have been given and at the same time able to take care of your people. That might be demanding for some people. At the same time, when you are giving orders and fulfilling the task, you have been given... you have to take care of the people and make sure that they are in good condition, and they are willing to do the job for you and so on. So, you have to be in a way... socially capable of giving the orders” (PM21a).

Such description suggests the pressure faced by an officer is like no other and requires the officers to be able to receive and deliberate orders to his subordinates. One of the policymakers at Institution B provided an interesting discussion of this matter by mentioning that;

“I think, the system here is too direct. I do not like a direct system... I want a system like what I have experienced. I was in a university, and my parents told me that you can go there, but you must be responsible and succeed. If not, we do not support you anymore. I had the freedom to decide and did not feel that I will be fully controlled 24/7. I was an adult, and I did not want to be treated as a child. That is why I often say to my colleague and those people who are responsible to the cadets at the academy; “My cadets would not have more problems than the cadets who are here at the academy. This is because here, they are controlled every minute”. I hated that when I was a cadet here... to be controlled... to be ordered... after every five minutes. When I was in the other university, I was only told that I have the final exams in June, and for the rest of the year... you have your

own problems, but you have to be prepared. So, I was not convinced with the directive kind of education here but then of course, in the military, it is difficult to have a different sort of approach. But, I hate... this very direct assistance” (PM2Ib).

There is some evidence to support this lack of ‘self-judgement’ and ‘self-discipline where two cadets from Institution A deliberated that;

S2: “In our routines... you wake up early, and you have breakfast when they tell you to have... and lunch and dinner and so on. Then, you have this whole strict schedule, what you do in any part of the day. And yeah, your routines... First you have your training and after 6.00 p.m., you have a free time... If you have free time. And then you have your own routines... you go to the gym; you phone your girlfriend and so on” (Y3Ia).

While another said that;

S3: “Yes... tight schedule... because there is always about three weeks ahead schedule for every week and every day. There is time for everyday... You know three weeks ahead what I will do at 15th February at this time. You really know, it’s in the schedule. So, there is a tight schedule, and you have to deal with it. So, there may not be free time and so on... and you have this problem when you go back to home when you don’t have the schedule... “What am I going to do?” (Y3Ia).

Together, these excerpts provide important insights into the nature of officers’ training at both institutions under study. One crucial observation on this is that there is now, a shift

from 'just obeying' to thinking and deciding and exercising judgement. As an example, a military trainer from Institution A mentioned that;

"I would say that the system... most of the cadets they will... almost every cadet will know this basic thing to be an officer. It won't mean that everybody is the same. I want to stress that. Wide range to think what they want... and as an officer, you must have your own opinion... not just like follow the leader and "Yes Sir... I'm with you in this". In our system, we want to give... want to have an officer who has his own opinion and he will say his opinion... that's like the basic thing. And, there is a certain place... say what you think about yourself and give the feedbacks to the ones who lead... he thinks or she thinks... and when orders are given then, everybody is going in the same line or in the same path. Like, I said first, there have to be some certain basic backgrounds and... through this moral and ethics. These standards are built that as an officer, we have a kind of same basic ideas about... starting from defending the country and what-so-ever. But then of course you won't... quite wide way to think about issues. But, I would say that if somebody won't... or we can somehow say that someone isn't capable of taking responsibility or leading then he won't pass" (MT11Ia).

In other words, the yet-to-be officers must understand the importance of their being able to think critically while making a judgement and deliberating a decision. One officer said that it is important for an officer to think critically to analyse;

"...their own actions. Maybe that is a two-fold things or actions... to evaluate an environment and to evaluate your own actions and to take in everything that you are given before you make a decision. In the modern world where a soldier is always... somehow... being put in a much more complicated... in a covert system...



where you are more likely to be involved in a peace-keeping operation where the roles are much more difficult to decide” (MT1Ia).

As leaders, or as students who are destined for a leadership role, the cadets must be able to think critically and assess the situation in hand to be able to deliberate the correct decision. In this way, it would also be another basis for troublesomeness as to understand how critical thinking is important in an organisation, where hierarchy plays a huge role. Confronted with this question, the same military trainer at Institution A mentioned the general public stereotype military with rigidity in making decisions when;

“...[in] truth, when a decision is made, the decision is well thought. When the superiors have decided on something, you have to follow the orders. In the first phase, the superior will always include the subordinate to be a part of the decisions. So then you can be critical. Hence it is not so that a General or a Colonel makes a decision; “I want this to be done” and then everyone goes” (MT1Ia).

The explanation from the officer clearly suggests that the ‘hierarchal structure’ of the military during peace-time involves a certain level of criticality before a decision is made and an order can be commanded and carried out. The officer further enlightened that in battles:

“...if you always question, then you will be in trouble. Because during battle, the person who gives you orders... knows more than you” (MT1Ia).

Realising this fact, a military trainer asserted that:

“...in the modern peace-time situation, I think most of the decisions are always made by people in a group... discussion first and the mission command is important because then you can be critical... If the superior and the subordinate... have different ideas on certain goals, the superior would then realise that something has changed. In that sense, the concept of ‘mission command’ is quite important” (MT11a).

For this reason, the military trainer has indeed allowed the cadets to be critical:

“...[telling] them to convey their ideas to me. Of course, because I am a captain, and they are cadets, there is a hierarchy, but I try to be more organised with it. This is important because if they think that; “he is a Captain and I am a cadet... he wouldn’t care about my ideas” ... they wouldn’t tell me. It would be different if they feel that ‘this Captain listens to me’ ... They would be more likely to make a comment, open-minded and critical. My own views who had served in a common infantry unit for the six years... I think, it was very critical... All the orders were criticised and discussed. Of course, most of them were followed, but there were some that had been slightly modified to suit the subordinate better. So I think critical thinking is very important. It might not look like that, but it is... At least at the cadets’ school or at small companies. I don’t know much about the higher ranking officers...” (MT11a).

In another way, the task of educating cadets is a challenge, not just because of the military’s environment, but also the long-lasting stereotypical perception that a lower ranking subordinate could not participate and give his views in the decision-making process. However, the excerpt included above clearly suggests a more democratic and open session where criticality is not just welcomed, but also applauded. However, it is

itself a threshold for the cadets since they have been trained to obey and follow from the very beginning since their basic training period. Hence, in order to move on to the next step, the cadets must realise that their role as an officer does not mean that their words are always definite and would exclude those involved.

### **7.3.2 Developing the officer's mind: a troublesome process?**

The next troublesome experience for Officership has to do with the higher education provided by both institutions which aim at producing graduate officers. Earlier in the sections above, it was included as an opinion given by a Navy Captain who described that the current MOE system at his institution does not really train military officers but rather, 'students who are forced to wear uniforms'. Again, the debate between having a higher level of qualification and imparting the much needed military officer's skills and function knowledge takes centre stage. To begin this discussion, it would be worthwhile to first examine the purpose of introducing such an approach in MOE. A policymaker at Institution B mentioned that:

"First of all, I have to say that there has always been in the military a certain resistance against any, to my opinion, any intellectual... But, I think, any organisation as I said, should have its own self-correcting mechanism... You [need to have people with] certain intellectual back-luggage. [As a platoon commander, I don't need] a Master degree in Social or Military Sciences. I was there with my tank – I need tank tactics and tank shooting on a shooting range and so on. But, once you grow up in an organisation, you need all the skills. And most of the time more conceptual skills and this is done only by promoting academic education. I mean, abstract thinking and so on. You need it... [and] on the personal view, I think... one of the characteristics of academic to me is [it] makes people always

curious... always looking to new things... improve... and I think this is also a capacity in defence” (PM51b).

However, this noble desire depicted by a policymaker seems to be contested when a military trainer questioned:

“...should WE be doing it? We should be delivering personnel into the Armed Forces... And, if you said that to become an officer one must have a certain level of education, then ok... We recruit people with masters... bachelor or whatever. We can determine that. But it is not our job to give them that masters’ education. It should be done elsewhere. We should focus on the professional skills... the leadership... what makes them officers... [This] institute is not doing that. That is why, I argued that there is no difference if you compare a student studying at a university for five years... to a student here, who studies for the same period of time. There might be a little bit difference in terms of attitude... but not that much. Only during the one-year training after [they have completed their studies from Institution B], we try to instil the professional skills... but even then... ok... here, officers are in uniforms but not yet an officer in heart and mind” (MT11b).

Such strong point of view transpired here resonates with the review of the literature to the existence of two school of thoughts in MOE; where the first one supports the institution to educate future cadets to have high academic qualification while, the other one questions the task as, it diverts the intention of equipping the needed military professionalism among the cadets. Even though the debate marks a significant and positive evolution of officers’ training and education through the years, the long deliberation as what should be the form of MOE education, puts this ‘education’ process, into a troublesome experience.

As it has been explained by the policymaker, the education is directed more at developing intellectuality and to impart cadet's desire of continuous learning. According to a policymaker at Institution A:

“There is a difference between ‘training’ and ‘education’. ‘Training’ means you already have certain knowledge, and you apply that knowledge. Whereas, ‘education’ here... we have to give them knowledge because they do not know anything... they do not know shit! Sorry for the expression but they (the cadets) do not know shit when they arrive here. So we have to educate them. Training is afterwards... that is done in the units. At first, they have to gain the basic skills here. So we don’t train our cadets, rather we educate them” (PM1Ib).

In this way, the feedback goes against the comments of those mentioned previously by one of the Navy captains who questioned the institution's approach towards the cadets' education and training. The policymaker further elaborated that one of the reason why the cadets lack in military professionalism is due to the condition where cadets:

“...build their intelligence [thus making] it very important... It is important for these people to use their brains and gain a general knowledge of Physics, Ballistics, Construction, and Mathematics... everything. It's very important for their future career. They have to learn ‘how to learn’... because it does not stop after academy life is finished. It is just the beginning. As you must gain advanced education in order to become a Major and so on. All these different steps mean that at a certain point of your career, you will be put back to learn. If you are not used to learning, you won't succeed. So, it is very important to develop their general knowledge. But, I always think... perhaps I am naïve... that the people came here to become officers and it is not because of getting a diploma... I think

90% of my cadets... they are here to become an officer. They are not here for the diploma, but they know that they have to pass... they have to succeed in order to become an officers” (PM1Ib).

Even though there is a sense of criticism towards the system alluded through the comment; the policymaker maintained a neutral ground by mentioning that the system is a result of country’s defence forces requirement. Moreover, he was still adamant to say that the present system is able to provide a ‘thick’ basic military education among the cadets. This is because:

“...when you are talking about our training system, there is much more weight on the academic stuffs. When you succeed in studies, you normally succeed in having a career in military. But, if you are very good in military; handling guns or equipment or whatever – that kind of practical things – you cannot say that you are also good in the academic study... it goes the other way and those who are more intelligent, they succeed better... [T]he academic studies show that you are capable of learning new things, theoretical things and so on but at the same time, you are really good at these military issues, and that is a good combination. Those, who are much more interested in practical things; going into the forest with the troops, handling guns and so on, he tends to stay there” (PM2Ia).

This view was also shared by one of the cadets who mentioned that:

S1: “...the whole idea is that your degree, regardless of what subject or what you have studied will never fully cater for a sort of perfect mould... The point is to give you guidelines... a LOT of it... I can say seventy percent of it is up to your passion

and willingness even to learn more than it is required... to actually analyse even more than we have learned” (Y31a).

Yet again, the importance of educating the officers is problematized as one of the cadets described that:

S5: “Emphasis on academic studies... it is different here. We are being trained for a profession. Is it then important to understand other Mathematical equations? The answer is yes but in what time? We are expected to learn university materials, in addition, to know what legal rights we have, the jurisdiction and we have the vocational and professional studies. For that... I think, there should not be an over-emphasis on academic studies because you have to understand the time available to do all that. They are bringing in the best professionals into Institution A, but they must understand that the students that come here want to become military officers. We have a long education ahead of us and they are cramming a lot of it in the first few years. I know, it is not an issue now and I think it works for now” (Y11a).

In other words, the former officers and present cadets would have experienced troubles in seeing the relevance of their higher degree qualifications to their future endeavours as an officer. The opinion is hugely shared with a military trainer at Institution B who mentioned that the things that he had learned to earn his degree have no value in the making of himself as an officer. According to the trainer:

“These are the values... the formation... I don’t think I need to be good in mathematics and sciences to become a military officer. Giving academic education

of course, builds a certain level of intellectuality, but you don't really need it to become a good officer. The education prepares you to synthesise, analyse problems but I think we must work hard on military and values" (MT4Ib).

And interestingly, the following answers were given by one of the policymakers at Institution B when asked the same question:

"I will be very honest... no. Perhaps, one course... ballistics... because I went to the chivalry. But the other courses... they did not help me for my military job. But of course, the general knowledge... how to use brain... it helps of course. It's a 'necessary evil'. But the course as such... it did not serve me. I can give you an example. I was a Commander in 1992 and at a certain point, one of the soldiers came to me and started crying. He was 50 years old and told me that his wife had left him for his best friend. So... boom! There sits a 50-year-old man, crying... I was 30... a Captain and I thought; "For 3 years at the Academy and they gave me a course in Psychology but they never teach me how to deal with this problem". I never forget this. Nowadays all the courses try to make connection with a real military life. When they use example, they will use military examples. Now there is a link between the academic and career of an officer" (PM1Ib).

As a result, one of the cadets at Institution A mentioned that:

S5: "The weeks for academics are usually short and tough. Most of the people try and learn things as much as they can and spit them out during the test and forget about it all together after that. But, if you ask the same person about some theories, they would not be able to recall it because it is no longer in their minds. I would say that is the way for some people in our course... they get good marks



by read and read... and write and write... but in the end they might not have learned anything in a deeper sense” (Y21a).

This fits with a logic defined by Perkins (2006) as an inert knowledge<sup>14</sup>, thus, creating cadets that mimic without understanding the real reason for having such education available to future officers in the first place. Another cadet also shared the same problem by elaborating that:

S3: “I had some troubles in seeing all the points of academic study. As I said, I was not good... I was not the sharpest pencil in the case. But still, there are very high Physics... ok... I don’t know but they are very high Physics... I really had troubles to see how this helped me to become a better officer... or a better military leader. I don’t really know but of course, there are some academic studies that are very important like this leadership studies. That taught us much different kinds of leadership, management... So I can say that academic studies are useless. But, I can say I can’t say. But sometimes I have trouble to see that point of those” (Y31a).

However, it led them to feel:

S3: “Damn... killing people is not this hard!” (All laughing) (Y21a).

Such expression vindicated the idea that to a certain extent, there are cadets and officers who feel that their education at their respective institutions did not comply with their experiences of a real working environment. Having failed to connect the dots between

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<sup>14</sup> A form of knowledge that sits in the mind’s attic. dusted off only when specially called for by a quiz or a direct prompt (Perkins, 2006:37)

the practicalities of what they have learned could have a huge influence on the cadets once they are commissioned to become officers.

On a different note, cadets' grades and academic achievements are used as a predictor of future officers' ability to perform at their units. According to one of the military trainers at Institution A:

“Our system or our military culture is very much focused on official grades, numbers and percentages and all that stuff because, in the end, they have to form a formal line... that who has the highest grades... the point average... he gets to choose his posting first so on and so forth. So our system is very much focused on the physical grades... I mean who gets a five and who got a three-and-a-half and who got a two... So, that is the problem” (MT91a).

In other words, the practice of allocating cadets having the highest academic achievements to the most 'popular' unit is not a viable descriptor for officers' proficiency in their profession. This was also shared by his colleague from Institution B who mentioned that:

“...that alone does not build an officer. So it doesn't mean that if you have a good result [here], you will be ranked up in the ranking... doesn't mean you will become a good officer because you will only have a basic military education... You got an academic education so you have a diploma or a master... but it doesn't necessarily say or qualify you as a good leader... as a good officer. I think, that is going to be difficult to change. I think, this is something that some people have. I think certain leadership capabilities are inherited, and some just don't have it... They might improve some of it but they will never become like those 'naturally born leaders'” (MT51b).

As a result:

“... nearly 90% of the people are lost due to academics. We have to keep a standard because we are delivering our products to the Army. There are some people who do not understand why they need a master’s degree to become an officer... and some may not understand why they have to become an officer to get their master’s degree. But I think the main problem is in the fact that we ‘squeeze’ everything in. They have 300 credits plus sports plus the military things plus the military training during holidays... So what we see is that people are just... ‘drowning’. It’s too much... they do not have any spare time. They are studying, running around or doing some military training... so some cracked. I think that is also good because that is a real life of an officer... not same as someone who is doing his job behind a desk. As when you are in an operation, you are never at ease. It is always rushing, driven by circumstances and the surrounding and the combination of all these shows how demanding things are compared to a civilian university” (PM31b).

Based on the above-mentioned excerpts, there are two interesting points that could be highlighted. The first one, there is a stereotype towards the requirement of having future officers with higher education qualification. The stereotype is not about the interrelatedness of subjects learned at Bachelor and Masters Level with officer’s professionalism, but rather on its value to develop higher order thinking and cultivating the desire for lifelong learning.

Secondly, the present system is suffering from the act of trying to ‘squeeze’ everything deemed important to the education and the training of future officers. As it has been argued by this present research, to date there are no viable research studies that

really concentrate on finding the 'jewels' in the current MOE system. As a result, the age-old battle whether to 'educate' or to 'train' military officers continues to this very day. As it has been observed earlier in the literature, such competition placed a huge pressure on the system and of course the cadets themselves. As a result, the military are losing good people that may have the quality to become a good officer just because they could not cope with the academic requirements.

### 7.3.3 Officership: Living the Standard

The other difficulties observed through the data deal with meeting the mark and qualities of an officer. As mentioned by one of the officers, joining the military is similar to joining a family, while becoming an officer is like fitting into a selected group of a family. Recalling his experience at the institution as a cadet, one officer at Institution A mentioned that;

"I think the main issue is to gain the officer's identity and also when you do that, you become a part of member of officer corps in the defence forces. So there will be a strong identity within the officer in the Army. For example, ... I know a lot of officers in different ranks... and we share the same values... and we share the same background or things like that. It's a very big thing to be involved with that big group of a... officer. We can count on each other... We are kind of... sort of... brothers" (MT81a).

Furthermore, another officer from the same institution mentioned that;

"I would say to complete a transformation; it is an understanding why the military itself... why the officer corps exist... why we do and what we do... and the willingness to do that work. So, I would say... it is somehow... also, the understanding and the willingness to take up that responsibility and challenge

and start doing it. So understanding is a part of that transformation. I am not sure if I understand all that even now... but I think that must have been the key. It's not like a lightning bolt; 'ahh... now I understand everything'... I think it's more like a gradual transformation. As then there are moments of doubts for everybody... there are good times and bad times... and the key is to push on despite of bad things. It's a gradual process that happens during that period of four years" (MT91a).

In other words, the thresholds mentioned in Chapter VI for Officership are principally directed "to gain the officer's identity" and to make the cadet officers understand "why the officer corps exists". Being asked the question; what would be the most important thing that a cadet must understand in order to enable them to become an officer, an officer responded that:

"Hard question... but if you [want to be an officer], you [must be] willing to be a part of the club... a part of the family... you have to be proud with who you are and you have to know that you are ready to give an answer. [Even when] you are wearing a civilian dress or a military dress... people will [always accept] you [as an] officer 24/7. So, you have to be ready, and you have to [follow] the rules..." (MT71a).

In effect, the changes from being a soldier to an officer as described, clearly suggest that the troublesomeness for this ontological shift involves the process of gaining the 'officer's identity' and to become a part of that community of practice. This proves to be a problem in its own right as;

“...the biggest problem in our training, I say, is that they don’t have a possibility to work in the unit like all the commanding officers. So that... they learn that when they graduate and go to work. As the training that we provide them is mostly based on maps and situations without the actual subordinate units. So, it might not be that realistic for them to kind of understand the situation” (MT4Ia).

Whereas, such absence in the training would mean that the cadet officers;

“...don’t have that much life experience that they would have been given the responsibility of other persons’ lives who have children or have actually been in a situation where you need to fulfil the military task. There is always the risk of getting yourself or getting your men killed. So... that is a situation that we cannot put them into during the training which is of course, a big thing” (MT4Ia).

Thus, the lack of ‘real experience’ and total dependence on military camps and training for war and conflict really affect the effectiveness of an officer as, the burden of ‘losing a life’ is almost always a prolonged simulation.

On a different note, military officers are also expected to uphold their noble positions as the ‘defenders of the nation’ by advocating a high level of moral lifestyle for the remainder of their lives. One officer mentioned that:

“...have that role of an officer even when I am having my free time. I’m always an officer. So, it’s something that I have to carry... because, yeah... at the moment, I am wearing my ‘civilian uniform’, but still I am an officer. So you have to behave like an officer. When I am having my free time, I can’t just “there... ok, I can”, but I have to carry... the things that I do might affect my work as an officer. I have to obey the rules much more tighter than the civilians” (MT7Ia).

It is interesting to highlight the officer's reference to his attire at the time of interview as 'civilian uniform'. This choice of words seems to indicate that an officer, no matter in what 'uniform' he is, will always carry a vindication that he is an officer. This shows that officers are governed by rules that are highly ingrained into their psyche as officers and they must always present this through their conduct. In an interview, one of the officers explained that this;

“...is something about how [an officer] presents [himself], how he acts with senior officers, what is considered polite, what is considered rude and appropriate... how to be on time, how to keep a promise and this kind of mental things... It goes back to your first question. You learn it. You are a part of this organisation, this team, and if you conduct something illegal even though you are an officer, it might also mean that you should have known better to do that. Like drunk driving... that is something that will affect your career. If you are an engineer and you had been caught drunk driving... “Ok, that is his own business” ... But here, it meant whether you are a trustworthy person because that is something that you just don't do it... you just don't go endangering other people with your own behaviour” (MT10Ia).

Interestingly, the importance of knowing the 'values' of being an officer is so important that the values are 'taught' collectively by the older cadets and the current officers of the institutions. At Institution A, for an example, there is a special 'committee' that is made responsible for educating the younger cadets, the values and traditions of being a part of the Officers Corps. According to a cadet from the third year at an institution;

S3: “We have this Second Grade Cadets who... they kind of form this... tradition committee that is responsible for teaching the younger cadets to act like they are

supposed to. And they teach them traditions which we have a lot, and they teach how to act in different places. There are many traditions... how to... where to go and not to go... there are some trees that form a gate that only the third grader can walk through it... that kind of things. So there are many things they have to teach to the younger cadets. And I was a member of this committee... I had a good time teaching it and of course, the teachers' officers do it too... and we have one course called "The Introduction to Officership" (Y3Ia).

Moreover, apart from 'educating' the newly admitted cadets, the committee also functions as a governor that may propose an expulsion of those who are seen unfit to become an officer. Such practice was also found at Institution B, where there is a special 'Infectious Week' in which the new cadets learn about;

S4: "...the school's [tradition]. In real, to say that you are a student here, or you are a part of the school, you have to pass something like that. You will have to learn a lot from each other... how to behave as a group, about the school..." (Y3Ib).

This approach is so effective as, it makes the cadets, more attentive to their conduct and manner. While having a discussion with the third year cadets from Institution B, one cadet commented that:

S5: "You just have to think about the image of Army when you are outside these walls. When you are in a city or something, you will give the impression of being an officer..." (Y3Ib).

In addition;



S1: “When I am in my uniform... I sit straight... I walk a bit more... (Laughing)... Not to exaggerate... for example, someone is having a problem with their luggage, and you are around... you will help them quicker because you are representing something that is bigger than yourself. You are representing the Army, and it is just another way of thinking. When I want to cross the road... even when I am in a hurry, and it is red... I would not cross the road as it is being respectful to the general rules and people around you will look at you” (Y3Ib).

The will not to “cross the road” because the “light is red” could be an effect of them realising that:

S3: When you wear the organisation’s uniform when you do something... the people do not see ‘you’. They see the organisation you represent. When you do something wrong, they do not see it as something being done by the wearer. They will say it was done by a soldier. So, it is like... when you do something wrong, the fault falls on the Army, not on the person. So, you have to give a thought before you want to do something, even when you are in your civilian clothes and even more when you wear the uniform” (Y3Ib).

Furthermore;

S3: “There are things that we can do in civilian clothes, but you can’t do it in a uniform. Wearing a uniform is similar to having a spotlight on you. Personally, you won’t change very much, but how the other people would see you... that would change. A, you have to be more cautious because the people will see you more easily in uniform than somebody who is not wearing it” (Y3Ib).

In all, the notion of being an officer is not only determined by having 'the rank' but also includes the practical professional practice of an officer. Moreover, a cadet would not only have to learn and adapt to a new environment, a transition from being a civilian to a soldier; the cadet would also have to learn how to act and behave as an officer. This suggests that there exists a double identity that is needed to be mastered by the cadets in order to join the community of practice. While, the first route enables a cadet to be accepted as a part of the military, whereas, the second course is required to permit the cadet to identify himself as a member of the Officer Corps. Even though the transformation at this stage is not as arduous as the Soldiership phase still, the phase is important in attaining the character of a military leader.

#### 7.4 SUMMARY

The objective of this chapter was to assess the troublesome knowledge that might arise from the threshold concepts presented in chapters V and VI. An investigation of the troublesome experience has shown that the initial experience during the first few weeks is quite troublesome as, the newly admitted cadets try and get themselves familiarised with their new militarised surroundings. As the data presented in the chapter has suggested, the experience during the Soldiership phase is very much harder than during the Officership phase. This finding is substantial as, the first phase would be crucial in setting up the needed background knowledge required to become an officer, whilst the second phase requires understanding to join the Officers Corps. Although, the study has successfully demonstrated that there *are* forms of troublesome knowledge, the findings have certain limitations in terms of understanding (in a deeper sense) the troublesomeness that is experienced during the Officership phase.

Chapter VIII, the final chapter in this thesis will discuss the data found in Chapter IV, V, VI and VII. Based on the available literature, the discussion stresses on the ontological shifts, where some suggestions regarding the cadet's position in the liminal space are discussed.

## Chapter VIII

### Through the Liminal – Discussion of Findings, Implications and Future Research

“It is better to have enough ideas for some  
of them to be wrong, than to be always  
right by having no ideas at all.”  
— Edward de Bono

#### 8.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seek to discuss the findings presented in Chapter IV, V, VI and VII, while attempting to answer the following research question;

How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy to further inform the development of officer education?

As it has been established in Chapter IV that there are two ontological shifts that should happen to a cadet that goes through an education system at institutions included in this study. Coming from a civilian background, a cadet ontologically transforms to become a soldier and then an officer right after a designated time frame at the institution. The discussion continues with Chapter V and VI, where the ontological shifts and the threshold concepts in becoming a soldier and an officer were further deliberated. Following this, the exploration continued in Chapter VII with a discussion on the troublesomeness of those concepts presented in Chapter VI.

In this chapter, the focus of the discussion was on the data found and its relation to the available literature especially on threshold concepts and other theories included in this study. As the discussion so far have given emphasis to the aspect of the journey to become an officer, this

chapter, in particular, takes into consideration, the problems of being in the threshold or liminal space.

### **8.1 RITES OF PASSAGE: THE JEWELS IN OFFICER EDUCATION?**

Indeed, as the research has proven, the endeavour to study military education and training is a hard and complex task. As an opening to this argument, it is significant to include a comment made by Kennedy & Neilson (2000) on military education.

“As a discipline, military education has historically been very vulnerable to short-termism and a “flavour of the week” mentality... [In] modern professional system, whenever, officers are gathered together for the purpose of education, some elements of training are imposed into the curriculum, if for no other reason than to remind students that they are specifically part of a military establishment and not just members of the general population” (x).

As the passage suggests, there has always been a danger for a military institution as such included in this study to adopt a system that touches only the surface of what they wanted to do. There is a very good reason for this. As it has been revealed through the review of the literature, a military institution that endeavours to provide higher education to its officers, is caught in its role to train officers and the desire to function as an institution of higher learning. This juncture does not only inevitably create friction and conflict on the institution’s very own logic, but also on the organisation’s purpose and function. One direct and unavoidable result of such conflict would be a *stuffed curriculum* where it tries to satisfy the need to train military officers with ample and adequate skills to immediately function as officers, once they are assigned to a unit; while being educated – at the same time – to earn a civilian equivalent higher degree qualifications.

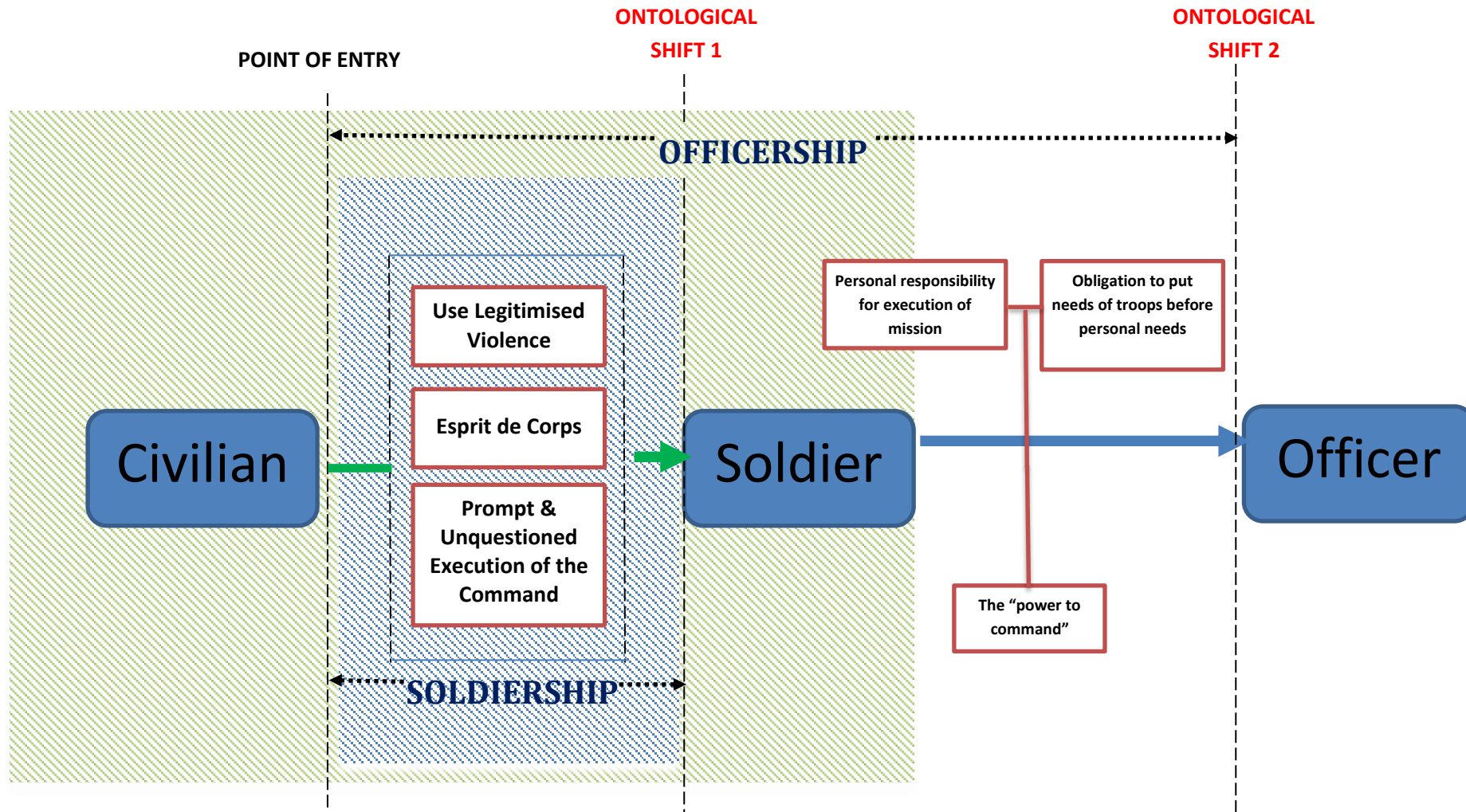


Figure 8.1: Ontological Shift and the thresholds concepts from Civilian to Officer

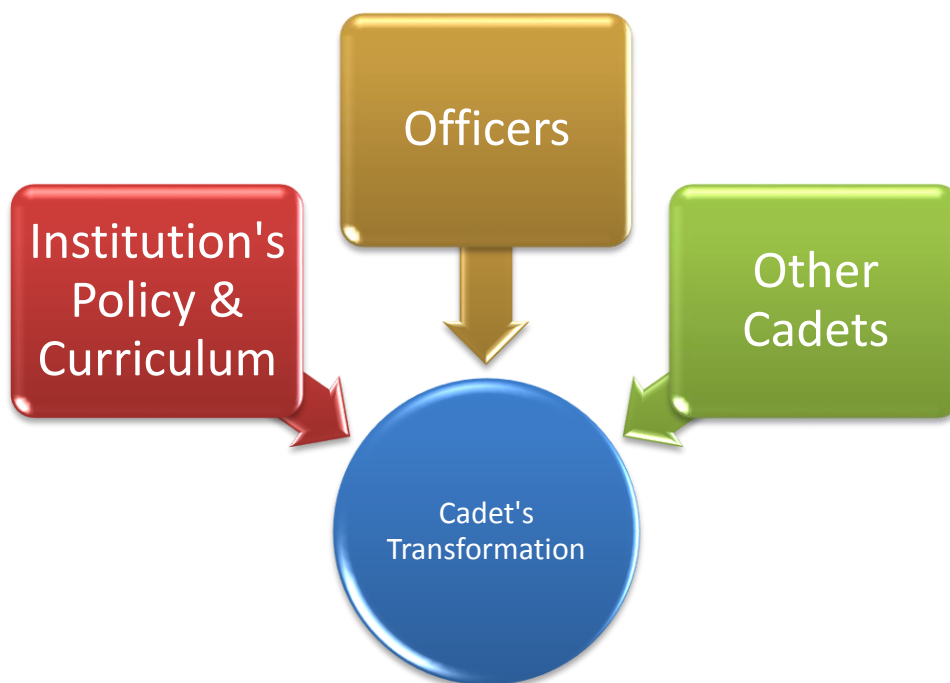
This task – educating while training – is becoming much complicated with the realisation of a new kind of national security threat in the midst of the twenty-first century.

This reason has made threshold concept of research in the military more appealing as “it focuses on difficulties of mastering in the subject” (Cousin, 2008:201). Chapter V, VI, and VII present a convincing indication that those ‘*jewels*’ in becoming an officer lay within a path of rites of passage. The present research attempted to understand the ‘*how*’ and ‘*what*’ in officer’s education, which had led the author to conclude that the education and training of officers is hugely influenced by the task of gaining the identity of practice. As depicted in **Figure 8.1** and explained in previous chapters, the threshold journey that a cadet must cross to become an officer can be a multifaceted and troublesome process. As a result, the cadets, like the warriors in Gennep’s study, went through a systematic education and training arrangement where they are;

“...considered ‘dead’, and [they] remain dead for the duration of [their] novitiate. It lasts for a fairly long time and consists of a physical and mental weakening, which is undoubtedly intended to make [them] lose all recollections of their childhood existence. It is then followed by the positive part: instruction in tribal law and a gradual education, as the novice witness’s totem ceremonies, recitations of myths, etc.... Sometimes, the initiation takes place all at once, sometimes in stages. Where the [novices are] considered dead, [they are] resurrected and taught how to live, but in a different manner than in childhood. Whatever the variations of detail, a series, which conforms to the general pattern of rites of passage can always be discerned” (Gennep, 1960:75).

What the author would like to stress here is his personal observation on the intricacies of this ‘arrangement for the dead’ where it can be seen as a collective effort formed by the *tribe* to facilitate the crossing. This ‘tribe’ – the military institution, its officers and cadets themselves – form an important *community of practice* that assists and promotes such transformations to happen. Based on this observation, it was then claimed by the author that the officers’ education

system existed at the observed institutions that truly develops its members through the “formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus, acknowledge each other as participants” (Wenger, 149). As it has been presented in Chapter VII; the *Initiation Phase is not only* represented as concrete ceremonies for this ‘arrangement for the dead’, but also serves as a re-educating period intended to ‘revive the dead’ and give them new identities. This collective participation of these parties is represented by **Figure 8.2** – developed through the process of trial and error, taking place voluntarily or not – will be refined and further expanded in the following sections.



**Figure 8.2: The collective effort**

### 8.1.1 The Institution

The institution functions as a beacon that directs the policy and the implementation of a curriculum deemed suitable to be used in the education and training of future officers. These include the formation of a suitable curriculum based upon the State policy, which is shaped by the two forces: “a functional imperative stemming from the threats to the society’s security and a

societal imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominant within the society” (Huntington, 1957:2). In the reply of one of the questions; What are the factors that influence the curriculum here at Institution B?, a policymaker responded that;

“To me, there are two big influences. First would be the academic world as, I told you we are in the process of getting the accreditation for our bachelor and master’s program. However, in order to get this accreditation, we must follow the academic accreditation. As, the second one is an internal one... what the defence department wants from future officers... so which content, what qualifications, what competence do they want. These are the two main influences. But, of course, what the defence department wants, depends on what kind of missions, what kind of soldier we need for future missions and so on. And then, you have of course, the political-military level. What does nation want to do within the international security context? We want to participate in operations, what kind of operations and in order to participate, what kind of personnel that we have... what kind of skills these people need” (PM5Ib).

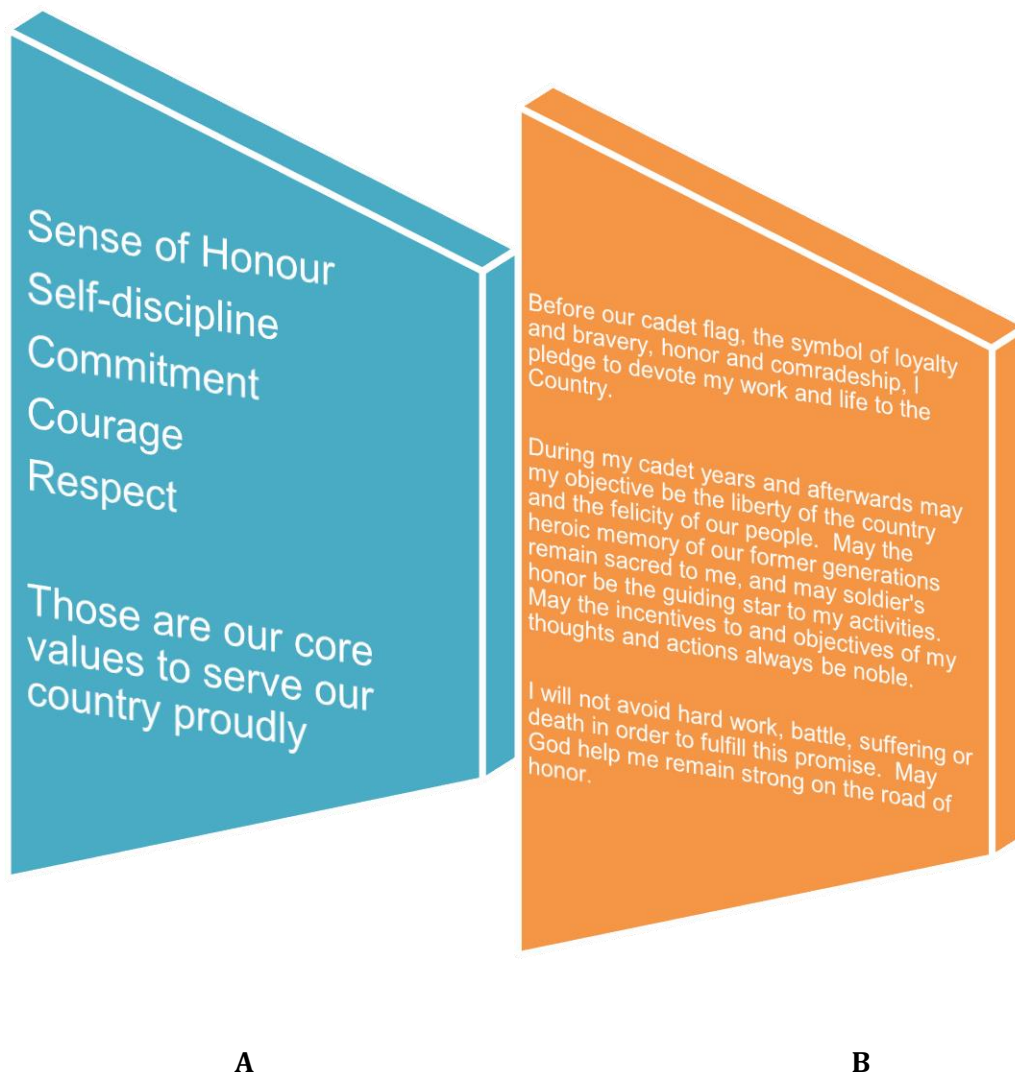
Another policymaker at Institution B further deliberated that;

“...my clients are the component commanders. So, the land commander component for instance... he will say; “I need officers with these qualifications”. They fixed the objectives. After having the fixed objectives, we determine ‘how’ we will attain those objectives, and we start by making a program... for the military formation, military education, the physical and the character building” (PM1Ib).

As a result, the education and the training method at such institution is “imbued with an idea of service to the nation, [where in practice, the cadets] must be loyal to some single institution generally accepted as embodying the authority of nation” (Huntington, 1957:35). Therefore, it



influences the institution's *symbolic thought* (Turner, 1969) declared through examples, as depicted in **Figure 8.3**. These 'declarations' are not just a mere mission statements or a formal summary of the aims and values of the institutions, but also serve as the basic concepts that builds the institution's curriculum structure.

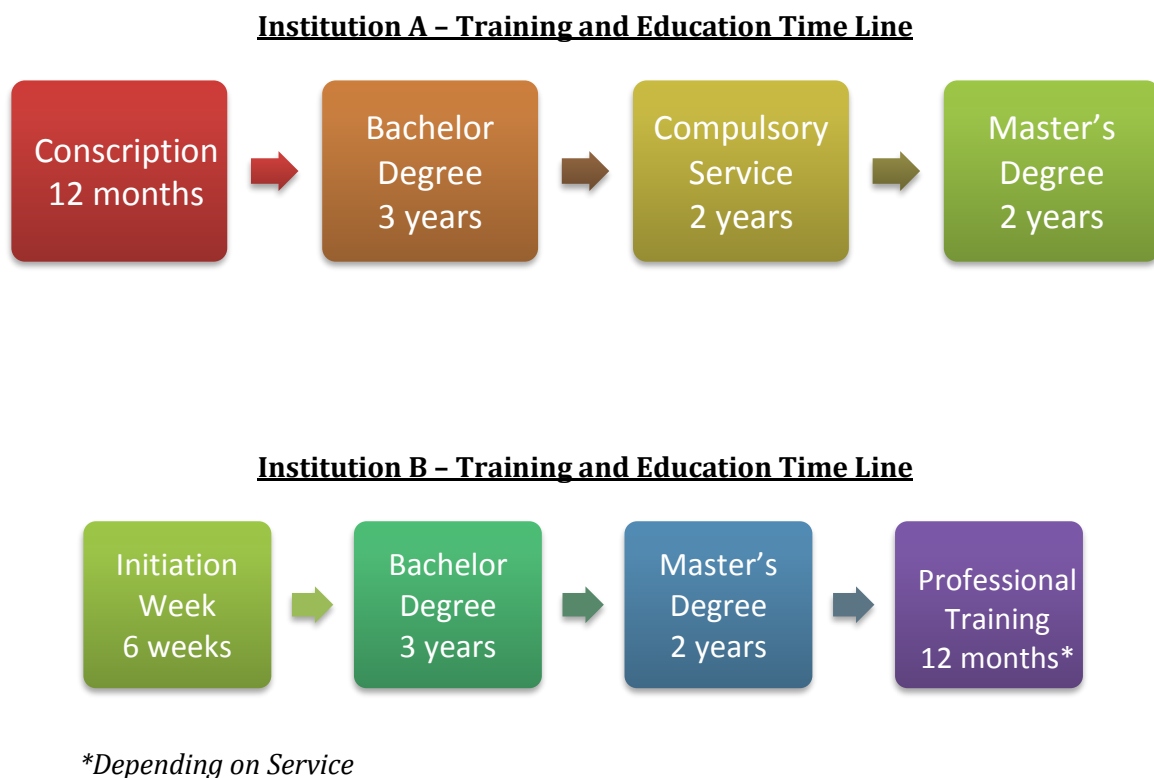


**Figure 8.3: Cadet's Oath at Institution A and Institution B**

Source: Researcher's personal collection

Moreover, as each country develops and practices different policies, the one fundamental outcome from this is the difference in how the curriculum is devised. **Table 8.1** shows that there

exist obvious differences in terms of the time allocated by each institution for the training of its cadets. This difference in approach, which is practised as a result of employing different policies raised one fundamental question; how much time or duration is required that significantly affects the education and training of a person who wants to become a military officer? Chapter V highlighted the differences between Institution A and Institution B in terms of available time spent on the imperative “initiation phase”.



**Figure 8.4: Training and education timeline**

The present research has not fully determined the effectiveness of either system in any way, but there is a predisposition that the policy and the approach of the curriculum at Institution A, permits better ontological shifts. This inference was made based on the two consensuses gained through personal observation on the curriculum implemented at the two institutions. First of all, as the policy to gain entrance to Institution A requires a prospective applicant to do a twelve-

month course of conscription, hence, the cadet has an ample time to make a conceptual crossing to become a soldier – a crucial and significant phase that put huge impact on the cadet’s route to become an officer. As a follow-up, in correspondence with a military trainer from Institution A, he deliberated that;

“The one year [conscription], which contains a half year long practical training is the most suitable. [Shorter] training period could cause impolitic difference with the leadership competence among the applicants, which would be harmful for the education from the officer’s point of view. On the other hand, [longer training] is slightly pointless because the purpose of the training is to qualify to act as a leader on a platoon level. At the [institution], leadership training will continue towards higher tasks by congruent methods. Besides, before applying for the [institution], every cadet has [the] possibility to practice personal leadership skills as an instructor in a fixed term post [while serving the conscription period]” (MT51a).

Such portrayal of the system clearly suggests that a prospective cadet who wants to enter Institution A would not only be given a longer period that facilitates his civilian to soldier transition, but also an opportunity to ‘measure by himself’ whether, he can become an officer or want to become one. In addition, the curriculum implemented allows the experience over the troublesome knowledge as such presented in Chapter VII, which happens in a gradual phase thus, promoting a much thorough transformation process.

On contrary, this process of transformation happens differently at Institution B, where new recruits acquire basic military skills and learn to function within a military community through the 'Military Initiation Phase'. Even though the period also serves as a period, where civilians transform themselves to become soldiers, the amount of time given for it to happen is rather too short. Having correspondence with a policymaker from Institution B, the officer reflected that;

“Personally, I think that period of six weeks is minimum to work on integration into a military community... Looking at the 'audience', I think that candidates who already have an affinity with 'military life' will adapt very easily and will even get a motivation boost to start the academic portion of their education. Candidates, who are more attracted to the academic part of our program (or who applied out of curiosity) will need an adjustment period to see whether they fit to military life or not” (PM5Ib).

The reflection suggests that for some cadets, the period would become a 'trial-and-error' phase, where more 'adjustment period' would be required. Furthermore, the officer's education and training system implemented at Institution B is spread throughout the five years, which are spent by the cadets at the institution where the curriculum;

“...reflects the evolving sense of responsibility we want to develop within our recruits. We made the choice of dividing the military education program and spreading it over the years, instead of concentrating it into one single period, as other academies do. There are many reasons for this: first of all, because we are looking for a good combination of academic education (Bachelor/Master), military and physical education and personality development. The current solution, aiming at integrating these four development objectives (individual level > team level > section level > platoon level), offers, in our opinion, the best results” (PM5Ib).

The author argues that even though, the curriculum spreads out the education and the training tasks, the experience of becoming a soldier and an officer happens simultaneously, hence, making the experience more troublesome compared to those experienced by cadets at Institution A. Furthermore, despite agreeing that the “Military Initiation Phase” is important, 'acclimatisation'

to military culture, where time is an important factor, prolonging it, is almost an impossible task. As a result of having a combined and a very much spread education and training system;

“Extending it would be difficult: it is already very hard to plan all activities in one year: 60 credit points (ECTS<sup>15</sup> - mandatory for recognition/accreditation Bachelor/Master), the physical training curriculum (up to 5 periods/week), and the military training curriculum. In fact, extending the period would mean to advance parts of the military training curriculum, which is now scheduled later (be it in the 1st year or beyond) to this first initial training period” (PM5Ib).

In other words, there is an issue of the overstuffed curriculum as the institution tries to accommodate the needs in between educating their officers while providing the crucial training periods in order to develop essential military skills.

Moreover, the discussion thus far brings us to the second consensus that the policy and curriculum at Institution A has more professional ‘flow’ (Turner, 1982:54) to its curriculum, thus creates a more engaged *communitas*. According to Turner;

“‘Flow’ denotes the holistic sensation present when we act in total involvement and is a state, in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part... we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is a little distinction between self and environment, between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future” (55-56).

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<sup>15</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union and other collaborating European countries.

In educational terms, it is necessary for the curriculum – especially those adopted by institutions included in this study – to have a flow that promotes learners to learn about a profession, but also let the cadets to experience a charm of being a soldier. As mentioned previously, the realisation of such institution within a military is due to the aspiration to have well-educated officers who are also military experts. As a result, the system is almost always prone to be packed with subjects and courses deemed important in the education and training of one. By looking at how the system works at Institution A, it can be said that the present one in use is a better one compared to the one currently being used at Institution B. Even though the time allocated by Institution A seems to be longer, but actually, the present system allows the cadet to be engaged with the practice right after they have had their bachelor's degree. Furthermore, the duration of two years that cadets spend in a unit exposes them to a certain aspect of the service, therefore, makes them much informed participants of the practice compared to their level when they started their studies at Master's level.

### **8.1.2 The Officers.**

After an institution, the second *community of practice* in the training of cadets that implements and carries out the curriculum is “the officers”. To begin with, it is interesting to note that all military trainers and instructors included in this study were former cadets and are now the military officers. This observation is of great interest as the officers were themselves, at one point, on the receiving end and were being assessed. Such position makes the military trainers and instructors active participants in the education and training of the cadets by being the ‘gatekeepers’ for the officer corps. By being one, the instructors and trainers hold the cadets’ rite of incorporation (Gennep, 1960:29). **Appendix E** provides us with an example, where it lists down the components that how cadets are evaluated from the first day they enter the institution, until the day, they are commissioned as an officer. In a conversation with a policymaker at Institution B, he mentioned;

“Cadets are evaluated almost on daily basis. Of course, for the academics, it is throughout their test and exams. For the physical training, it is throughout their test as well. Military training... during training camps... we have two training camps a year. Whereas, on their attitudes and characters, it is done every day and night” (PM4Ib).

Moreover, the presence of these officers within a compound does not only set the military’s authoritarian atmosphere but also provides subtle cues of the profession. According to another policymaker at Institution B;

“The most difficult part is the character part... the leadership... making leaders out of those people. That is the biggest challenge... and I think, that is my most important role ... Making leaders out of those people. How do they feel responsible? How to make them feel responsible? How to make them learn to take initiatives? That’s very...very difficult. How do we do this? By showing them the examples ... By explaining... by giving small projects that they have to organise themselves. Of course, we coach. So, they will learn step by step what it means to be an officer. Being an officer is not only giving orders. It also involves planning, organising, commanding, leading, controlling... it’s much more. Also, we try to learn all that in here” (PM1Ib).

Acting as a beacon, the officers laid down the tacit knowledge that the cadets must learn to acquire and develop the group identity that makes them as a part of the officers’ corps. Wenger (1999) elucidated that this tacit knowledge “may never be articulated, yet they are unmistakable signs of membership in communities of practice and are crucial for the success of their enterprises” (47).

### 8.1.3 Other cadets

Last but not the least, in the equation, are the cadets themselves. In a published documentation provided by Institution A, it reported the existence of ‘The Cadet Fraternity’ that functions as a ‘court of honour’ and is responsible for discipline and education among cadets so that the elder cadets instruct the younger ones and reprimand those who are disobedient. By default, all cadets would belong to the club and subscribe to its discipline and traditions. This exclusive club usually aims at preserving the spirit of being a part of the Officers Corps and to educate the cadets on the importance and the practice of discipline and honesty within the military. More to this, each of the cadets will be imparted with a feeling of responsibility for his actions that may shape the public’s opinion onto the corps. As a result, a cadet could face punishment from misbehaving created specifically for officers – from a good ‘trashing’ to the possibility of being and ejected from this special club – depending on the types, degrees, and the severity of the offence.

In addition, the same active participation from the cadets was also found at Institution B. However, instead of having an official cadet establishment, new cadets spend another one week with their second-year seniors after the military initiation week. During the group discussion over this week with the third year cadets, one of them explained the importance of this week.

S1: “I also think, when you come here and go through the initiation phase... you feel strong and then you come to the school, and again, it has a certain culture, and to learn this culture, they really break you down and rebuilt you and show you that this is why you have to work as a group” (Y31b).

Moreover;

S5: “It is also a chance to meet with the other promotions... and all 1st year students will have a ‘godfather’ who is in the second year... so, everyone is interested to find his senior, and I think, it is a good thing as it makes us closer” (Y31b).



Learning a new culture, learning to function as a group and to have a sponsor are indeed some of the patterns that resemble the Gennep's description of rites of the path. Only this time, the path is about being a part of an institution, affiliated with the officers' corps. According to Winslow (1999), such culture also functions as an effective way to identify "who belongs to the group and who does not" through concrete abstract ideals of "brotherhood and harmony, love and union, sacrifice and cooperation, and loyalty and discipline" (435).

Overall, this section has discussed and looked into the aspects of the transformation process presented in Chapter V, VI and VII. It has been argued that Institution A's policy, approach and curriculum bear the most resemblances to the present research's ontological shift found in **Figure 8.1**. However, focussing more on the aspects of the journey, the section also exemplifies how the institution, the officers and even, the cadets themselves would play their roles as the 'incorporation agents' that promote the transformation process for a civilian to become an officer. Therefore, the following section discusses the troublesome aspect of the journey that may result into the cadet's liminality.

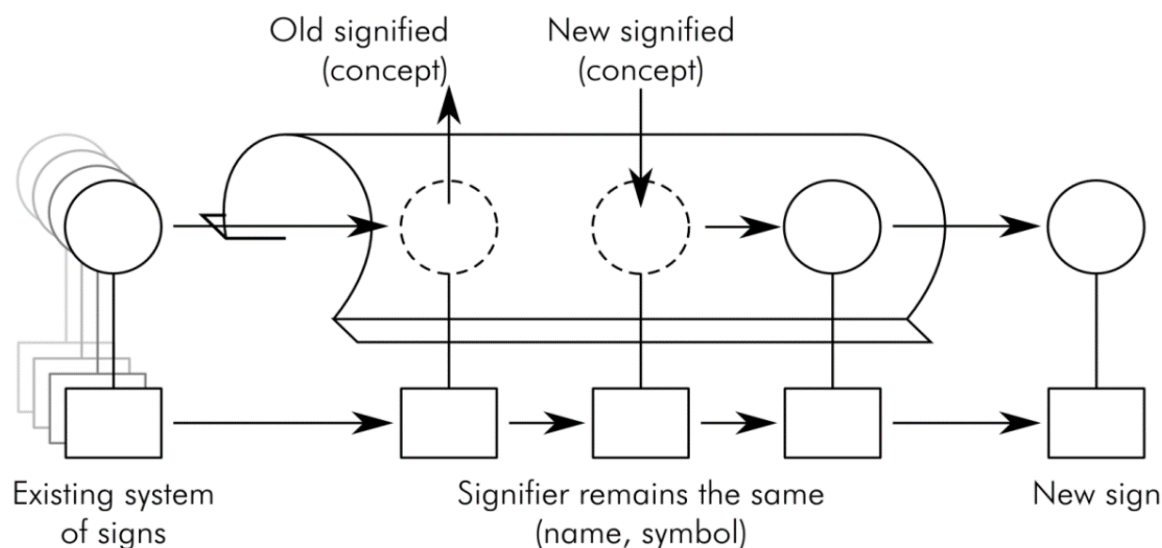
## **8.2 THE LIMINAL STATE: "A CIVILIAN, NOT YET A SOLDIER NOR AN OFFICER"**

Before we explore more into this, it is interesting to continue the discussion that the state of liminality experienced by the cadets at Institution A and Institution B might have taken place at a different pace. Hence, the author argued that as there is a compulsory conscription period of twelve months to enter Institution A, the ontological shift and the transformation process from civilian to soldier and then to officer happens in a much more gradual and steady pace. However, in Institution B, the transformation to become a soldier has been expedited within the prescribed six weeks of Initiation Phase, which is then followed by the institution's officer's training and education. This could be a source of trouble encountered, as the ontological shifts and the thresholds confronted by the cadets at Institution B are not as gradual to those experienced by

their counterparts at Institution A. Furthermore, to make this discussion more troublesome, even if the institutions provide more (or less) time for the transitions to happen, they will also be dependent on the individual cadets themselves as some cadets would not need the six weeks whilst others will need more than 12 months. As discussed in Land (2015);

“Insights gained by learners as they cross thresholds can be exhilarating but it might also be unsettling, requiring a change of subjectivity and, paradoxically, a sense of loss. The notion of threshold has always demarcated that which belongs within, the place of familiarity and relative security, from what lies beyond – the unfamiliar, the strange, the potentially threatening. It reminds us that all the journeys begin with leaving that familiar space and crossing over into the riskier space beyond threshold” (20).

In addition to this, it would be worthwhile to revisit Land, Rattray and Vivian’s (2014) metaphor of the liminal tunnel (Figure 8.2). As a new cadet enters a military institution, the new cadet must learn a few “new” and “foreign” meaning on top of their existing signifier. In the case of these new cadets, they must disregard their existing understanding of the world (as a civilian) and adopt to the new one (as a member of the Army). According to Land, Rattray and Vivian (2014), this process is conceptually challenging as if the cadets are unsuccessful to transform themselves, they will emerge with a different understanding from that of the teacher (i.e. the policy makers, military trainers and the other military officers).



**Figure 8.5: Introducing a New Meaning**

Source: Land, Rattray & Vivian (2014:4)

**Figure 8.3** depicts the study’s finding of being in the ‘liminal’ state as a person goes through the education and training to become an officer. However, before delving further into the discussion at hand, it is significant to express unequivocally that learners’ experiences differ from one individual to another thus, making the process of identifying a definite and perfect ‘way of experiencing’ unattainable. Despite this, the model could serve as a threshold on its own, in not only understanding the transformation of an ordinary civilian to become an officer but also in finding out those jewels in MOE.

To begin with, at the *Pre-Liminal* stage, it is interesting to note that according to Land (2015), before going through a programme of learning in higher education, learners must already have “an existing stock of concepts” that may influence the experience while being in the liminal, which inevitably affects its outcome. As the new recruits enter the institution, they encounter new thresholds that may directly result in the transformation of a recruit as a soldier/officer (embodied in path **1**). For example, being asked about their initial opinions regarding military, cadets at Institution A responded that;

S5: "... I knew something beforehand so; it was easy... already adjusting to the system. But, there is a say that the first few days, more or less, it is a surprise... good surprise I would say. You will be running... you will get tired... All in all, there is a social pressure that is difficult. Not the physical. It was about the new guys coming from all over the country... coming to a single place and suddenly having to make new friends and that is basically, the core thing. Not the physical stress. Not the 'forced education' and things like that but more like understanding the guys. So instead of sleeping alone when you are with your family, you will have 12 other guys who sleep in the same room as you and you start learning about people... very interesting things about people" (Y1Ia).

While, another cadet explained that;

S1: "Partially, my experience is very good because previous wars, nationalities a part of or that in a sense... I have ancestors who had served during the war; it is nothing new... the military concepts... to protect your own country. As, the fact that my dad is in the Army as well..." (Y2Ia).

It has been concluded that having background knowledge of what to expect had helped these cadets to manoeuvre and cross the threshold much better than their colleague who did not know anything. In addition to this, those following path **1** would exhibit a very high level of conformity towards the existing professional, cultural and traditional aspect of being a military. However, despite these findings, it would be interesting to include one of the military trainers at Institution A, who had mentioned that;

"As I told you, none of my family members was a soldier, so I didn't have a very good picture of the military system before I went to my conscript training. Maybe, at the beginning, I felt that soldiers and officers are 'weapon crazy' people, but after I had done

my conscript training, I know that I was totally wrong and... now I know that the defence is the security builder, and they are for independence” (MT51a).

As the quotation suggests, the officer’s lack of background knowledge of military could be a source of a problem for him to navigate through the liminal space. Additionally, one possible explanation for this was provided by the same military trainer mentioned above, who had said;

“I didn’t know how much you know about the country’s history, but we [have had] war before... so, I am very proud of our history and independence, and that is one of the reasons why I want to become an officer” (MT51a).

In other words, there are also those who have had an ‘epiphany’ that military life is right for them as a result of their positive outlook and motivation to become an officer. Another interesting discussion of this first path is what Land (2016) described as the *Einstellung Effect* – “a ‘functional fixedness’, ‘design fixation’ or ‘paradigm blindness’ which restricts a person to using and perceiving an object only in the way it is traditionally used and perceived” (20). This output, however, is not an unintended consequence as the military is already a total organisation where it needs this dimension of subjectivity to be able to operate under peace/war situation.

On top of this, there are also those who, despite having a proper background, would experience path 2 and ended up leaving the institution. In one of the interviews with the current cadets, one of them mentioned that;

S3: “There was also a guy whose father was in a military, but he didn’t want to be in a military... On the second day, he quit. He started crying and he explained to our chief about the situation and he quit” (Y11b).

In other words, despite having a 'correct and suitable background', a newly admitted cadet may still opt to quit if he or she "does not want to be in military".

### 8.3 THE "AMBIVALENT" CADETS OFFICERS

Apart from **1** and **2**, there were also those cadets whose feelings were caught to be 'in-between' thus putting them in 'stuck places', where the learner's ability of understanding difficult and troublesome knowledge may result in the learners' "lack of authenticity" (Land, 2015). In her study, Cousin (2003) described this as learners' tendency to 'fake it' – maintaining good results in an examination without making a transformation. Meyer & Land (2005:383) deduced in their paper that there is a possibility for a student to mimic to a certain point that he has made the conceptual crossings and approximated the intended new status. Realising this fact, the study would like to continue Meyer and Land's discussion over the matter and put forward a discussion that can contribute to deeper understanding on learners' "attempts at understanding and troubled misunderstanding, or limited understanding, and is not merely intended to reproduce information in a given form" (Meyer & Land, 2005:377).

Further, at this point, it is worth reflecting on Homi Bhabha (1994) colonial discourse; namely 'ambivalence', 'mimicry', and 'hybridity'. The association of such theory to threshold concepts could be seen as complex, but the inclusion of it may provide a deeper sense in understanding learners' 'in-betweenness' while being in the liminal space. In fact, the discourse was used by McNamara et al. (2002) who had proposed a 'hybrid liminality' that described the transitional phase as "an extended and ambiguous state of being 'in-between' thus, making the 'passage' as not linear but involves "a back and forth movement that repeatedly repositions the initiand in response to a complex, and often contradictory, set of agendas" (875). Consider once again, the *Pre-Liminal* phase, where a civilian is about to embark on a journey to become an officer. However, despite going through path **1** and **2** while being in the liminal phase, the person may occupy a third locus of being ambivalent – having simultaneous conflicting reactions, beliefs, or feelings towards a knowledge deemed troublesome as a result of previous held beliefs. As

mentioned by Meyer & Land (2006), 'liminality' equates to Genep (1960) and Turner (1969) rites of passage, where its state may be transformative and result in a change in status as a result of acquiring new identity from a certain community of practice. This brings the author to his first argument that professional training institution such as, those included in this study consider new cadets as the 'other'; essentially an *outsider* (McLeod, 2000:52). In order to abolish their 'otherness', the new cadets would go through a process of domestication to become "a competent member of the practice" (Wenger, 1999:136), where it occupies a "discursive space from which 'The Real Me' emerges (initially as an assertion of the authenticity of the person) and then lingers on to reverberate - 'The Real Me?' - as a question of identity" (Bhabha, 1994:70). It simultaneously puts the person in an ambivalent position - to be *inside* and *outside* - thus producing "other" that do have the 'knowledge' and can now be visibly seen as a part of the community (Bhabha, 1994:71) but lacks the self-conviction of being a part of *communitas* (Turner, 1969:96).

This brings us to the first and a very well established notion of 'compensatory mimicry' by Meyer & Land (2006:24), where a learner may experience "oscillation between states, often with temporary regression to earlier state". Having this as a point of departure, it is better to emphasise more on this idea of 'mimicry' by defining this state as being 'almost the same but not quite' (Bhabha, 1994:123). Embodied by path 4, it is also significant to speculate that cadets who mimic may resort to the *anxious repetition* of a certain activity or stereotype affiliated within the practice without having a proper understanding of the very reasons for doing it. It can be observed from the following account given by a first year cadet from Institution B;

S7: "the difficult thing was to keep the timing... always be on time, which was a problem for me. Because, in the Army, it is important for you to be on time and if you are not you will be punished. So, it was quite difficult to me. It was not for everyone... because they will give you impossible timing, and they know that it was impossible... and they just

make it that way so that they can punish you. But I think, that is a part of becoming a soldier. The first week was also a time where they will punish you or yell at you and things like that... I think, it is just something that you need to go through to become a soldier” (Y11b).

Despite being observant towards the military’s culture on time management and ‘doing-things-within-a-time frame’, the cadet did not fully understand this but concluded that “it is just something that you need to go through to become a soldier”. Therefore, this ‘something’ is in reference to the stereotype that the military likes to punish people and being a soldier; you must be prepared to be punished. As a result, the cadet may be punctual, not due to a reason that it is a trait which is highly valued in the military, but to avoid punishment. This lack of conviction may result in a cadet to mimic, but through time, they may understand the reason behind it. A policymaker from Institution B shared his own experience and commented that;

“For me, it was not shouting or discipline... it was time management. For me, this was my major issue. Getting up in the morning at time... and I got up 10 minutes before my roommates to get ready and after two days, I found it impossible. I got up at 5.45 a.m., they got up at 6.00 a.m. ... but they were ready and I was not ready. So, that was a problem. So, I had to learn how to manage my time. As that is very important for an officer... time management. If you are given a task... and you have to give a result to your chief at the end of the week... well... you have to produce the result at the end of the week. Not on Monday but on Friday. It’s time management. But, that was my problem. I got up earlier, but my roommates were ready for at 6.15 a.m. However, in the end, I got up at 6.00 a.m. and I was also ready at 6.15 a.m.” (PM11b).

As the excerpts have suggested, the realisation from ‘to avoid punishment’ to ‘the importance of having proper time management’ happens through time. Represented through path **4a**, the cadet



may eventually, through time, transform and become 'the officer' – either by 'compensatory mimicry' or 'conscious mimicry' (Meyer & Land, 2006:24).

On the other hand, there are those mimics which may not transform and may get themselves 'stuck' over years of their compulsory service. Depicted as following path **4b**, these officers will, to a point of their service, quit and leave their profession. One of the policymakers from Institution B commented during an interview that;

"In our academy, for example, I think we have 2 types of officers. The first type refers to those, who are much interested in academics. They want to become civil engineer... and want to go into laboratory... they are interested in military career... but I think, for them, predominantly, it is academic. Usually, when we look at the profile of those who go for the social military sciences, they are very much military oriented. As, the academic probably holds a second position. So, you have 2 different profiles. This is also interesting because both of them, once they have graduated, will go and serve into units, and they will start their career as an officer" (PM51b).

Interesting indeed, another policymaker from the same institution provided an interesting standpoint that to become an officer;

"... It is not something you try to do, it is a commitment for life, and you have to be convinced that this is your future... If you don't know what you are up against, you will not succeed. As I said, it is a vocation. If you don't have this 'feeling'... especially to become an officer... you won't succeed. Don't try... because you will never be succeed. You will leave. A lot of my colleague had left" (PM11b).

This 'lack of belief' in the profession may indeed leave the cadets to experience liminality much longer – even after being commissioned as an officer and leaving the institution long after. These

officers would *act* as an officer, have the outlook of an officer but do not really see themselves as 'an officer'. Consequently, the mimic cadets may eventually understand the true meaning of a certain concept and succeed in becoming an officer or lead them to quit altogether as a result of having a poor conviction over the profession.

Another consideration would be the *hybrid* cadets; those who follow path **1** but, at the same time feel "empowered to intervene actively in the transmission of cultural inheritance or 'tradition' rather than passively accepting its venerable custom and pedagogical wisdom" thus, prompting them to "question, refashion or mobilise received ideas" (McLeod, 2000:218-9). Somehow, in a way, these cadets;

"... approach the practice problem as a unique case. They do not act as though they had no relevant prior experiences; on the contrary. As, they attend to the peculiarities of the situation at hand ... Rather, each seeks to discover the particular features of his problematic situation, and from gradual discovery, designs an intervention" (Schön, 1983:129).

In other words, Bhabha's *hybridation* leaves the person's "subjectivity to be composed of variable sources, different materials, and many locations – demolishing forever, the idea of subjectivity as stable, single, or 'pure' (McLeod, 2000:219).

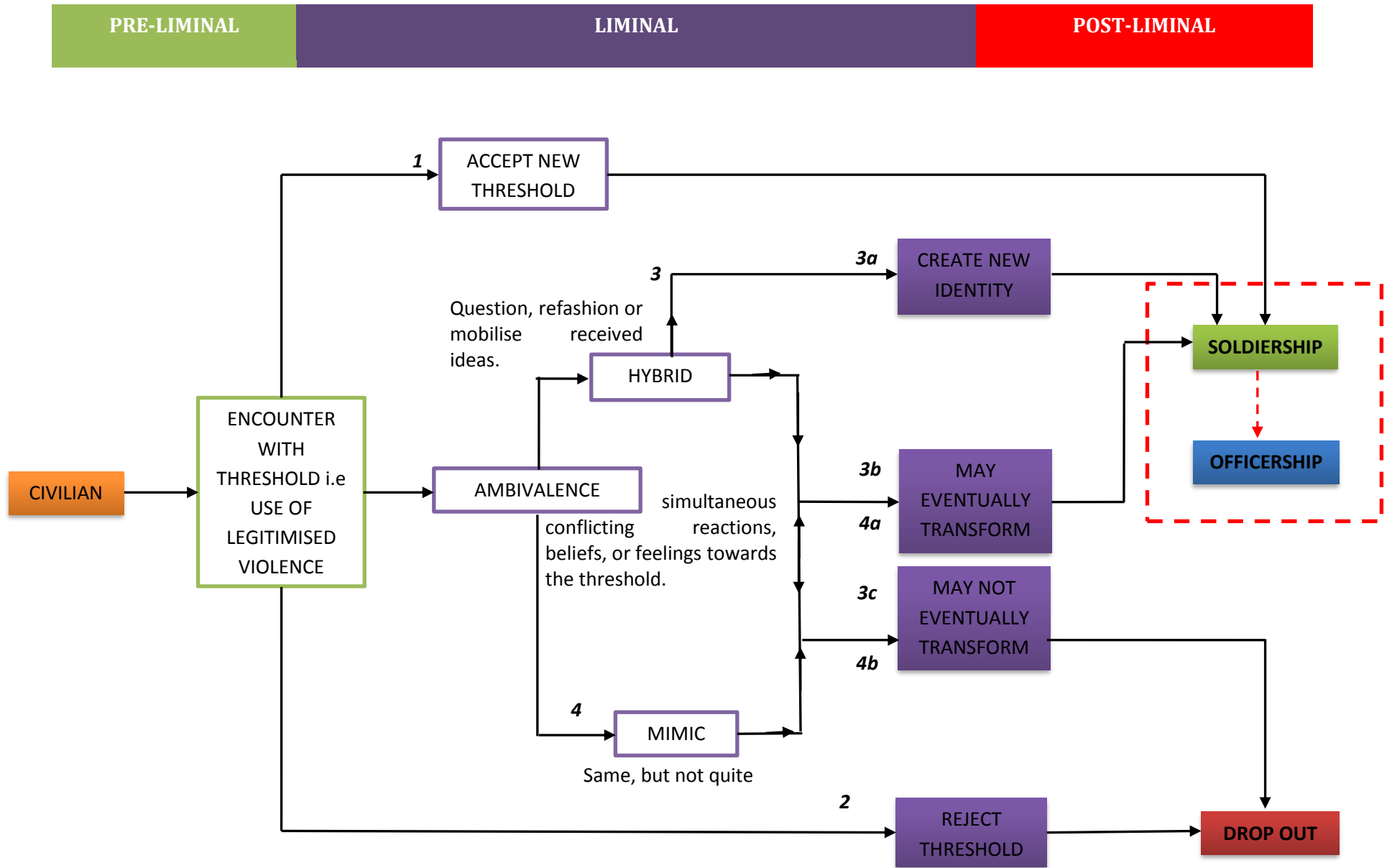


Figure 8.6: Liminality in Officer Education

So far, in the discussion, the inclusion of *hybridity* has two major significances. First of all, whoever occupies this liminal space would not just succumb to the age-old *ritual knowledge* (Perkins, 2006:37) but rather keeps on reinventing and re-envisioning them. These cadets are not easily convinced to confirm and consequently seen as challenging the authority. Unlike those cadets, who confirm, henceforth, leading them to follow path **1**, these cadets would follow path **3a** that may lead them to re-define and construct a new identity of being an officer. As an example, the jumping exercise incident mentioned in Chapter VII is a good illustration of this. In the conversation, the officer mentioned that:

“For instance, when I came to the [here]... and they told us “Jump”, everybody jumped because that is what we were told to do. Right now, if you tell a young guy “Jump”, he will ask you “Ok... how high do I have to jump... how long do I have to jump... why do I have to jump...” (PM4Ib).

Therefore, it creates a new atmosphere within an institution where authority – an asset in military training – is seen as being challenged and tested. Hence, it must be speculated and realised that this is not the case, and hence, this societal change is not wholly responsible for this to occur. On the contrary, the once-at-a-time cadets had brought in the changes as they saw some practices within the military during their time, as no longer valid and effective. One such account is provided by one of the policymakers at Institution B who mentioned;

“I cannot compare those 5 weeks with today’s 5 weeks. It’s a different system. We had the Paratroopers... Nowadays the 5 weeks are conducted by the promotion commander [so] there is now less shouting... less running... and crying... and definitely, less punishment. We were punished during my days. When I did something stupid, I had to run on the parade ground with my rifle above my head for 5 minutes, 10 minutes... depending on the mistake I made. Nowadays this is forbidden. It is not allowed anymore, and I am glad, it is

not allowed. But, you see, there is a difference. That was not easy... my time and I must be honest... 2 or 3 times... I thought to myself; "What am I doing here? Perhaps it is better to quit" (PM1Ib).

It is interesting to highlight that the policymaker who had himself gone through the same process of becoming an officer had reflected and questioned his decision to stay and continue his training despite the harsh treatment he was getting. He further reflected that;

"But it was part of the game because it was normal in the early 80's. It was normal for that time... When I was a young cadet, we had already talked about this. "In 20, 30 years' time... we will stop this. This is not humane". But, it WAS accepted at that period. It was normal, so we did it. For the Paratroopers, this was a game. "How far can we push them with this?" ... But nowadays it is the opposite. "What can we do to keep those guys?" We do not want to lose one. We want to keep all those guys and girls. There is a big difference. One is about 'breaking' while, the other is about 'keeping'" (PM1Ib).

Hence, the situation where cadet and his colleagues had come to a realisation that the practice must change to accommodate new ways of thinking has forced the author to include this as a representation of a hybrid cadet. This idea can be further discussed by saying that there is a high likelihood as well as higher possibility for hybrid cadets to reinvent the military *code of honour* (Janowitz, 1960:217) compared to their colleagues who had trailed path **1**. This brings us to the second predicament in the augmentation of *hybrid* cadets – would these cadets hold the same traits as their colleagues whose transformation is much more direct, or would they become the 'same but not quiet'. However, a definite answer to this question is not possible as more data is needed before any conclusion can be made. Nevertheless, as being presented in Chapter VII, there are officers who did not agree with an idea that being in the military is about 'violence' and becoming a 'fighting machine' as the core military business is war. Instead, they strongly believe

that their presence within a military institution is to 'prevent' violence from happening in the first place. In other words, they still subscribe to the basic idea, but they have come to a different realisation why they need to do so.

There are also those who reflect and negotiate their situation but go through path **3b**. Unlike those, who somehow create a new identity altogether, these cadets would eventually confirm to the values, thus following path **1**. At the beginning, these cadets possess the same typical aspects of a *hybrid* cadet, but as a result of collective participation and spending time together with their colleagues during training, the cadets transform in the long run. While having a conversation with the first year cadets from Institution B, the author had a chance to pose the question whether the participants feel that they had changed through the initiation process. Reflecting on their experiences, one of them responded that;

S1: I also noticed this ... I was in the same platoon with S4. As I think he had changed a lot. He was not really good in keeping time and everything... but at the end of the six weeks, he changed... very fast" (Y11b).

Whereas S4 responded that;

S4: At first, I was not comfortable... people were yelling at me... which I had a lot. For me, it was exactly like 'Full Metal Jacket'. So some people will get along with it... and some will never. Maybe it was because I watched the movie a week before I came here that made it a little bit harder. You just have this impression that the instructors are just like that, but then you realise that they just want to help you ... to make you tougher" (Y11b).

Being uncomfortable at first, as a result of watching 'Full Metal Jacket' clearly suggested the S4's initial conundrum to get him aligned with the new and alien military environment. As a point of

situation, the experience is similar to those who mimic – whose anxious repetition helps them to transform and become an officer eventually.

Lastly, there were also those who followed path **3c** and left the institution for the reasons very much similar to those experienced by **2** and **4b**. As mentioned by Meyer & Land (2006), the state of being in the liminal state can be recursive, looping back and forth between states, “often and with temporary regression to earlier status” (24). Only this time, the reflection process of hybridation had restricted the cadets to contextualise their positions thus leaving them in an ‘unhomely’ and ‘uncanny’ moment state (McLeod, 2000:220), where the experience of being stuck at some places must be traumatic and full of anxiety. Therefore, it is worth mentioning at this point that these people might become a source for such horror stories being shared and passed around in the long run and become a stereotype for the military. It is evident from the interview sessions with second-year cadets from Institution A, who said that prior to their admission to their institutions, they have had heard stories that described the people in the Army as “lazy, and brutal fighters that live in nasty conditions, where the food is really bad”. Such traumatic stories could become a stereotype that leaves a cadet to have a permanent negative impression about military. As a result, if this type of cadet attends such institution – voluntarily or reluctantly – he or she would ineffectively continue much further with his education and training to become an officer like the example mentioned previously.

#### **8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings in this study could offer an alternative way of not only looking at the approaches and ways to educate future officers, but also on the military practice itself. Furthermore, as the study has focused on professional development, it also offers an outlook that could be useful for future research studies in other professions. In particular, as the study has used threshold concepts as a lens to examine the military education, it may also provide insightful recommendations that could be beneficial to improve the overall curriculum for officers’ education. Despite this, it is necessary

for the findings and the discussions included in this study to be contextualised as, the study only managed to include two military institutions having a small number of participants.

During the data collection process, it became apparent that there are other factors that influence the overall setting and approach used to train military officers. However, as the study focussed on findings that would align to threshold concepts, it has managed to identify challenges faced by the cadets during their education and training period at the institution. Discussions with policymakers, military instructors and trainers, and also the cadets included in this study have shown the intricacy and the complexity of officers' education. The long and sometimes turbulent history of such education implies a strong will among its communities of practice to educate and train future officers that are ready to take and face security challenges in the twenty-first century. This proves to be a challenge for curriculum developer as the task of drawing up an ideal system that properly recognises and includes higher level education with military training is not without its restriction.

Even though it could be argued that the present study did not look into the structure of the curriculum, the findings about the crucial concepts in transforming a cadet to become an officer are still of great significance. As the study of threshold concepts tends to 'focus on difficulties in mastering a subject' (Cousins, 2008), the present study offers an understanding over the troublesome knowledge that may be useful in promoting better education and training method for future cadets. Furthermore, the ontological shifts will be helpful in informing curriculum developers to reconstruct the present curriculum's structure to accommodate the future cadets in a much better way.

Also, the study provided insight into 'how things are done' at the two institutions that use a different approach to their officers' education. Other than becoming a sharing medium for best approaches, the study also managed to look at the best practices that could be adopted by



institutions such as those included in this study and achieve its purpose and goals. As the literature may have suggested, the combination between higher education and military training puts the system under certain strain thus resulting in an overstuffed curriculum. This study has shown that there are significant differences between the two institutions under study in terms of their curriculum's approach. Proving one works better than the other would require a different form of research, but the present study has shown up to a certain extent that the present curriculum structure and practice at Institution A are currently serving its purpose better than the other. Even though this claim may be pre-mature, the conclusion made is not baseless. As the intention of such institution is to educate and train future military officers, the system not only allows an intellectual development, but also a professional growth in a more gradual manner. This, among others, would be crucial as it will assist its participants to cross the thresholds, thus becoming better military professionals. Furthermore, engaging the cadets in practice by experiencing it first-hand creates a link between the theories being taught in the classroom and how they are practised in the real world.

## **8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Despite the findings and discussions provided by the present research, there are still a number of limitations to what it represents. First of all, as the study concentrated more on aspects of 'the journey' in becoming an officer; a huge emphasis was given on the experiences to become one. Even though the previous section has put forward a framework on how to better promote the change into becoming an officer could be done, a further thorough investigation and observation on what is currently taught and trained should be done. Such information could prove to be invaluable towards identifying crucial subjects and courses deemed as the 'jewels' in the curriculum.

Furthermore, the present study, in actual is an overall impression of the form of curriculum adopted by the institutions. As the number of institutions included in this study is

limited to two European military institutions' its generalisation could be up for question as different countries may practise a different form of education to train their future officers. Furthermore, the application and the usage of a certain type of education module are very much influenced by the country's political climate, economic standing and the general relation between the public and the military. It may be appropriate to include more institutions into the present study and re-affirm its findings whilst having more institutions from different continents. The findings may then be a catalyst to be used as a benchmark for further debate in the improvement for better officers' education and training method and curriculum creation.

In addition, the exploration using threshold concepts into officers' education in this study only looked upon one component of the curriculum – the training of an officer. Further research should be undertaken into the other parts of the education and training process, which is on the academic qualification and the importance of it in developing better officers of the future. On top of that, studies could be carried out to evaluate the validity of the argument for having civilian education as a form of 'civilising' future officers and how such approach affects and shapes the future of the military.

Other than that, the present research did not have the clearance and needed access to the curriculum being used at both institutions included in this research. This had restricted the researcher opportunity to do a thorough curriculum enquiry. Apart from that, the research did not touch on any teaching and learning experiences that may include specific military pedagogy that would contribute hugely in the education of cadets. In addition, the research also did not look at how future officers are being assessed and deemed fit to carry on with their new roles as military officers.

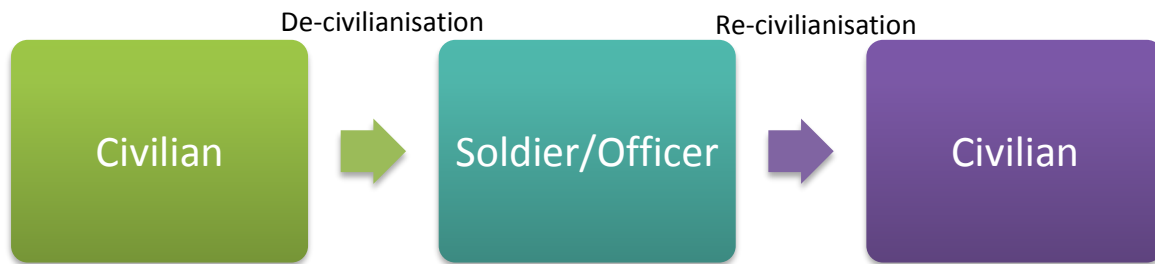
In a nutshell, future investigation into the military as a profession could look into the existence of different communities of practice and sub-cultures within a military and its

ramifications in terms of educational environment. As mentioned by Winslow (1999), the Army, the Navy and the Air Force exhibit and inhibit a different professional culture that governs their personnel (435). Having institutions that train cadets from all these services creates, by default, an issue of culture other that puts one at the centre while marginalising the others.

## 8.6 SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

The findings of this study offer a great potential for a range of future research studies based on data evidence that is likely to raise interest across the area education. However, despite its findings, more research is needed to delve deeper into issues pertaining to learners' experiences of a certain curriculum. To begin with, there is a need to explore curriculum systems from other military institutions such as those included in this study. Even though this could be proved as a hard and long process as military institutions are highly regarded as a sensitive institution, their input could be beneficial for other profession based education systems. This could be attempted to discover whether their system is different from those found in this study or whether there are unexplored variables that may provide deeper insight and understanding in this regard. Additionally, other investigations are also needed to either confirm or disapprove the present research finding from this study. It is recommended for future studies to use same participants as in this study so that a direct comparison could be produced and further evaluated.

Moreover, this study has thoroughly focussed on threshold concepts; so it would be a good idea to look at the next stage of ontological shift – the de-civilianising phase. As depicted in **Figure 8.3**, the military profession is the only profession that requires its personnel to go through such proper process by attending certain prescribed military-civilian integration courses. This is an interesting avenue and subject to be researched as it marks different ontological shifts hence suggesting a whole new set of concepts to be crossed.



**Figure 8.7: Phases of Civilianisation Phase**

## 8.7 CONCLUSION

So far, the research journey has shown that the application of threshold concepts into military education and training is still at an early stage. As presented in this study, the concepts may be of great interest to the participants and the practitioners within this environment hence promoting debate over its findings. It is hoped that such debate may result in reconceptualization of the officers' education that efficiently utilises the approach to promote a better education system for future officers. Arguably, this doctoral thesis would only be valid to a certain extent as it has only touched on the experiences of going through the military education system without really looking into the curriculum structure and the courses included in the programme. Furthermore, the findings included in this study were very much dependent on the participants, place, time and 'at-the-time-moments' that influence the process of data collection. Despite all this, the present study may act as a catalyst that creates a space where subject specialists, teachers and also the students would be at the centre of curriculum enquiry and share their perspectives, in the manner advocated by Cousin (2009: 202-212) as 'transactional curriculum inquiry'. Besides, unlike other research studies about threshold concepts, the present research into military education would not be beneficial only to the training of officers, but also to the profession as a whole. All in all, it is important for research to engage in discussion with the wider community in order for it to have an impact and inform the curriculum designers of the future.

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## APPENDIXES

### A. Permission Letter

[Recipient Address]

[Date]

#### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT (Name of Institution)

Dear Sir,

My name is Ahmad Thamrini Fadzlin B. Syed Mohamed, and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, Durham University UK. Currently, I am working on a research project entitled ***Civilian to Officer: Threshold Concepts in Military Officer's Education***. The research I am conducting for my doctoral thesis involves an enquiry into military education conducted in a number of well-established military academies of stature such as yours. The project seeks to enhance our understanding and promote improvement of professional military education in the current complex 21<sup>st</sup> century environment. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Professor Ray Land (Professor of Higher Education and Director of Durham's Centre for Academic Practice) and Dr. Julie Rattray (Divisional Director of Postgraduate Taught Programmes).

I would emphasise that I fully appreciate any concerns regarding the sensitivity of information in military establishments and hence we only seek access to information which would customarily be in the public domain, such as curriculum design, pedagogical approaches and conceptual dimensions of learning as applied to military contexts. Moreover, Durham University has strict ethical clearance procedures and does not permit research students to request sensitive or restricted information as that would put both students and institutions at risk. As a matter of course all research instruments and consent forms to be used in the study would be made available in advance of any visit to your institution.

In the light of this I am therefore respectfully seeking your consent to approach the commandants, military instructors, academic programme leaders and the officer cadets of the [name of institution] for this project and would appreciate any guidance on the most effective manner of doing so. I am able and keen to undertake the research enquiry at the (name of institution)'s earliest convenience, and preferably in the current term. Where face to face interviews are not possible telephone or Skype interviews could be arranged.

Before completion of the study, I will provide the [name of institution] with a draft copy of the full research report, to check for errors, inconsistencies or any misrepresentation. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07450016405 or [a.t.syed-mohamed@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.t.syed-mohamed@durham.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor at 0191 334 8347 or [ray.land@durham.ac.uk](mailto:ray.land@durham.ac.uk). Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Ahmad Thamrini Fadzlin B. Syed Mohamed  
Durham University, UK

**B. Consent Form****CONSENT FORM****Civilian to Officer: Threshold Concepts in Military Officers' Education**

*Instruction: Participant is required to complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself*

Please cross out as  
necessary

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet? **YES / NO**

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study? **YES / NO**

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? **YES / NO**

Have you received enough information about the study? **YES / NO**

Who have you spoken to? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof. ....

Do you consent to participate in the study? **YES / NO**

Do you consent to give permission for the researcher to videotape **and/or** audiotape the interview session and to use it in various formats for research and publication purposes? **YES / NO**

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study: **YES / NO**

- \* at any time and
- \* without having to give a reason for withdrawing and
- \* without affecting your position in the University?

Do you understand that your responses are anonymous and that they will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team?

YES / NO

Do you understand that the data will be kept in a secure location for the duration of the study and then destroyed on completion of the research?

YES / NO

Signed: ..... Date: .....

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) .....

## C. Participant Information Sheet

### Participant Information Sheet

My name is Ahmad Thamrini Fadzlin B. Syed Mohamed. I am a PhD student at the Durham University's School of Education. Currently, I am working on a research project entitle **Civilian to Officer: Threshold Concepts in Military Officers' Education**. In order to complete this research project, I will be talking to a number of participants at your institution about their experiences of military education and leadership.

#### **What will I have to do if I take part?**

If you agree to take part, I will ask you to answer some questions. There are not any right or wrong answers – I just want to hear about your opinions. The discussion should take about an hour at the longest. Please note that some of the questions will relate to your expertise, personal history and experiences in military education and leadership.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, **taking part is voluntary**. If you do not want to take part, you do not have to give a reason and no pressure will be put on you to try and change your mind. You can withdraw from the study at any time. Please note, if you choose not to participate, or withdraw during the study this will **not** affect your current position at the institution.

#### **If I agree to take part what happens to what I say?**

All the information you give me **will be confidential** and will only be used for the purposes of this study only. The data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be disposed of in a secure manner. The information will be used in a way that will not allow you to be identified individually. The university authorities will not be able to link any information provided to you. However, I must inform the management **IF**:

- 1. You disclose details of any potential offence within this institution, which could lead to adjudication. So, you should not mention anybody's name during this discussion;**
- 2. You disclose details of any offence for which you have not yet been arrested, charged or convicted;**



3. **Something you have said which leads me to believe, that either your health and safety, or the health and safety of others around you, is at immediate risk;**
  
4. **Something you have said which leads me to believe that there is a threat to security.**

In these situations, I will inform the university management, who may take the matter further.

### **What do I do now?**

Think about the information on this sheet, and ask me if you are not sure about anything. If you agree to take part, sign the consent form. The consent form will not be used to identify you. It will be filed separately from all other information. If, after the discussion, you want any more information about the study, you can contact me.

### **My contact details are as follows:**

Name: Ahmad Thamrini Fadzlin B. Syed Mohamed

Phone: 07450016405(UK)/012-2408850(MY)

e-mail: [thamrini@upnm.edu.my](mailto:thamrini@upnm.edu.my), [a.t.syed-mohamed@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.t.syed-mohamed@durham.ac.uk)

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!**

**APPROVED BY DURHAM UNIVERSITY'S ETHICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**D. Interview Questions I: Policymakers**

Research Questions

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>1. What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and officers from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives?</b> | RQ1 |
| <b>2. What conceptual transformation and ontological shift do cadets find difficult to grasp?</b>   | RQ2 |
| <b>3. How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy?</b>  | RQ3 |

Questions	Research Questions
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you define a soldier?</li> <li>2. How would you define a military officer?</li> <li>3. How does the professional life of a soldier/officer differ from other professionals?</li> <li>4. How would you explain the differences between a soldier and an officer?</li> <li>5. What are the challenges that your institution face in transforming soldier/officers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?</li> <li>6. Why do you think some cadets succeed better than others in becoming a soldier and an officer?</li> <li>7. In your opinion, what are the concepts that are particularly important in the transformation in becoming an effective soldier/officer?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Do you think that the military education curriculum at your institution in some way recognized the concepts you mentioned?</li> <li>II. How does those concepts you mentioned influenced the military education curriculum at your institution?</li> <li>III. What is your opinion on the institution’s current approach towards developing and preparing 21<sup>st</sup> century soldiers?</li> <li>IV. Would there be any changes to the current system?</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. How do you evaluate and decide that cadets have achieved appropriate level of competency in becoming a soldier/officer?</li> </ol>	<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p>
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## E. Interview Questions II: Military Trainers

### Research Questions

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and officers from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives? | RQ1 |
| 2. What conceptual transformation and ontological shift do cadets find difficult to grasp?   | RQ2 |
| 3. How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy?  | RQ3 |

Questions	Research Questions
<p><b>Section 1: Introductory Questions</b></p> <p>1.1 Can you give me a brief introduction of yourself?</p> <p>1.2 What subject/course/military training are you teaching/responsible for?</p>	

<p><b>Section 2: Becoming a Soldier/Officer</b></p> <p>2.1 How would you define a soldier?</p> <p>2.2 How would you define a military officer?</p> <p>2.1 How would you describe the particular contribution of your course/subject/training in transforming a civilian in becoming;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a soldier</li> <li>ii. an officer</li> </ul> <p>2.2 Have you encountered cadets who had problems with your subject/course/training? Can you give an example?</p> <p>2.3 What challenges have you encountered in managing the subject/course/training?</p> <p>2.4 Based on your expertise on the subject/course, what are the key important ideas that can assist the transformation process?</p> <p>2.5 How do you typically teach this subject/course/training?</p> <p>2.6 What misunderstandings do cadets characteristically exhibit in understanding their roles as a soldier and as an officer?</p> <p>2.4 Based on your expertise on the subject/course/training, what are the important understandings that can assist the transformation process?</p> <p>2.8 What are the characteristic needed to be demonstrated by a cadet that shows that he/she has become;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a soldier</li> <li>ii. an officer</li> </ul> <p>2.9 Why do you think some cadets succeed better than others in becoming a soldier and an officer?</p> <p>2.10 Do you feel that the current subject/course/training and military programme provided by the institution is sufficient in transforming future soldiers/officers?</p> <p>2.11 How do you evaluate and decide that cadets have achieved appropriate level of competency in becoming a soldier/officer?</p>	<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ3</p>
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2.12 Is there any plan in changing the current subject/course/training/evaluation system?

## F. Focus Group I Interview Questions: New Cadets (Year 1)

### Research Questions

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and officers from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives? | RQ1 |
| 2. What conceptual transformation and ontological shift do cadets find difficult to grasp?   | RQ2 |
| 3. How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy?  | RQ3 |

Group	New Cadets (2014 intake)	Research Question
<b>Aim</b>	Identifying threshold concept from new cadets	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To determine troublesome thresholds new cadet face in terms of becoming a soldier</li> <li>2. To get feedbacks on new cadet's experience over their military experience</li> <li>3. To get the cadets responses on troublesome knowledge they have to face in their new environment</li> </ol>	

<b>Methods</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The researcher will engage the group to discuss on their recent experience of being at the university i.e. Can you recall your first impression about being in the Army, How do you feel on your first day?</li><li>2. The researcher will then ask the cadets to describe challenges they faced while going through the recruitment process i.e what challenging experiences you had experienced during selection process, during first training session, first time at the university.</li><li>3. The researcher then engaged the student to reflect on their transition from civilian to soldier experience. Which phase or part of the training they found most challenging?</li></ol>	RQ1  RQ2
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## G. Focus Group II Interview Questions: Intermediate Cadets (Year 2)

### Research Questions

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|--|-----|
| 1. What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and officers from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives? | RQ1 |
| 2. What conceptual transformation and ontological shift do cadets find difficult to grasp?   | RQ2 |
| 3. How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy?  | RQ3 |

Group	Intersessions Cadets (having spent 2 years at the institution)	Research Question
Aim	Identifying threshold concept from cadets that have spent a certain period of time at the university	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To determine troublesome thresholds from cadets who have spent an amount of time at the institution</li> <li>2. To get feedbacks from the cadets in terms of their experience over their military education</li> <li>3. To obtain feedbacks on military and officership training the cadets have experience</li> <li>4. To identify the influences of the cadets' respective discipline and to find out its significance on the cadets' transformation process</li> </ol>	

<p>Methods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The researcher will engage the group to recall their experience of being at the university and what have they learn through the period of time on being a soldier i.e. Can you recall your first impression about being in the Army, how do you feel on your first day, what have you learn from your experience in becoming a soldier?</li> <li>2. The researcher will then ask the cadets to describe challenges they faced while going through the military training programme at the institution i.e what are some challenging experiences they had experienced in military classes/training, what adjustment they had to make in order to cope with military life.</li> <li>3. The researcher then engaged the student to reflect on their transition from civilian to soldier experience. Which phase or part of the training they found most challenging?</li> <li>4. The researcher then asked the cadets to reflect on their officer training i.e is what do they understand about officership, have they experienced any challenge in learning about officership, why do they think some cadets succeed better than others in becoming a soldier and an officer?</li> <li>5. The researcher then asks the cadets to share their perception on military officership i.e important traits of an officer, what have they learned, do you think the military education at the institution is sufficient to prepare them for the real job.</li> <li>6. The researcher will then discuss the cadet's views over their academic courses i.e do they think their academic courses plays a significant role in their transformation as a soldier/officer, how do they feel on the assessment system, are you clear on the assessment and the standard that you need to achieve?</li> </ol>	<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ3</p>
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## H. Focus Group III Interview Questions: Commissioning Cadets (Year 3+)

### Research Questions

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and officers from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives? | RQ1 |
| 2. What conceptual transformation and ontological shift do cadets find difficult to grasp?   | RQ2 |
| 3. How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy?  | RQ3 |

Group	Commissioning Cadets	Research Question
<b>Aim</b>	Identify threshold concept in terms of becoming a soldier and an officer from commissioning cadets	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To determine troublesome thresholds from cadets who have spent an amount of time at the institution</li> <li>2. To get feedbacks from the cadets in terms of their experience over their military education</li> <li>3. To obtain feedbacks on military and officership training the cadets have experience</li> <li>4. To identify the influences of the cadet's respective discipline and to find out its significance on the cadet's transformation process</li> </ol>	

<p><b>Methods</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The researcher will engage the group to recall their experience of being at the university and what have they learn through the period of time on being a soldier i.e. Can you recall your first impression about being in the Army, how do you feel on your first day, what have you learn from your experience in becoming a soldier?</li> <li>2. The researcher will then ask the cadets to describe challenges they faced while going through the military training programme at the institution i.e what are some challenging experiences they had experienced in military classes/training, what adjustment they had to make in order to cope with military life.</li> <li>3. The researcher then engaged the student to reflect on their transition from civilian to soldier experience. Which phase or part of the training they found most challenging?</li> <li>4. The researcher then asked the cadets to reflect on their officer training i.e is what do they understand about officership, have they experienced any challenge in learning about officership, why do you think some cadets succeed better than others in becoming a soldier and an officer?</li> <li>5. The researcher then asks the cadets to share their perception on military officership i.e important traits of an officer, what have they learned, do you think the military education at the institution is sufficient to prepare them for the real job.</li> <li>6. The researcher will then discuss the cadet's views over their academic courses i.e do they think their academic courses plays a significant role in their transformation as a soldier/officer, how do they feel on the assessment system, are you clear on the assessment and the standard that you need to achieve?</li> <li>7. The researcher will then ask the cadets how they feel about the academic/military training programme at the university i.e is it sufficient, what is needed to improve the current academic/military programme.</li> </ol>	<p>RQ1</p> <p>RQ2</p> <p>RQ3</p>
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## **I. List of Protocol**

### **List of Protocol**

My research objectives are;

- a) What are the key conceptual transformations and ontological shifts in the training of military cadets and leaders at military higher education institution from the specialists', trainers' and cadets' perspectives?
- b) What conceptual transformation and ontological shift cadets find difficult to grasp?
- c) How might threshold concepts theory be applied to military education curricula and pedagogy to further inform the development of Military Officer Education?

I wish to interview cadets/military trainers/policymakers who experiences of what they teach in an Auditing class and how they teach it.

### **Introducing myself: a list of self instructions**

1. Explain purpose and nature of my study to the interviewee
2. Give an assurance that the interviewee will remain anonymous in any written reports growing out of the study, and that her responses will be treated in strictest confidence. However, I may use short quotes in the thesis report – these will remain anonymous.
3. Interviewee is to feel free to interrupt or to ask for clarification etc.
4. I will tell each interviewee a bit about my background and my interest in the study
5. I will ask permission to tape-record the interview, explaining why I wish to do so.

### **Reminders re set up and conduct of interview Set-up**

- This will be face to face interviewing with a relatively informal style
- I will state that the interview will last a maximum of one hour at the beginning of the interview

### **Introductory questions**

- See semi-structured interview guide.

### **General prompts**

#### Follow up questions

- Direct questions on what has been said
- Repeat significant words

#### Probing questions

- Could you say something more about it?
- Do you have further examples ...?
- Can you give a more detailed description ...?

#### Emotive prompts

- Find out more about interviewees' feelings ...

#### Specifying questions

- What did you think then ...?

#### Prompts

- Alien
- Counter-intuitive
- Challenging
- Tacit

#### Silence

Allow pauses in the conversation – the subject must have ample time to associate and reflect – and should then break the silence herself with significant information.

### **End of interview**

## J. Cadet Evaluation Form (Institution B)

### PROTECTION VIE PRIVEE

(Loi du 08 Dec 92)

Annexe G

App 1

-6/6 -

### FICHE D'APPRECIATION DES QUALITES CARACTERIELLES: OFFICIER

#### Evaluation sheet - character qualities

(Candidat officier de carrière issu du recrutement normal ou complémentaire)

Grade, Nom, Prénom :			
Numéro de matricule :			
Date du début de la formation :			
Période d'appréciation du ..... au .....			Cycle de formation : 5 <sup>ème</sup>
Année			
Entretien de fonctionnement - Appréciation non-statutaire - Appréciation statutaire <sup>(1)</sup>			
Interview - Non-Statutory evaluation - Statutory evaluation			
Nr	Compétence - Competency	Niv Level	Cotation <sup>(2)</sup> Score
Compétences génériques - Generic competencies			
1	Collaborer - Cooperating	2	
2	Respecter les autres - Respecting others	2	
3	Etre flexible - Being flexible	2	
4	Agir de manière intègre - Acting with integrity	1	
5	Faire preuve de loyauté envers l'organisation - Being loyal to the organisation	1	
Compétences spécifiques - Specific competencies			
6	Etre orienté vers les résultats - Result oriented	1	
7	Suivre les règles - Following the rules	1	
8	Communiquer - Communicating	2	
9	Gérer le temps et le stress - Managing time & stress	2	
10	Travailler de manière autonome - Working autonomously	1	
11	Se développer - Self developing	1	
12	Motiver les autres - Motiving others	1	

13	Diriger - <b>Directing</b>	1	
14	Montrer l'exemple - <b>Showing the example</b>	2	
			126 /
<u>Interview / Additional remarks</u> <sup>(3)</sup>			100 /

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Grade, Nom, Fonction, Date, Signature		
<b>Offr responsable</b>	<b>Chef de Corps</b>	<b>Candidat</b> <sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Biffer la (les) mention(s) inutile(s) -

(2) Attribution des cotations (Valeur entre 1 et 9 seulement, 0,5 et 10 exclus) - **Attributing a score (between 1 and 9, 0.5 and 10 are excluded)**

(3) Remarques à remplir obligatoirement pour les cotations inférieures à 6 - **Remarks are mandatory for scores below 6**

(4) Le candidat signe et inscrit de sa propre main la date et la mention "pour vu, je joins (ou je ne joins pas) un mémoire". - **the candidate signs and writes, in his own handwriting, « received, I join (or not) an appeal'**