

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)

Public and Self-Perceptions of the F.D.R.E. Defence Force
In Addis Ababa

By: Berhane Zikarge

June, 2016
Addis Ababa

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of the Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Peace and Security Studies

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List of Abbreviations

C.I.L.	Centre for Intercultural Learning
D.C.A.F.	Democratic Control of the Armed Forces
E.C.	Ethiopian Calendar
E.N.D.F.	Ethiopian National Defence Force
E.P.D.M.	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
E.P.R.D.F.	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
F.D.G.	Focus Group Discussion
F.D.R.E.	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
I.N.S.A.	Information Network Security Agency
K.C.M.H.R.	King's Centre for Military Health Research
N.C.Os.	Non-Commissioned Officers
O.P.D.O.	Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization
S.E.P.D.M.	South Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement
S.N.N.P.	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples
T.P.L.F.	Tigray People's Liberation Front

Abstract

There is a significant perception gap between the public and the Ethiopian Defence Force itself with respect to the attractiveness, prestige and legitimacy of the military institution. This research mainly focused on the views of selected senior preparatory students, their parents, veterans and military personnel. The survey results are analyzed to answer three questions: How do the students, parents and veterans perceive the F.D.R.E. Defence Force and the military profession? How do the Defence and the military personnel view themselves with regard to the image, prestige or attractiveness of the institution and the military profession? What is the perception gap? And what implications does it have for recruitment and retention?

The study uses prestige and legitimacy as a conceptual framework of analysis to examine a range of possible factors affecting the perception gap between the students, parents, veterans and the Defence institution. The findings show that low salary, and poor quality of life of military personnel; and lack of support and recognition for the veterans partly explain the declining prestige of the Defence. The overall image which emerges from this very limited case study is that the military profession is not attractive.

Moreover, this study also revealed that there is a widely held perception that the Defence Force is not free from partisanship and there is a prevailing perception that the Defence is not representative enough at its officer corps level, which in turn does seem to affect its legitimacy. Mounting evidence was also found that these deficiencies have profound implications for personnel recruitment and retention.

However, the Defence institution does not seem to share these perceptions, differing on the depth, and implications of these shortcomings, claiming that the institution still attracts enough recruits, it maintains high standing as regards prestige, and it enjoys solid legitimacy. Finally, the study concludes that there is a wide perception gap between the public and the Defence with regard to the core issues under consideration, except, the apparent consensus on the perception of Defence capability.

Key Words: *Perception Gap, Prestige, Legitimacy, Ethnic Composition, Recruitment, Retention*

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background

While Ethiopia had a long military history, the emergence of a modern military force in Ethiopia started in the early reign of Emperor Haileselassie I (Teshale, 1995: 51, Marcus, 1996: 32, 107). After the demise of the imperial regime, dramatic shifts occurred in the size and ideological orientation of the Ethiopian military with the emergence of the Derg regime in 1974. According to Gebru (2009: 3, 127,131), the culture of militarism reached its climax as conflict raged on from different corners. The regime continued massive recruitment, including obligatory military service, which was so hated by the general public characterized by hiding and flight.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (E.P.R.D.F.) defeated the Derg in 1991 and disbanded the old army and the air force, save a handful officers. With the secession of Eritrea, the Ethiopian navy ceased to exist (Adejumobi and Mesfin, 2006: 55, 69). On May 12, 1998 a war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia under the pretext of territorial dispute, which occasioned massive mobilization and deployment of troops (Gebru, 2009: 345). The border war was culminated by the defeat of Eritrean forces, yet even after the signing of a peace accord both regimes remain implacable enemies (ibid).

The Ethiopian Defence Force still has to deal with internal insurgency in some pockets of the country, and external threats from Eritrea and the Somali based extremist group *Alshabab*, that necessitate permanent deployment of troops along the border and frequent cross-border military operations. These three threats have hardly changed over the last decades, except perhaps the change of some actors. Thus, the F.D.R.E. military still occupies a central position in the public profile.

In many countries around the world public opinion survey is an integral part of the social and political landscape (EuroBarometer, 1991:1). However, in Ethiopia be it in the past or present public perception survey in general, about the military in particular seems alien. Of course, in the public parlance socially desirable responses are abundant about the armed forces. Nevertheless, beyond the lip service paid to the Defence that gives a much nuanced picture it is hard to

comprehend the public's genuine perception with respect to the military's image, prestige, trust, and legitimacy.

According to Berinsky, Powell, Schickler, and Yohani (2011: 515), public opinion research started to expand since the 1930s in the U.S. most notably during the Great Depression. However, the Second World War saw massive increase in public opinion polls when the power of propaganda and media was felt and transformed into real industry (Atanasovic, 2003: 1). Not only academics and experts are interested in public opinion research, but also industry, public administration, politicians, as well, and the list of interested parties is steadily increasing (Brooker, College and Schaefer, n.d: 1).

Academic scholarship on Ethiopian civil-military relations remains underdeveloped within the larger field. There is no meaningful public opinion research conducted around the legitimacy, trust, image of the military, and a myriad of civil-military relation issues. According to some foreign observers (CIL, n.d:1), Ethiopian traditional culture tends to be more secretive, modest and conservative; especially when it comes to high politics people tend to shy away from speaking their mind and such political culture seems to reinforce these modest traditional values.

This introvert political culture (Gale, 2008) is in large measure a reflection of our political history as the successive regimes were intolerant of dissent and infamously suppressing freedom of speech and opinion. The low level of literacy and the absence of robust media seem to inhibit informed dialogue and lively debate about Defence issues and contribute to the lack of comprehensive public perception research.

The purpose of this study is not to gauge the threat perception gap between the government and the public and its consequent actions, or to assess the overall civil-military relation issues. Rather the aim of this study is to examine whether there is a perception gap between the students, parents, veterans and the Defence, more specifically to investigate how the students, parents and veterans perceive the Defence Force in terms of legitimacy, prestige, the level of interest for military service and overall impression. And how the Defence Force view itself vis`a vis the representative respondents' perceptions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The perception gap that I ponder to investigate focuses on a very important institution to which our country attaches great importance, namely the F.D.R.E. Defense Force. Examining the students, parents, and veterans perception toward the military is important for a range of reasons. If there is a gap in perception between the society and the military it may lead to decreased support for the missions conducted by the armed forces, and even for the military personnel themselves, damaging the morale and operational effectiveness of deployed troops.

There is also the possibility that indifference or lack of interest toward the military and its missions could entail decline in recruitment, increased attrition and lead to alienation towards returning injured or retired military personnel, negatively affecting their reintegration into civilian society. Not surprisingly, as public emotion runs high during aggression, it was observed that public support for the military during the Eritrean invasion was very high. According to the main stream media, contemporary public support for the military is claimed to be very high, at least in absolute terms (Wegagen, Feb.14/2015). Some preliminary evidences suggest that military personnel, including the Defence as institution, felt this to be the case (ibid).

However, public support *per se* that may stem from mere necessity, sympathy, appreciation, or pride, is one thing, yet high interest to join the army or allowing a son or a daughter to join is another. Apart from the official rhetoric, little is known about how the Ethiopian public perceives its armed forces and the profession itself. The divergence between high popular support (if any), and a very low interest to give military service requires explanation. The problem with the conventional wisdom of public support is that it has never been subjected to a careful investigation and analysis using data tailored to understand the real consequences it entails.

Therefore, the conventional wisdom about the widespread public support for the military seems misleading and that there is real cause for concern. Currently the military profession has come under tremendous stress. This new pressure seems to be generated from changed perception in the society. Interest and motivation to join the military is terribly declining (Defence Human Resource Officer, personal communication, May, 12, 2015). The institution seems to face serious challenges in recruitment and retention of high quality army personnel and in maintaining the right composition of professional soldiers that represent the entire population (ibid).

1.3. Research Questions

The thesis attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) How does the public perceive the F.D.R.E. Defence Force and the military profession?
- 2) How do the Defence and the military personnel view themselves with regard to the image, prestige or attractiveness of the institution and the military profession?
- 3) What is the perception gap? (if any) And what implications does it have for recruitment and retention?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To investigate the perception gap between the students, parents, veterans and the military personnel regarding the F.D.R.E. Defence Force.
- 2) To examine how students', parents', veterans' perceptions and societal values influence the military profession.
- 3) To identify the major challenges facing the Defense Force in relation to its image, prestige and attractiveness.
- 4) To analyze the magnitude of the challenges and their effects on military preparedness.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

Due to time and budget constraint the study is geographically limited to Addis Ababa, though, it can offer significant insights with regard to the urban youth, it may not fully represent the rural youth. The absence of any scholarly research on the subject matter may be another limitation that poses difficulty to compare the trajectory of public opinion on Ethiopian armed forces of the past and the present regimes.

Given the sensitive nature of some issues and the culture of excessive confidentiality it was difficult to obtain abundant information from the persons approached even on matters of actual fact concerning the army, such as details relating to man power strength, recruitment figures, attrition figures, ethnic composition and recurring patterns of behavior and the like. Given the legacy of military dictatorship and the poor culture of free speech respondents might have been hesitant on issues of sensitive nature, and might have given socially desirable responses.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study does not cover all aspects of public perception of the Defense force. Rather it will focus on discerning the perception gap between the students, parents, veterans and the Defence with respect to the attractiveness, legitimacy and prestige of the military institution. Indeed, the perception issue has been examined in light of the level of interest of young men and women in joining the army and the interest of parents of young sons and daughters whether they were willing to allow their children to join the army. Finally, a modest attempt has been done to investigate how the Defence views itself and whether the gap in perceptions has any implications for recruitment and retention.

1.7. Methodology

This study utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach has been more suitable to the subject matter under consideration. To interpret and deconstruct the opinions and attitudes of respondents the qualitative method was important, and there was a need also to quantify the presence or absence of the concerning attributes. Since the study was concerned with describing the perceptions, opinions, attitudes and motives of particular individual or group the research design is tilted towards descriptive one.

The techniques of data collection were questionnaires, focus group discussions, interviews, observation and personal communications with relevant informants. I have selected three broad categories of respondents, i.e. civilians (students and parents), veterans and military personnel. The largest target population is senior preparatory students in Addis Ababa (*See, Annex-L, Table-11*). The reason to identify this population was because it is the most eligible group for military recruitment in terms of age and educational background.

The technique used in selecting these students was non-probability sampling, more specifically purposive sampling. The sampling unit was six public high-schools from different sub-cities, and two prestigious private high-schools a total of eight preparatory schools. The sample size ranges from 31 to 33 students from each school 156 males and 101 females a total of 257 students and each respondent was drawn according to convenience. The parameter of interest was second year students aged between 18 and 22 years since it is at this age that recruitment requires.

My choice of more public high schools is based on the general fact that such schools are attended by all students from lower and middle income families which are the prime target for military service. My consideration for a few prestigious private high schools is based on the fact that such schools are relatively less in number and are attended by students from the higher economic background. Although, students from affluent families are notoriously reluctant to join the army, their opinion counts on other various issues, as well as for triangulation and to compare how the army is perceived by the poor, the middle class, and the affluent.

In addition to preparatory students, the study also included 8 parents of young adults, purposefully selected from the general public. Results regarding veterans in this study were based on a representative sample of 16 men and who served in the military and are no longer on active duty. In this sample 5 of the veterans were discharged from the military prior to 1998, and 11 veterans had served until 2001. Moreover, a representative sample was taken from the military, specifically, 21 senior officers ranking from Major up to Colonel, 12 Junior Officers ranking from 2nd Lieutenant up to Captain, 13 NCOs and Private soldiers. The grand total number of respondents was 327.

Different techniques of data collection have been used for the different categories of respondents. Hence, for the preparatory students questionnaires having 16 questions were administered. The questionnaires include long batteries of items to allow scaling and to widen options for respondents. Counting these various items as separate questions the questionnaires would approximately consisted 20+ questions. For the senior officers questionnaires having 30 questions have been distributed. Moreover, for the NCOs and soldiers in order to allow them express their genuine feelings and to prevent socially desirable responses questionnaires having 13 questions have been administered.

Likewise, for the parents questionnaires having 10 questions have been distributed. Furthermore, questionnaires having 18 questions were distributed to 14 veterans. I have also conducted structured face-to-face interview with 2 veterans. All questionnaires were self-administered and designed taking into account the necessity of allowing more freedom for respondents and the ease of data management. Thus, close-ended and open-ended questionnaires have been formulated depending on the expected response format. My choice to undertake focus group discussion with the junior officers was realized by the fact that they did have time which allowed

me to explore ideas at length and to conduct in-depth discussion. To enhance the depth of my analyses, I have used various secondary sources, such as books, documents, human resource data, journals, laws, internet sources, personal observations and other relevant publications.

1.8. Ethical Considerations

I have done my best to ensure voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. First, I have provided an official university letter; to the relevant authorities and respondents informing who I am and why I am doing the project. Moreover, I have explained the aim of the study from the outset to respondents and their verbal consent was duly obtained. Indeed, my respondents were made sufficiently clear that they were under no obligation to participate and there would be no negative consequence if they declined or failed to respond.

Second, a brief explanation has been given as to how and why the participants were selected and what they were being asked to do. Respondents were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity will be protected. This was partly achieved through distributing questionnaires that did not require individuals to write their names in order to make respondents more comfortable. Thus, there was no way to identify them by names and the resulting response (who wrote what).

Third, with respect to the focus group participants and interviewees since they have made an informed decision to participate there would be no ethical problem associated with responses not remaining confidential or anonymous.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one provides an introduction and background of the study. Chapter two highlights the conceptual and theoretical framework around which the study can build upon. It also provides the previous scholarly works that relate to the topic under consideration. Chapter three endeavors to analyze the data gathered and discuss the findings in light of the existing literatures, practices and legal framework. Chapter four evaluates and interprets some of the most important implications that are drawn from the findings. Chapter five presents the conclusion and reports the overall study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1. The Evolution of Public Perception of the Military

The origins of modern conception of public opinion are usually traced to liberal democratic theories of the eighteenth century, with precursors reaching all the way to ancient Greece (Price, 2007:10). The concept of “public opinion” started to gain prominence only in eighteenth century with the emergence of several significant historical trends, primarily the growth of literacy, expansion of the merchant classes, and the circulation of literature enabled by the printing press (ibid: 11).

In Ethiopia, during the medieval times and the feudal era the perception of the peasant towards the then army was negative. Bahru (2002: 15) noted that, “to be an armed retainer of a lord freed one not only from the drudgery of farming but also from the harassment and persecution of the soldier”. According to Caulk (1979), the abyssinianian peasants were victims of the feudal armies; when they revolt against the system, the rulers usually allow quartering of soldiers with the local people that involved massive looting and confiscation of cattle. When one recalls very recent memory regarding the perception of the Ethiopian peasant towards the Derg’s army, it was characterized by hatred. Aspen (2002: 61) for example, observed that the Derg regime introduced an imported ideology for its brutal oppression, leaving the peasants in their seemingly perpetual role of providers of fruits of their drudgery to the predatory state.

Apart from this, while Ethiopia had a long military history and rich experience on matters of war and peace, the study of public opinion of the armed forces is underdeveloped till present day. Indeed, much about the Ethiopian public perception of the current Defence Force remains even more illusive. While recognizing the fact that there is little academic interest on military matters and there is conspicuous absence of any systematic study on this topic, I question the conventional wisdom which claims that ‘the Defence Force is enjoying high public support and maintains high standing, in terms of institutional prestige and legitimacy’.

One important observation that offers me a reason to consider the above mentioned assumption is that, such conviction has never been subjected to a systematic investigation; as the practice of public opinion study in general, and public opinion of the armed forces in particular is alien to Ethiopia be it in the past or present.

In fact, many studies suggest that even in the Western world although, existing since the 18th century, public opinion in the modern sense of the term was then still only emerging, growing and gathering its influence over various social, political, and economic issues. In the U.S. and Europe, the study and application of knowledge on public opinion became crucially important during World War II and also during the Cold War era (Berinsky, Powell, Schickler, Yohai, 2011, McRill, 2009, Berinsky, 2009, Jervis, 2001)

During World War II, it was incumbent on governments, especially, the U.S. to ensure whether the public supports or opposes isolationism or war effort. In that context, public opinion surveys were significant because they reflected the levels of sacrifices that citizens are prepared to pay that were necessary for the success of the war. Most importantly, supporting the war meant complying with the draft, buying war bonds, or, for many women, defying gender norms to work in wartime industries. In the Cold War era, the ideological rivalry of the superpowers, the arms race, fierce competition for sphere of influence and the resultant politics of fear prompted many to put too much emphasis on public opinion, either to convince, their populace that it was, in fact, engaged in real war or to valorize their own ideological thinking over the adversary's (Berinsky, 2009).

If one reviews many of the topics and issues studied by Gallup Institute, it is evident that war and defense related topics were of primary importance (Hartl, 2003:15, Dieck, 2013: 2, Kay, 2008: 1, Kreps, 2010: 92, Burnstein, 2003: 29). Brooker, College, and Schaefer (n.d, P: 1) have noted that the formal academic study of public opinion is relatively new, but the practical study of public opinion is not new at all. They have observed that, governments have inherent propensity to pay attention to public opinion as long as they are in power. They further describe that; even the more oppressive tyrants need to know what the people are thinking, albeit it is just to oppress them more effectively.

In Ethiopia, there was a similar wisdom; when the king feels uncomfortable with the public mood or does not have any clue as to what his subjects think about his rule, he asks his advisors or his inner circle, “What does shepherd say”, “*Eregna min yilal?*”*

Page and Shapiro (2008: 14, 175) demonstrated that, in the ‘normative democratic theory’ the reaction of government policy to citizens’ preferences is a crucial concern. According to Nate, (2013: 4) in the modern world, at least theoretically it is widely accepted that a democratic government must be responsive to the will of the people. He noted that knowing what the public is thinking and obtaining public support are a powerful combination; hence, public opinion is the “greatest source of power”. He quotes Abraham Lincoln, stating that “Our government rests on public opinion. “Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed” (ibid).

It is true that, current political narratives in Ethiopia seem to accord with the widely held assumption that claims “public opinion is the strength of democratic government. It cannot be neglected in democratic system. Public opinion is important in a democracy because the people are the ultimate source of political power” (Brancati, 2013, Carol and Hildreth, 2012). It is also true that, trust, prestige, and legitimacy of the military profession are strongly influenced by the general public attitude towards the armed Forces. However, these issues have not been subjected to serious public debate in Ethiopia yet. It is rather uncertain whether Ethiopian public bear that in mind and hence there is a need to open a debate on such topics, or whether it is possible to do so in the first place.

The majority of literature reviewed measures different public attitudes toward the military. They vary immensely in terms of the topics that the respondents are asked to assess and the depth of scrutiny with which certain attitude is explored. The supporting statistics that the authors provide also vary greatly; from rich and chronological data, through sketchy evidence to no figures whatsoever, (Manigart, 2001, Mares, 1998, Zilberman and Webber, n.d, Lemyre, Turner and Krewski, 2006, Kriesberg and Klein, 1980).

* I learned this from informal conversation with Abba Habtemaryam, a priest of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church at Bisrate Gabriel Church, 2015, Addis Ababa.

Most of the surveys include a general question of trust in the military but some go into more detail and ask the respondents to estimate “how favorable their overall impression of the armed forces is”, or “how the public recognize and handle their armed forces”, “how confident they are in the armed forces” or “do citizens have the required propensity for service?” (Glisic, 2005: 87-89, Gribble and Simon W. 2014:13, KCMHR, 2013: 1-6, Scotto, Reifler, Clarke, Lopez, and Sanders, 2011: 2, Dorn, 2008: 10, Ashcroff, 2012: 7).

Apart from the measurement of trust and interest in the military, the range of subjects comprises: whether they support the deployment of their troops in specific missions, whether the defense spending is appropriate, perception about the image and prestige of the military profession, threat perceptions by the government and by the public, the level of support for military alliance, and the like (Stewart and Whiteley, 2011, Dieck, 2013: 1, Mares, 1998:104).

Among the surveys that are accessible on the websites with regard to defense, one can find polls that measure “absolute” trust in armed forces, but also those which are concerned with “relative” trust of the military in comparison with other state institutions. While some surveys offer data measuring trust in the military precisely, others depict only very general public trust in national defense (Gallup, 2015, PEW 2013, Ashcroff, 2012: 6, Caforio, 2004: 1, 101)

In our case, on the public parlance, we have a good deal of mythology about high public support for the armed forces; however, no research proven evidence has come to light so far that enables us to take the claimed ‘high public support’ for granted.

According to Ashcroff and Caforio, (2012: 6, 2004: 1, 101) many recent studies showed public trust in the military in Europe has continued to increase since the beginning of the 21st century. Euro Barometer surveys conducted twice a year in EU member states, showed that the military was among the top three most widely trusted institutions.

As mentioned above, in Ethiopia there is no practice of opinion polling with respect to the trust, image, legitimacy, threat perception, spending, approval rating for missions and a range of related issues. So far, no academic studies have examined the Defence Force in light of such topics. So, this study is meant to fill this gap.

As far as the declining interest in military service is concerned the Ethiopian Defence has conducted a study in 2009 to unravel the interest or attitudes of young men, local authorities, and parents of young men, which identified numerous factors that might explain the decline in propensity. The study findings revealed that the youth have showed less interest in military service. There are a number of factors that explain why they lacked interest in the military. Among the many factors, prioritizing other career options, low salary, lack of incentives, and dislike military life style took the biggest part.

Nonetheless, this study for the most part does not adequately address the public's perception with respect to trust, image, prestige, composition, and legitimacy of the Ethiopian Defence Force. In connection to the above points, how the Ethiopian public perceives and recognizes its armed forces and veterans, and how the Defence view itself and how it handles the active duty military personnel are questions that need elaborate dialogue, debate and research. This study, though, very limited in scope, in terms of geography and content, it is part of that endeavor.

2.2. Operational Definitions of Terms

The term “public perception”, is difficult to define. In fact, it is possible to craft a working definition. According to Dowler, Green, Baur, and Gasperoni (2006: 40), public perception is simply the type of information obtained from a public opinion survey. That is, merely the aggregate views of a group of people who have been asked directly what they think about particular issues or events.

The term “public opinion” is the aggregate of individual attitudes or beliefs about certain issues, public officials, public figures or institutions (Nate, 2013: 12). According to Atanasovic, (2003), public opinion is “the shared opinion of a collection of individuals on a common concern” which influences the practice of political actors to behave in certain way during the process of resolution of socially relevant problems. As can be observed from the above definitions, there is no fundamental contradiction between the meanings of these two terms, i.e., public perception and public opinion. Hence, throughout this study they will be understood as synonymous concepts and can be used interchangeably.

2.3. The Discourse of Civil – Military Gap

The issue of civil-military relations was crystallized with Samuel P. Huntington's "The Soldier and the State" and Morris Janowitz's "The Professional Soldier", but now the question of a gap between the two communities began to receive the attention of academics, politicians, and military leaders alike (Cohn, 1999: 2).

According to Clemmensen, Archer, John, Belkin, Hall, and Swain (2012: 671) scholars mean very different things when they refer to the civil-military gap. To illustrate this point, the authors conceptualize the 'gap' in terms of four distinct ideal types and show that scholars have referred to each variant as the civil-military gap at different times. The authors identify four ideal types of civil-military gap- cultural, demographic, policy preference, and institutional. These authors also cite Deborah Avant's (2010), three standards for assessing the health of the civil-military relationship stating that, whether the military has an influence on policy, whether the military is representative of society, and whether tensions characterize the civil-military relationship.

Although, these authors, acknowledge the importance of Avant's standards in determining whether the civil-military relationship is in crisis, making that assessment is not the same as characterizing what the relationship is; in other words whether or not there is a gap (Clemmensen et.al., 2012: 672, Avant, 2010).

To take another example, Cohen (1999), identifies three patterns of civil-military relations: the relationship between military and societal values and culture, the degree of autonomy that the military has from civilian institutional interferences, and the question of whether military or civilian leaders are more influential in shaping policy, particularly in regard to decisions concerning the use of force. While Cohen's three patterns somewhat echo the topics that I ponder to examine, his conceptual lens is more oriented to ascertaining who is behind the wheel of military policy than it is to determining whether or not there is a perception gap (ibid).

Some of the military gap variants demonstrated by Clemmensen et.al (2012), especially, "demographic" (in terms of the economic background of military personnel) and Avant's second standard "whether the military is representative of society" (in terms of ethnic imbalance) resonate to this study that are to be dealt with at greater length. According to Clemmensen et al. (2012), the first culture gap refers to whether the attitudes and values of civilian and military

population differ. While military life exhorts-unity, discipline, and sacrifice; civilian life promotes individuality, hedonism and self-gain. In fact, he noted that, some of the civilian patterns may characterize the attitudes of the officer corps (military elites) as well.

This observation is worthy of note, as I will expound it in the later sections, available data in my work suggest that, despite military life dictates to cultivate the above mentioned values, much of the civilian life traits seem to permeate the Defence institution, as ‘individualism’ and ‘self gain’ are gaining considerable ground in the Defence Force starting from the top military brass to the rank and file.* Therefore, I do not expect significant ‘cultural gap’ in this respect between the Defence institution and the civilian society. However, I am of opinion that, currently, the Ethiopian youth’s sense of “calling”, “duty”, “sacrifice”, and “service oriented” attitudes and values in the context of military service seem to diminish profoundly.

The second gap refers to demography i.e. whether or not the military represents the population in its partisan and socio-economic make-up (ibid). In the Ethiopian Defence force case without doubt the top military brass has maintained an effective working partnership or collaboration with the civilian political leadership. Judged by prior experience most low ranking officers and solid majority of the military personnel also seem to favor E.P.R.D.F. For example, in the 2014 national election, out of more than one hundred thousand army personnel it is estimated that not more than seven hundred have voted for opposition parties.*

This may not be that surprising when it comes to the higher echelon of officers given the fact that these officers began their careers in the armed struggle, and they were active members of Tigray People’s Liberation Front (T.P.L.F.), Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (E.P.D.M.), and Oromo People’s Democratic Organaization (O.P.D.O.) and Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Front (S.E.P.D.F.). The F.D.R.E. military also tends to draw disproportionately from the rural areas, a trend that was exacerbated by economic hardships (rural unemployment and land shortage). In turn, social and economic elites tend to be underrepresented in the military. As will be depicted in the next chapter available data suggest that ethnic origin of the officer corps does not adequately reflect the various ethnic groups in the country, though the constitutional stipulation pointing to that effect.

* Defence Evaluation Report, 2010, Addis Ababa.

* Senior Officers’ Evaluation Report, 2015, Addis Ababa.

The third refers to policy preference gap i.e. whether military and civilian elites agree or disagree about a range of public policy issues. Clemmensen, et al. (2012), noted that the potential for policy gap is rooted in the paradox that “the institution created to protect the polity must become powerful enough to threaten the polity”. These authors argued that, the military’s power to threaten the polity, combined with its unique role in protecting national security, gives rise to a distinct set of organizational interests that can prompt senior officers to prefer policies that differ from those favored by civilian leadership.

Gruber (2015:3-5), for example, find that differences in experience between civilian and military elites can lead to difference in policy preferences. In the Ethiopian case, so far this gap has never been an issue; given the top military brass were senior military commanders during the armed struggle and by and large were submissive of the senior political leadership of the armed movement. Nonetheless, consistent with Gruber’s perspective, it can be argued that the dwindling percentage of senior members of parliament who were influential figures during the armed struggle and cabinet members with prior military experience may lead to policy preferences gap in the future. Though, such gap on policy preferences is worthy of investigation, given the study’s limited scope I may not dwell on this topic unless some aspects of it may be mentioned in passing.

The fourth type of civil-military gap refers to the institutional gap, which concerns whether the relationship between the military and civilian institutions such as the media, the courts and the education system can be characterized in terms of harmony or conflict (Clemmensen, et al., 2012: 673).

As has been mentioned above, though, examining institutional gap is beyond the scope of this study, such type of gap is partially relevant to some of the issues that I am looking to address, for example, the expansion of the military colleges tend to inculcate military culture; currently the F.D.R.E. Defence has established more than 10 colleges, many of them are training senior and junior officers as well as NCOs, on military science and leadership, of particular interest is the recently established one known as “Capacity Building College”, which is designed to indoctrinate the military.

Some evidences also suggest that there is a tendency of judicial deference to the military by the Federal Supreme Court, especially, as exemplified by its cassation decision and given the existence of separate military judicial system.* In the realm of media, I have observed that the private media allegedly magnify the negative aspects of the army, while the government, the ruling party, and the Defence media tend to magnify the positive aspects of the military.

Why does the civil-military gap matter? The logic behind the scholarly interest in the civil-military gap is the expectation that the extent of the difference in perceptions, values, attitudes, opinions, and perspectives between civilians and the military explains the parameters and outcomes of civil-military relations. According to Lee (2010:25), when the civil-military gap concerning a certain policy is small; it is conceptualized as means that there is a general consensus and common understanding between civilians and the military. Under this condition, it is expected that civil-military relations is characterized by harmony, and the preferences of the military are accepted by civilians without major impediments.

In my observation the Ethiopian Defence Force seems to be characterized by harmony, when looked at from the vantage point of the relations it has maintained with the political leadership (parliament and cabinet) however, what characterizes its relation with the other bulk of ‘civil’, (ordinary citizens, civil societies, or opposition parties) is hard to tell.

In contrast, with a substantial civil-military gap, the gap thesis predicts that there exists a lack of consensus and mutual understanding between the two groups (civilians and the military). Under this situation, it is anticipated that the relationship between civilians and the military will be marked by tensions, and military preferences will not be readily accepted by civilians in the public policies.

Applying the logic stated above to the issues that I intended to examine; my expectation is that there will be a wide perception gap concerning prestige and legitimacy of the military. In the next chapter based on the theoretical framework reviewed above I shall assess the perception gap taking the role of prestige, confidence, legitimacy, and composition as the frame of analysis.

* Federal Cassation Decision No. 33368, Vol. 9, P: 93, Oct., 9/2001 E.C., Captain Assefa Belay vs. Military Prosecutor.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis and Discussion

This chapter captures the main theme of the study; it looks at the quantitative and qualitative data to explore factors that influence perceptions on a number of major issues. Hence, the first part of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the F.D.R.E. Defence Force; specifically it highlights its constitutional foundation with respect to its formation, mission, and civil democratic control mechanisms. The second part will look deeper into the prestige of the Defence Force. The third part presents public confidence as regards the Defence's capability. The fourth part deals with the issue of legitimacy and the final part addresses the ethnic composition of the Defence Force.

3.1. The F.D.R.E. Defence Force in a Nutshell

In 1993, the E.P.R.D.F. led Transitional Government announced plans to create a multi-ethnic Defence Force. The F.D.R.E. constitution, which took effect on August 21st, 1995, has made several explicit references with regard to equitable composition, missions, obedience and respect to the constitution, and neutrality from partisanship of the armed forces (Article, 87).

This constitutional process entailed the building of a new professional army and officer class (Proc. N^o. 27/1996). The preamble to the proclamation reads: “[I]t is found necessary to organize, and to regulate the administration of, the Defence Forces of the F.D.R.E., which Defence Forces safeguard the country's sovereignty, embody a fair representation of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and carry on their functions in a manner free from political loyalties”. However, it was observed that although the armed forces have significant battlefield experience and the transformation was still underway, their guerrilla orientation has sluggish the process to a well structured, professional modern military (Alexander, 2013:89).

In terms of civilian control of the armed forces, the constitutional framework provides plenty of reference stipulating that the Prime Minister is the Commander-in-Chief of the national armed forces and the Minister of Defence shall be a civilian (Arts, 74.1 and 87.2). Moreover, the constitution states that the House of People's Representatives shall have the power to: establish

the national defence, determine its organization, administer and supervise its conduct, investigate and take necessary measures if it infringes human rights and the nation's security, proclaim a state of war, approves its budget, and oversight its overall performance (Arts, 51.6, 51.10, 55.9, 55.7, 55.17). Subordinate to the House of People's Representatives is the Council of Ministers, charged with declaring a state of emergency should an external invasion occur and drafting a law on declaration of war (F.D.R.E. Constitution, Arts. 77.11 and 93.1).

The F.D.R.E. Defence consists of two separate branches: the Ground Forces and the Air Force (Proc 809/2013, Art, 4.1). The Defence Force relies on voluntary military service of people above 18 years of age. Although, there is no compulsory military service armed forces may conduct call-ups when necessary and compliance is compulsory (F.D.R.E. Criminal Code 2005, Art.284 and F.D.R.E. Constitution, Art. 18.4. b).

3.2. Perceptions of the Defence Force's Prestige

Before proceeding to examine the substantive results of empirical survey on the F.D.R.E. Defence's prestige, I need to create clarity on the concept of prestige itself. Neubecker (2013) noted that, prestige is socially constructed and is based on the perceptions and value judgments of people located within the social structure.

According to Balcescu (n.d:7), prestige is the general impression over the social status of an individual or a social group compared to others, and the appreciation of this asymmetry entails superior or inferior status. Iglesias (2014:32), explained prestige as a "consensus judgment" within society; defining institutions with varying degrees of status. White and Henrich (n.d:3), identified two kinds of status: dominance and prestige. Dominance signifies an imposed status, whereas prestige signifies a freely conferred status.

Iglesias (2014:46), explained that prestige can be influenced by multiple factors, its assessment can be either subjective or objective and it may refer to social prestige or individual prestige. Given the fact that one may envisage different varieties of prestige, here I am interested in one dimension of the social prestige i.e. occupational prestige. What exactly do we mean by prestige?

The following is from Macmillan English Dictionary (2006:1114). 1= Prestige means "the high reputation and respect that someone or something has earned, based on their impressive

achievements, high quality etc. 2= “having high reputation and attracting a lot of respect, for example because of being of very high quality”. Oxford Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (7th Ed.:1193) also provides similar definition; prestige means “the respect and admiration that somebody or something has because of their social position, or what they have done”. All these accord broadly with my own intuitions about the common sense meaning of ‘prestige’- the admiration, merited respect and reputation that a particular occupation holds in a society. A prestigious institution deserves in the eyes of the community the superior standing which the same community confers.

The importance of prestige pervades all aspects of an institution. Hence, one can contemplate a broad range of possible factors affecting the prestige (attractiveness) of an organization such as transparent and/or predictable career path, meritocracy, decent living condition, welfare facilities, family assistance, personnel salaries and the like (Iglesias, 2014:46). Other literatures also suggest that prestige can be measured in a variety of different ways: the income and material rewards the position generates, the power, influence and resources available to the position holder, the value placed on activities of the position, the respect commanded by the position, the amount of formal and scientific knowledge required by the position, the physical work environment and freedom of action attached to the position and etc (www.enotes.com, 2015).

As mentioned above, although, prestige can have multiple variables; salary has served as one of the prestige indicators for many institutions (Iglesias, 2014:36). It should be clear, at least intuitively that more resources make it possible for an institution to reach a higher level of institutional prestige as more money attracts higher quality personnel. Based on the literatures, one can assume that relative increases in average salaries will be related to increases in public perception ratings, save some exceptions. Likewise relative decrease in average salary should be associated with decreased in ratings. So, higher level of personnel salary may be viewed as a reward for maximizing institutional prestige.

Accordingly, given the absence of any reliable information to examine the myriad of factors mentioned above, I deliberately limit myself to three factors to measure the prestige of the F.D.R.E. Defense Force as an occupation: personnel salary, personnel quality of life and support and treatment of veterans. According to the Stockholm International Peace Institute survey (2014), by global standards Ethiopia’s military spending as a percentage of its GDP is low - only

around 0.8 to 1 percent, which puts it in the bottom half of countries. By African standards, Ethiopia is placed 30th below Djibouti 27th and Eritrea 29th (Beckhusen, 2015). In terms of military spending, in 2014, CIA World Fact book puts Ethiopia 113th out of 141 countries.

But the question is at what cost? Is it not possible to make the Defence Institution more attractive without making it the burden on the national economy? The prestige of the armed forces and the prestige of a military profession in society are important for a successful recruitment of military personnel. Consequently, a positive contemplation of the armed forces as well as a high regard of the profession are motivating factors for the decision-making of young adults in joining the military.

The army is seen as a social segment exposed to the pressures of the most dynamic social and economic factors. The approach of the F.D.R.E. Defence Force through the occupational point of view not in the sense of “duty” or “calling” does not mean that its institutional duty-oriented role is underestimated or diminished, but it is to depict the challenges that the Defence institution is facing today in terms of declining prestige.

How prestigious is the Defence Force and the military profession today? Is the Defence Force attracting and keeping high-quality personnel? To help answer these questions, my work looks at how military salary will compare with civil service employees’ salary these days. This is important because relative pay plays an important part in career decision-making and thus is crucial in recruiting and retention.

Here, it should be borne in mind that my focus is not on the transparency and accountability of the overall defence spending or deficiencies in prioritizing, allocation or the procurement processes. My main concern is rather how attractive is the salary scale of the Defence Force compared with other civilian public institutions and its implication to institutional prestige. Below are tables which help to compare the salary scale of the Defence officers, with the salary scales of the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Information Network Security Agency, the Federal Public Prosecutors, the Federal First Instance Court Judges, the Human Rights Commission and the Institution of Ombudsman.

Table 1- E.N.D.F. Officers' Salary Scale, as of Today									
Grade	Rank	Base(Gross) Salary	Service Years on specific Rank						
			2 Years	4 Years	6 Years	8 Years	10 Years	12 Years	14 Years
13	2 nd Lt	2203	2295	2390	2487	2590	2697	2810	2925
14	Lieutenant	2390	2487	2590	2697	2810	2925	3042	3160
15	Captain	2810	2925	3042	3160	3280	3402	3525	3650
16	Major	3280	3402	3525	3650	3778	3015	4058	4210
17	Lt/Col	3778	3915	4058	4210	4365	4523	4684	4855
18	Colonel	4365	4523	4684	4855	5030	5210	5408	5615
19	B/General	5210	5408	5615	5838	6070	6305	6545	6790
20	M/general	6070	6305	6545	6790	7040	7292	7547	7805
21	Lt/General	7040	7292	7547	7805	8066	8330	8597	8867
22	General	8066	8330	8595	8867	9140	9416	9695	9976

Source: Defence Finance Department (2016)

Table-2 Salary for Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission and Ombudsman Institution										
Grade	Base Salary	Grade Salary								Ceiling
		S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	
9	3446	3610	3779	3957	4132	4314	4502	4697	4899	5102
10	3957	4132	4314	4502	4697	4899	5102	5307	5511	5721
11	4502	4697	4899	5102	5307	5511	5721	5938	6164	6392
12	5102	5307	5511	5721	5938	6164	6392	6627	6870	7117
13	5721	5938	6164	6392	6627	6870	7117	7369	7627	7894
14	6392	6627	6870	7117	7369	7627	7894	8166	8448	8727
15	7117	7369	7627	7894	8166	8448	8727	9006	9285	9573
16	7894	8166	8448	8727	9006	9285	9573	9863	10153	10446
17	8727	9006	9285	9573	9863	10153	10446	10741	11041	11344
18	9573	9863	10153	10446	10741	11041	11344	11650	11958	12269

Source: Mywage.org/Ethiopia

Table-3 Salary Scale for Information Network Security Agency , IT Professionals											
GRADE	BASE SALARY	GRADE SALARY									CEILING
		S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	S-9	
I	2240	2345	2453	2565	2681	2802	2928	3060	3197	3340	3490
II	2565	2681	2802	2928	3060	3197	3340	3490	3645	3807	3976
III	2928	3060	3197	3340	3490	3645	3807	3976	4151	4333	4524
IV	3340	3490	3645	3807	3976	4151	4333	4524	4719	4921	5133
V	3807	3976	4151	4333	4524	4719	4921	5133	5349	5573	5807
VI	4333	4524	4719	4921	5133	5349	5573	5807	6045	6293	6551
VII	4921	5133	5349	5573	5807	6045	6293	6551	6813	7086	7358
VIII	5573	5807	6045	6293	6551	6813	7086	7358	7630	7905	8190
IX	6293	6551	6813	7086	7358	7630	7905	8190	8481	8778	9085

Source-Mywage.org/Ethiopia-2015

For the sake of space I have omitted the salary scale tables of the rest four public institutions, and compared them using the base and the ceiling of their salary scales. The Federal Public Prosecutors’ scale starts with 2150 birr base salary for Grade One public prosecutor and ends with 7890 birr for Grade Two Assistant Supreme Public Prosecutor. The Federal First Instance Court Judges’ scale starts with 2150 birr base salary for Grade One Assistant Judge and ends with 5243 birr for Grade Four Judge, excluding the President and Vice President. The Human Rights Commission and the Institution of Ombudsman salary scale starts with 497 birr base salary for Grade One (such as cleaner and gardener) and ends with 7005 birr for Grade Fourteen personnel.

Ideally, I would like to compare individual military specialties with equivalent civil servant jobs, but it is impractical in this study for two reasons. First, my focus is on the Defence overall. To do an accurate comparison would require looking at many or all military occupations in all mechanized, air force, special forces, infantry, combat support and combat service support units. Second, there is no standardized material that outlines which military job is equivalent with which civilian jobs. Although, it is difficult to construct military and civilian comparison groups, we need to match roughly some military personnel job title and equivalent civilians by some proxy variables such as level of education, technical skills and service years.

In general, at entry point a private soldier needs to have 10th grade formal education then will take an average of 8 months to 1 year military training. Though, the military training itself can arguably be considered to be equivalent to some college-level training, I disregarded it in my comparison. For the reasons of space and convenience I only see officers' salary scales and opt to exclude private soldiers' and noncommissioned officers' from the comparison.

In the current Defence Human Resource Directive (2014:50), for military personnel to be commissioned as a Lieutenant he/she needs to have at least 13 years of service, for Captain 17 years, for a Major 22 years, for a Lieutenant Colonel 26 years, for a Colonel 30 years. I would like to remind that on top of the substantial leadership experience they obtained over the years these officers have several academic and military courses, especially when they move up to the next rank.

When we compare a captain computer engineer who holds a BSC degree with INSA's personnel having the same education Grade five, the former's base salary is 2810 birr while the latter earns 3807 birr. Bear in mind that the Captain has at least 15 years of service in the military, where as the civilian may not have a quarter of it.

If we compare a Colonel lawyer having a Master's degree with a civilian prosecutor having the same education in the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission Grade Twelve, the former's base salary is 4365 birr while the latter's is 5102 birr. It should be noted that the Colonel has at least 27 years of service in the military, whereas the civilian may not have more than six years. In short, one can sense the level of disparity by simply looking at the Defence's salary scale table and the corresponding civil servants' salary scale tables illustrated above.

In the table below I have attempted to explore more how salary affects the Defence's prestige. Hence, I assessed the perceptions of my respondents using related questions having multiple point rating scales to evaluate the level of interest in military service and the consequent reasons.

Table-4 The impact of personnel salary on Defence's prestige				
Questions	Responses	Actual Number	Percent	Type & Total Number of Respondents
Would you be disappointed if your child joins the army?"	I would be disappointed	12	85.7%	14 Veterans
	I would not	2	14.2%	14 Veterans
	I would be disappointed	5	62.5%	8-Parents
	I would not	3	37.5%)	8-Parents
	I would be disappointed	19	90.5%	21-Staff College students
	I would not	2	9.5%	21-Staff College students
What is the main reason for your disappointment?	Low salary	9	64.2%	14-Veterans
	Death/injury	1	7.2%	14-Veterans
	Regimented Life	2	14.2%	14-Veterans
	Have better career options	2	14.2%	14-Veterans
Do you think the Ethiopian National Defence attracts high-quality, motivated and talented recruits?	No, it doesn't attract	19	90.5%	21-Staff College students
	Yes, it attracts	2		21-Staff College students
	Yes, it attracts	7	53.8%	13- NCOs and soldiers
	No, it doesn't attract	6	46.2%	13-NCOs and soldiers
What is the main reason that might explain the decline in propensity for military service?	Low salary	9	42.9%	21-Staff College students
	Better Opportunities	9	42.9%	21-Staff College students
	Dislike regimented life	1	4.8%	21-Staff College students
	Other opinion	2	9.5%	21-Staff College students
Comparing with government employees' (civil servants') salary, do you think the military pay is justifiable and reasonable?	It is very low	7	53.8%	13-NCOs & soldiers
	It is low	4	30.8%	13-NCOs & soldiers
	It is reasonable	2	15.4%	13-NCOs & soldiers
Do you think the young adults do have high interest for military service?	They are not interested at all	2	25%	8-Parents
	Have moderate interest	5	62.5%	8-Parents
	Have high interest	1	12.5%	8-Parents
What do you think is the major reason for declining interest?	Low salary	4	57.2%	7-Parents
	Dislike regimented life	3	42.8%	7-Parents
Do you consider joining the military?"	No, I don't	231	90 %	257-preparatory students
	Yes, I do	25	9.7%	257-preparatory students
What is the major reason among others that inhibits you from joining the army?	Want to pursue university	80	34.6%	231-preparatory students
	Have other opportunities	73	31.6%	231-preparatory students
	Dislike military life	22	9.5%	231-preparatory students
	Low salary	17	7.4%	231-preparatory students
	Fear of death or injury	15	6.5%	231-preparatory students
	Long commitment	12	5%	231-preparatory students
	Other opinion	12	5%	231-preparatory students

The responses elicited in Table 4 need some explanation; the Palace Guard NCOs and soldiers, veterans, parents and Staff College senior officers seem to be well-informed about the defence salary scale and might sense it in comparison with other public institutions. That is why their responses regarding salary are roughly close to 83.8%, 64.2%, 57.2% and 42.9% respectively.

However, in the case of preparatory students those who cite low salary as a reason for their lack of interest in military service account only 7.4%, in my opinion such disparity is not surprising as the students do not have much information about the Defence salary scale and as they are students and have not joined the employment market yet, probably they are not best suited for analyzing such impact. Nonetheless, despite those preparatory students who cite low salaries are minority their concern is not insignificant when it comes to the prestige of the Defence. For that matter 90.2% of these students reflect that “they don’t want to join the military”, which shows the fact that the Defence Force is not attractive in the labor market.

In the focus group discussion it was observed that many of the participant military officers believe that civilian pay and benefits surpass military wages hence, many educated military personnel tend to terminate their service contract. They also mentioned that, military personnel give up a lot to serve in the armed forces, often spend years away from their families, may be assigned to other mission posts at a moment's notice, deployed to hostile territories, and often face life threatening risks. Thus, according to them, although, all these factors can not be quantified in terms of money, the salary they are earning is extremely low.

One military lawyer, (office colleague of this author) remarked:

What's the logic that puts the civilian prosecutor often very young and inexperienced ahead of a military Captain with similar education, skills and substantial leadership experience on the job? The Defence sector is really not paying comparable salaries, and this takes a toll on the Defence personnel. *

He also added that a Captain engineer earns about 4000 birr, although his net salary is much lower after tax and other deductions.

* Informal conversation with Lieutenant Getinet Kinde, works at the Defence Justice Directorate, 2016.

In fact, some may argue that military personnel are getting free housing and health services; however, many of those who receive these benefits represent a tiny minority, who are assigned in a few urban areas. For that matter, currently many of the public institutions offer transport and housing allowance to their employees even others go beyond these and allocate petty cash for other forms of fringe benefits. *

As Defence Evaluation Report underlines, no any civilian government official was heard saying military personnel are reasonably paid, but, often it was said they would love to be able to pay them more if the economy of the country allowed them to do so. However, the Report states that there is a stark difference of opinion when it observed the position of the higher echelon of officers in the defence regarding salary of military personnel. The Report concludes that those high ranking Defence officials argue that military personnel's salary is fair and relatively adequate.*

Thus, I observe a wide divergence between the majority of military personnel and the high ranking generals on the issue of salary. If one assumes the opinion of the top military brass is the official position of the Defence with respect to salary then it can be said there is a perception gap between the Defence as institution and the rest of military personnel as well as the majority of respondents. Indeed, supported by the evidences mentioned above, it is plausible that the low salary in the Defence contributed to the declining prestige of the Defence institution.

In order to understand more the level of prestige that the respondents accord to the Defence Force, I have asked my respondents to rate eight occupations according to their contribution to the well-being of the country. I found that the Defence is ranked 3rd among eight professions proposed for evaluation by the preparatory school respondents next to teachers and medical doctors.*

Contrastingly, an excellent ranking (1st) has been accorded to the Defence by the Staff College officers. Thus, the ranking varies significantly from one category of respondents to another. One would expect members of a profession (Staff College Officers toward-Defence and Students

* Informal conversation with Brikti Mengisteab, a Prosecutor works at Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, 2016.

* Defence Annual Evaluation Report, 2014.

* Questionnaire response from Preparatory school students indicated in Annex-L, Table-11 Addis Ababa, 2016.

toward-Teachers) to think differently from non-members and the professional/occupational attachment has something to do with attitudinal effects or professional bias if you like.*

Moreover, my survey asked 257 preparatory school students “Which national institution makes you feel proud?” From the seven occupations provided for choice, 159 (62%) respondents chose “Ethiopian Airlines”, 51 (19.8%) chose “Defence”, 14 (5.4%) chose “Housing Construction”, 10 (3.9%) chose “Ministry of Health”, 9 (3.5%) chose “Ethio-Telecom”, 7 (2.7%) chose “Electric Corporation”, 5 (1.9%) chose “Water Resources Authority” and 2 (0.8%) offered “Other Opinion” stating that they feel neither pride nor prejudice.

The same question was posed to 21 Staff College officers; hence, 14 (66.7%) of the respondents chose “Defence”, and 7 (33.3%) chose “Ethiopian Airlines”. The same question goes to 14 veterans, where 5 (35.7%) of them chose “Ethiopian Airlines”, 4(28.6%) chose “Defence”, 2 (14.3%) chose “Housing Construction”, 2 (14.3%) chose “Ministry of Health”, and 1 (7.1%) chose “Ethio-telecom”.

As can be gathered from the above statistics preparatory students’ perceptions of the Ethiopian Airlines are overwhelmingly positive, despite modest in degree, this is also true for the veterans. Though, the rating accorded by preparatory students to the Defence Force is also positive given the fact that it stood second, the number of respondents that accorded this favorable rating is relatively small, 51 (19.8%) approval rates out of 257 students. Contrastingly, however, the Defence has got the highest favorable rating (66.7%) by the Staff College respondents ahead of even the Ethiopian Airlines by wide margin. Ratings of the rest institutions are extremely poor; since the question was close-ended it is difficult to figure out the actual explanations for such trend.

On balance, public perception of the Ethiopian Airlines is astonishingly favorable, while public perception of the Defence Force is also modestly positive. However, a critical reader needs to look at the format or connotation of the question posed. It just asked the attitude aspect of an individual “*Which national institution makes you feel proud?*” and “being proud” of something does not necessarily imply that particular respondent is attracted to the institution under consideration. Of course, an institution having a positive public perception in this particular trait

* Questionnaire response from Command and Staff College senior officer students, Addis Ababa, 2016.

has a good chance of enhancing its “prestige”, however, this may not be always true, as “prestige” is contingent upon multiple factors and depends upon the context and the nature of the occupation under consideration.

Hauser and Warren (1996:3) for example, noted that occupational prestige is usually determined by a variety of job attributes and socio-economic variables. According to them, even the best measure of occupational prestige can not stand alone and it should be assessed cautiously with other aggregates. They further argued that, even insimilar occupations sometimes the actual underlying job will determine whether prestige is conferred or not conferred on the position. The authors illustrate this idea by comparing a bank manager with a sewage company manager claiming that one would most likely view the banker as holding the most prestigious position, yet it is probably the sewer company manager who makes the most money.

Thus, the above mentioned positive rating of the Defence Force may not directly translate into “high prestige”. The fact that someone is “proud” of the Defence does not imply that particular individual is likely to seek out membership in the same institution, but it might only mean “I appreciate what that institution has done or is doing right now or giving credit to the personnel, who endure heavy hardship and pay heavy sacrifices in the course of performing their assigned tasks”.

Therefore, the fact that majority of the respondents offer favorable rating to this particular item; being “proud” of the Defence may only explains its gratifying role in safeguarding the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. And such favorable feeling might emanate from mere appreciation or sympathy and may not necessarily indicate it is a prestigious institution. As can be observed from the above mentioned responses regarding the “low salary”, “low incentives”, “declining interest in joining the military” and other related issues, the balance of perceptions becomes lower toward the prestige of Defence at least in the eyes of the respondents. This observation becomes even clearer when other dimensions of prestige are meticulously examined.

In doing so, the issue of prestige is further illustrated by examining the feelings of respondents with regard to the treatment, support, respect and recognition of veterans and military personnel by the government and by the public. Staff College officers have been asked “What is the influence of veterans in society with regard to their role in projecting defence’s image?” Out of

21 respondents, 18 (85.7%) of them said “they portray negative image of the Defence”, only 2 said “they are inspirational”.

The same question was posed to 13, NCOs and soldiers, 8 (61.5%) of them said “they influence negatively”, 5 said “they influence positively”. In the same vein, Staff College officers were asked: “How do you evaluate the resettlement process of veterans on their return to the civilian life?” Out of 21 respondents, 11 said “not satisfactory”, 5 said “are left alone and neglected”, 3 said “they are looked down”, 1 said “majority employed in low income jobs”, and 1 said “reintegrated successfully”.

Similar question was posed to 13, NCOs and soldiers, whether they think veterans get the support and respect they deserve from the government; 7 said “no, they don’t get”, 5 said “yes, they get”, and 1 offer “other opinion”. Parent respondents were also asked whether they think veterans get the support and respect they deserve from the public and government; out of 8 respondents, 5 of them said “no, they don’t get”, and 3 said “yes, they get”.

I have also posed the following questions to veterans: “Do veterans get support from local authorities? Are they received well and respected by society? Does the Defence facilitate conditions to smoothen their transition into civilian life? Their responses were ranging from “not adequate” to the most drastic answer “not at all”. As can be gathered from these questionnaire responses overwhelming majority have reflected a negative rating on the support, resettlement, and recognition for veterans. I found consistent responses from two veterans interviewed on April, 27/2016. Capitain Fithanegest Kassahun is a veteran from Tigray Regional State, Tahtay Koraro Wereda, Semema Kebelle. This veteran told me his story as follows:

I joined T.P.L.F. in 1986 to fight against the Derg regime, I wounded in a battlefield at a place known as *Guna* (South Gondar) in 1989, again during Ethio-Eritrean war, I wounded in a battlefield at a place known as *Teseney* (Western Eritrea) in 2000, despite my heroic service to my country, I have got neither disability allowance nor resettlement benefit.

Corporal Atsbaha Abraha is also from the same Regional State, Wereda and Kebelle. He narrated his story as follows:

I joined T.P.L.F. in 1987 to fight against the Derg regime, I wounded in a battlefield at a place known as *Adigozomo* (Western Tigray) in 1988, I wounded in another battlefield in a place known as *Meragna* (North Shewa) in 1990, during Ethio-Eritrean war I wounded twice in different battlefields, at *Erdimatyosin* 1998 and at *Denbemengul* in 1999 (around *Badime*) in spite of my selfless service to my country, I am dumped without any means of livelihood. I have been trying to get my benefits for over 15 years now. It's a waiting game, the Defence Human Resource officials wait you out until you die. Or they provide you so many flimsy reasons that you become exhausted and stop fighting for your benefits.

It is just unfortunate that these veterans have been denied their benefits by the military that discharges them as unfit for military service due to disability. These are wounded veterans who have done a lot for their country and I believe that they deserve appropriate treatment and disability allowance for the injuries they sustained in-service (*See, Annex-L*).

As far as the quality of life in the military is concerned the situation further worsens the perceived low prestige. Military pay for a private soldier starts at gross 1,360 birr a month; this includes expenses for everything ranging from food which is 450 birr, uniforms, sanitary items and etc. In our focus group discussions it has been noted that, military units posted at places where there is no electric power are to buy fire wood for cooking deducting from their salaries. As there is no extra money to offset these expenses in turn it resulted in dietary deficiencies, which often raises the frustration of troops at the lower pay grades. Focus group participants pointed out that, many military personnel believe that the cause of the poor living condition is not only chronic underfunding, but also gross inefficiency in how the scarce resource is spent.*

Accommodation is also a critical part of the package for a military well-being that makes their duty possible - it's not an added benefit or should not be regarded as a sort of a bonus scheme. Most importantly, however, it is a vital factor in ensuring our forces' effectiveness. In a military setting mobility is an inevitable way of life, but military personnel deserve a place to live that is

* Focus Group Discussion with Junior Officers, Addis Ababa, 2016.

of a proper standard every time they come back from mission. Though, there are efforts underway to alleviate this problem the process is too slow (ibid).

To date, gyms and other military recreation facilities are nonexistent in the Command Headquarters, let alone at Division level and below. As a result many military personnel tend to spend their leisure time in wrong places that lead them to intoxication and other unintended behaviors. My regular visit to various combat units showed me that, faulty boilers, leaky soup bowls, broken cups are being used and there is acute shortage of cooking utensils. This gives an idea of the extent of the dilapidation, and the frustrations that military personnel face when living in garrison environment (ibid).

As has been observed from many meetings, top Defence officials acknowledge that there are problems in creating happy unit life, yet according to them this is caused by the leadership failure at the unit command level as they are unable to take any innovative measures to improve quality of life at their respective units. Those who command combat units on the front lines who wish to remain anonymous on their part worry that there are more complicated reasons that may obscure the whole, hidden problem. According to them, no one seems to understand how big the problem is, but they are concerned it is growing. They further noted that, the true effect of this failure to properly address the well-fare problem has now been shown to be felt by many soldiers not just simply by a form of frustration, but also in terms of insubordination and other severe symptoms.*

In our focus group discussion it was noted that, the source of the military's discontent doesn't solely lie in money, but also the reluctance of the leadership in dealing with these sorts of problems. On the whole, low salary and poor quality of life coupled with leadership failure seem to drive the downturn in personnel morale.*

This closer look at a range of survey questions, interviews and focus group discussions suggest that there is a wide disaffection and resentment on both the veterans and active duty military personnel which is by and large associated with the honor and prestige of military service. Generally, the most prominent factors which proved to have the strongest influence on declining

* Informal conversation with Combat Unit commanders who wish to remain anonymous, Shire, 2015.

* Focus Group Discussion with Junior Officers, Addis Ababa, 2016.

prestige are the lack of monetary/material and symbolic rewards such as low salary, lack of incentives, poor living condition with regard to active duty personnel; lack of support, lack of proper rehabilitation / reintegration scheme, and lack of recognition and respect with regard to veterans. This low prestige also does have a profound spillover effect to the society, as can be gathered from the above evidences, local authorities and the wider public seems to have low impression to the veterans and by extension to the Defence institution.*

The honor and prestige enjoyed by soldiers are significant to the extent they are socially recognized in the civilian sphere in a manner that facilitates their conversion into social assets. That is why I assume that, military personnel's beliefs about the prestige that outsiders or other members of the community attribute to their organization have a strong influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, the available data and my analysis explain much of the perception gap on the prestige issue between the students, parents, veterans, military personnel and the Defence institution.

3.3. Perceptions of the Defence Force's Legitimacy

According to Kenosi (n.d: 3), the level of trust that citizens have in their armed forces is paramount to good civil-military relations. In a democracy, it is the responsibility of the armed forces to gain public trust, because a military that is not trusted by the population lacks legitimacy and will have difficulties justifying its expenses and even its existence.

Reyes (2010), explained that, in its broadest sense the term "*legitimacy*" refers to the way a government or social system attempts to justify its existence and power. He further noted that, all governments need to legitimize their rule, to justify their right to power, to promote their authority as a means to gaining popular support. According to Tregidga, Milne, and Kearins (2010:4), "Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions".

Here, I am not to gauge regime legitimacy as it is entirely beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, since the Defence Force is a derivative of the political system, I sought to extend

* Defence Human Resource Main Department Survey, 2009.

the definitions noted above of legitimacy to examine the Defence Force by focusing on some specific issues. In doing so, I considered the perceptions of legitimacy using representative sample from the civilian public and the self-perception of the Defence itself and of military personnel. The F.D.R.E. Constitution article 87/4 states that “the armed forces shall at all times obey and respect the constitution” and article 87/5 of the same constitution stresses “the armed forces shall carry out their functions free of any partisanship to any political organization(s)”.* In similar fashion, the Defence Force Proclamation (No. 809/2013) in its preamble states that one of the aims of this legislation is to enable the “Defence Force to carry out its functions free of any partisanship to any political organization(s)”.*

The Constitution also provides ample mechanisms for a democratic oversight of the military by civil authority. The parliament has a standing committee that oversees Defence and Security affairs, and ensures parliamentary control on defence policy and decisions such as organization and structure of the armed Forces, recruitment, promotion and discipline.

According to Alexander (2013:91), although, the constitution stipulates the forgoing principles and mechanisms, practically there is no robust parliamentary oversight on the overall Defence performance and decisions. As will be elaborated in the next sections, there seems to be a huge difference between policy and practice. The main focus of this section is to investigate how the students, parents and veterans perceive the Defence Force and how the Defence views itself with regard to legitimacy and the implications arising from such perception gap.

Legitimacy is too unwieldy and complex a concept to be measured with one indicator, however, for the sake of space and brevity I opt to examine the legitimacy issue based on one very important variable, i.e. partisanship. Thus, the following table presents respondents’ perception on the partisanship variable.

* F.D.R.E. Constitution, 1995, Article 87/5.

* Defence Force Proclamation, No. 809/2013, Preamble.

Questions	Responses	Actual Number	Percent	Type & total No. of Respondents
Do you think the Defence Force is free from partisanship?"	Yes, it is free	45	17.5%	257-preparatory students
	No, it isn't free	212	82.5%	257-preparatory students
	Yes it is free	7	33.3%	21-Staff College students
	No, it isn't free	14	66.7%	21-Staff College students
	Yes it is free	8	57.1%	14-Veterans
	No, it isn't free	6	42.9%	14-Veterans
Who do you think it is affiliated with?	Elected government	42	19.8%	212-preparatory students
	To E.P.R.D.F.	157	74%	212-preparatory students
	To opposition parties	3		212-preparatory students
	other opinion	10		212-preparatory students
	Elected government	4	28.6%	21-Staff College students
	To E.P.R.D.F.	6	42.9%	21-Staff College students
	To opposition parties	-	-	21-Staff College students
	other opinion	4		21-Staff College students
	Elected government	-	-	6-Veterans
	To E.P.R.D.F.	5	83%	6-Veterans
	To opposition parties	-	-	6-Veterans
	other opinion	1		6-Veterans

As can be gleaned from Table 5 the responses received from the preparatory students and from Staff College officers are consistent regarding the “partisanship” issue, while results from the veterans exhibit divergence though, by a narrow margin. The veterans’ declared political stance appears to be a strong factor that shapes their opinion on this particular point. This might make sense given the fact that the majority of veteran respondents who chose “it is free” told to this author that, though the real answer to the question posed was otherwise, they opt for the ‘politically desirable response’, so as not to expose their political party to ‘outsiders’ and not to stifle some benefits they expect from the government.

Some of those who offered “other opinions” stated that since military personnel take part in election they can’t be regarded as apolitical, apparently conflating individual member’s right to

elect with institutional partisanship in official capacity. Others, preparatory students in particular, said the very question itself “is laughable”.

As can be gleaned from Table 5, the big majority from all categories of respondents reflected the same opinion suggesting that the Defence Force is by and large associated with the ruling party. Based largely on these survey results, it can be concluded that there is a real cause for concern if the Defence Force is widely perceived as abandoning its constitutional duty of political neutrality.

It is worth noting some of the responses tabulated as “other opinion”. Some of the respondents embraced in this tabulation recalled the manner the army reacted to the T.P.L.F.’s split in 2001 and the national election in 2005. According to these respondents, the two incidents and other observations including the overall indoctrination of the army seem to compromise its impartiality and reinforce the already existing strong popular belief that the army is not free from partisanship.

I also asked the preparatory students “How do you see/view the Defence Force? Out of 257 respondents, 28 (10.9%) of them circled “fear”, 93 (36.5%) chose “respect”, 44 (17.3%) chose “distrust”, 49 (19.2%) circled “appreciation”, 22 (8.6%) chose “dislike”, 19 (7.5%) offer “other opinion”, and 2 female students didn’t respond. As shown from the responses adding those who said “respect” and “appreciation” the Defence has gained 55.7% approval, in contrast adding those who gave “fear, dislike and distrust” responses, 36.8% students do not have good impression of the Defence Force. Although, in this particular question those who reflected such negative impression represent the minority its implication for legitimacy should not be overlooked.

According to some other sources, the legitimacy of the Defence Force has been seriously criticized since its inception. For example, one critic described the following:

It is stunning to hear that a top military brass can publicly denounce opposition parties on grounds of holding and propagating dissenting political views. At the very least this military official does not seem to respect the much invoked constitutional provision that stipulates: “The armed forces shall carry out their functions free of any partisanship to any political organization(s) (Hindessa, 2015).

Another critic also said that "more viable approach to build a truly non-partisan army would have been through the formation of an all-party commission to draw a consensus based road map for its recruitment, training, and indoctrination". He went on to say that, as long as a bold measure is not taken to remedy this anomaly significant number of the public will continue to perceive the present army as a defender of one political group (Leenco, 1999: 37).

According to Ouedraogo (2014:16), building professional militaries is dependent upon establishing a clear and balanced allegiance to the State and to civilian authorities who have popular mandate and not interfering in politics favoring one to fend off other political challengers. He claimed that, without a military's steadfast support for neutrality and democratic sovereign authority, the process of democratic governance will be at jeopardy.

Ouedraogo (2014: 4), rightly noted that, military professionalism is commonly grounded in several overriding principles: "the subordination of the military to democratic civilian authority, allegiance to the State and a commitment to political neutrality, and an ethical institutional culture". He further argued that, if some kind of anomaly persists in these relationships the consequence would be a military that is more partisan and less professional in the eyes of society, thereby diminishing legitimacy for the institution-something that is necessary in order to recruit committed, disciplined, and talented soldiers (id:20).

Ouedraogo (2014:20), further observed that, key government politicians have to find a nucleus of senior military officers identified with the ruling party to serve as their guardians. He asked why politicians are often willing to tolerate and at times, encourage military leaders' use of public resources for personal enrichment. He answered this stating that, it is because politicians are excessively obsessed with securing the military's support in order to hinge on power and unfairly avoid other rivals from the political scene. He concluded that, this reality represents not only a "*politicization of the military*" but also the "*militarization of politics*".

In similar vein, Feaver (1999:228), also noted that, political loyalty is bought among many developing countries' armed forces, where substantial corruption opportunities give them a stake in the survival of the civilian regime. Ouedraogo (2014:20), also explains the flip side of the above story sating that, some opposition political parties will also try to find sympathizers within the military ranks with the aim of usurping power during times of crisis (id:19).

According to Paulos (2001), similar tendency was vividly illustrated in the experiences of the TPLF's internal political wrangling in 2001, whereby both factions badly sought the support of the military and resorted to manipulation of the chain of command that results in divisions in the top military brass labeled as 'loyalists' and 'faction sympathizers', and ended up giving generous promotions to the former and forced retirement to the latter.

Hindessa (2015), also remarked that, "even these days it is becoming a common phenomenon to observe top military brass attending political party's conference and making pronouncements of political nature. Indeed, these actions are symptomatic of a broader politicization, if not partisanship of the military command". According to him, as many party loyalists continue to dominate the senior and middle officer ranks, concern is raised about the long-term impact it may have on the civil-military relations and the political stability of the nation. At this juncture, I would like also remind my readers that, our own Derg's legacy could have been sufficient warning for us to take political neutrality of the military more seriously.

To put the above perception in perspective, I have also posed another question to the preparatory school students "What word or phrase first comes to your mind when you see or think of members of the Defence Force?" This particular question offered 9 options for the respondents. Accordingly, out of 257 respondents, 37 (14.4%) said "popular", 8 (3.1%) said "low intelligence", 23 (9%), said "discipline", 60 (23.3%) said "heroism", 20 (7.8%) said "violation of rights", 11 (4.3%) said "illiterate", 81(31.5%) said "E.P.R.D.F.", 8 (3.1%) said "patriotism", and 9 (3.5%) of them offered "other opinion".

As presented in the above descriptive statistics, if one looks at the responses given for the option scales separately, majority (31.5%) of them associated the members of the Defence Force with E.P.R.D.F. If we categorize the options in to two those disfavor and favor, meaning adding the response of those who chose, popular 14.4%, discipline 9%, heroism 23.3%, and patriotism 3.5%, the sum will be 49.8%, and those who chose, low intelligence 3.1% violation of rights 7.8%, illiterate 4.3%, and E.P.R.D.F. 31.5% the sum will be 46.7%. The trend suggests that both results are close thus, seemingly a divergence of opinion. However, when we take a closer look at those who mentioned "other opinion", all of them suggested more unfavorable feeling that swing the balance to negativity; adding words such as: "cruelty", "tribalism" "corrupt"etc. Thus,

one can sense how significant numbers of respondents have negatively perceived the Defence Force in terms of partisanship.

To capture more the legitimacy issue I asked Staff College officers whether they think the present Defence Force would be sustained if an opposition party holds power. Out of 21 respondents, 19 (90.5%) of them said “it would be disbanded”; only 2 of them said “it would be sustained, except for the most senior echelon”.

In the focus group discussions majority of participants described that the opposition parties do not perceive the Defence institution as a force that is committed to serve whatever government comes to power through democratic means. Some participants remind that many political leaders in the opposition camp make hostile statements against the Defence Force in many occasions and they do not believe that these parties will maintain the military, especially those in the higher echelon.

Daniel (2013), remarked that, “if history is any indication, no constitution in Ethiopia ever survived the change of government”, this also holds true partly for the military. According to him, it is just a matter of time before the current ones will be adjusted to the tune of whoever controls the palace next time around. He further claimed that, in a country in which the traditional political institutions have been overthrown and modern ones have yet to achieve legitimacy, military intervention in politics will be inevitable.

Ouedraogo (2014), on his part noted that, in African societies civil–military relations assume patron-client relationships with a recurring cycle of coups and countercoups. According to him, in those societies in which significant elements of the population deny legitimacy to the political system, the military are likely to play an active role in politics. According to him, even in societies with a generally authoritative and legitimate political system, succession crises may enhance the role of the military and at times which also encouraged military intervention whenever the competence and decisiveness of a government are called into question.

When one takes a closer look at the Ethiopian Defence Force in light of the above proposition, he/she can find an interesting coincidence. Not long ago, there was mob violence in many areas of the Oromia Regional State and in some areas of Amhara Regional State. Both security problems were reportedly triggered by different causes. What was the underlying cause(s) and

who were the political actors behind the scene are important questions, but seeking answers for these questions is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, in Oromia the conflict was largely associated with the Addis Ababa's "Master Plan", and in Amhara it was associated with the case of Kimant ethnic group's self-administration and its consequential territorial claim.

The point that I want to make here is that, the Regional State authorities and local authorities were seemingly helpless had it not been for the quick intervention of the military. In both Regional States the local police, militias, and related security apparatus exhibit a shocking incompetence, indiscipline, and lack of resolve. The competence and decisiveness of the Regional State authorities were highly questioned. Undoubtedly, such crisis situation has not only enhanced the power and task of the military, but also allowed the Defence Force to engage in persistent constabulary roles. But, the question is how did the military intervene and on what legal basis?

The F.D.R.E. constitution article 87 (3) states that “ *the armed forces shall protect the sovereignty of the country and carry out any responsibilities as may be assigned to them under any state of emergency declared in accordance with the constitution*”.

From this constitutional provision one can understand that “protecting the sovereignty of the country” is an inherent mandate of the armed forces. However, in order to deploy the army to enforce internal law and order, first, a state of emergency has to be declared and second, the army needs to have a duly authorized mandate. To the knowledge of this writer none of these have been satisfied and the concerned Regional States' authorities have not officially requested the assistance of the military admitting that they are unable to control the situation by their local law enforcement agencies and personnel.

Without satisfying these constitutional prerequisites the military intervene anyway and still is engaged in policing role. Here, I am not critiquing the military personnel's extraordinary effort to restore law and order. Instead, as long as the military has sworn in to defend the constitution and to be abiding by it, it has to carry out its functions respecting the very constitution it pledged allegiance. Otherwise, such incidents will inevitably tarnish its legitimacy. Current trends suggest that, while the Defence Force increases its role with the recurrence of local instability, the civilian authorities especially, the local authorities, their law enforcement agencies, and local

police seem to be ill-equipped and unable to possess the capability to influence civil-military relations at the national and local levels. Still, it is not clear what the public opinion is regarding the ‘new normal’ that brings in army troops in the role typically understood of as policing.

According to some sources, the current trend suggests that the military is championed by the ruling political elite, given its crucial role in ensuring regime stability (Daniel, 2013). Indeed, characterizing the military as the ‘guardian’ explains only part of the story. Many top political officials do not spare any chance to utter flattering words stating that “on top of defending the nation’s sovereignty our Defence Force is making extraordinary contributions to the various development efforts of the country, including infrastructural development, technology transfer and electronic security” (ibid).

When trends are looked within the ruling party, until recently the long-established norm was that the top military officers are truly accepting their subordination to their political leaders. Understandably, the influence of the ruling party on the senior echelons of the officer corps is profound. By and large, it reflects the deep intimacy and enduring links that existed between the political leadership and the military command structure of the former guerilla movement. This was a norm adhered to since their days as commanders of the ruling party during the armed struggle.

However, I am of opinion that, for the future there is no guarantee this will remain the same given the probability that the new generation of political leaders may not have the audacity to ignore the ‘advice’ of their seniors, the matter would be even stronger in the army given these new generation of leaders are inexperienced in military affairs.

Apart from the perception I have attempted to highlight above, in actuality how much is the influence of the military in the processes of government, in the policy preference and formulation or assessing the extent to which the different experiences outlined can contribute to the creation of a civil-military relation architecture are issues beyond my scope, yet they may be interesting areas of research.

How does the Defence view itself? According to the top military brass, the Defence is enjoying a strong popular support and legitimacy. They believe that the Army is not involving in the political scene; hence, its neutrality has never been questioned. The Defence’s official stance

claims that, “The army that we sought to build is a State army, not an army of a single political party or political organization” (F.D.R.E. Military Doctrine, 1996: 43). However, in spite of this perception, the present research and some sources from the Defence itself suggest that there are significant numbers of people who think that the Defence has a strong political affinity with the ruling party. For example, very recently it has been highlighted that during the Ethio-Eritrea war the E.P.R.D.F. political leadership has been excessively intrusive in pure operational matters that were supposedly to be left to the professional judgement of the military commanders on the battlefields.*

The Defence’s official view is also met with another contradicting evidence when one looks at the ruling party’s policy document named as “*Ye Serawit Ginbata Beabiyotawi Democracy*” (1999 E.C.) literally translated as “Army Building through Revolutionary Democracy” (2007), herein after referred to as “Policy Document”. In this document it has been stated that, “The Defence Force is the last barrack of defence in any political system” (2007:72). It went on to state that in a developed liberal democracy, the liberal ideology is the dominant outlook, it has become conceptually inviolable and nobody within that system questioned its validity. In this political system, though, theoretically, the Army is said to be apolitical, in actual fact it is a formidable political machine. This document argued that, by virtue of the well-established liberal ideology, the Army personnel have been well exposed to this liberal ideology long ago in their school ages, and before their recruitment. Thus, in the Western world, such conducive political environment does eliminate the need for direct political indoctrination of the Defence institution.

This policy document further states that, in Ethiopia unlike Western liberal democracies the alternative political paradigm is Revolutionary Democracy. However, according to this document, despite vigorously promoted, Revolutionary Democracy has not become a dominant ideology, and has not prevailed yet in the Ethiopian society, hence, in such situation the political indoctrination of the army should not be left to the Army’s internal procedures, military command and control patterns (Policy Document, 2007: 85). Instead, E.P.R.D.F. shall do it indirectly using its government machinery (Policy Document, 2007: 86). This policy document claimed that, in the Ethiopian context, though, the interests of the majority of people are likely to be served by revolutionary democracy, and the vast portion of the society has already supported

* Defence Training Evaluation, Mekelle, 2016.

this political ideology, still significant segment of the Ethiopian society are vulnerable to different varieties of backward attitudes and so does the Army, as it is more prone to anti-revolutionary democracy tendencies, if left politically unchecked (Policy Document, 2007: 80).

According to this document, regime security and state security are one and the same, they are not separable, and those who attempt to make a distinction between them are disillusioned (Policy Document, 2007:22-23, 27). Thus, the mandate of the Ethiopian Defence Force is to safeguard the Revolutionary Democracy political system (Policy Document, 2007:23). To reinforce its claim this document projects a worst case scenario - civil-war, stating that in a political system where a certain political group attempts to change the incumbent by force, the Defence Force is duty bound to crush such rebellion, so as to protect the regime, and the constitutional system as well.

According to this document, this can be done by making the Defence Force being subservient to the ruling political party or it can be done by allowing the Defence Force to operate relatively outside the direct command of the ruling party. Thus, the document argued that, different political systems utilize different *modus-operandi* hence, it is not a matter of substance or content, rather it is a matter of form, as long as the Defence Force remains to be the ‘last barrack of defence’ for a given political system of any sort (Policy Document, 2007: 23).

In this document the concept of ‘Revolutionary Democracy’ has not been clearly defined or explained, thus, it remains difficult to understand what it means, and what it is up to. Although, this ideological buzzword dominates the diction of this particular policy document, it remains perilously ambiguous, even a curious reader can find none other than two mystifying words: ‘revolutionary and democracy’. However, one can easily sense that the document is indicative of E.P.R.D.F.s overbearing and strong zeal to control the Defence Force and the level of determination to maintain its patronage over the same institution. As we shall see it later, the other most repeated, but least understood phrase in this policy document is that “the Defence Force is the last barrack of Defence for the Revolutionary Democracy system”.

According to literatures, many scholars suggest different prototypes and variants of civil-military relations, implying that there is no-one best civil-military relations model that fits all. Indeed, the traditional Western models of civil-military relations conceptual architecture have been

challenged by many subsequent scholars, among the most eloquent being Rebecca L. Schiff (2009), Jon Rahbek Clemmenson (2013), Rocky Williams (1998), Peter D. Feaver (1999, 1997), Deane Peter Baker (2006), Michael Desch (1999).

Williams (1998:24), for example, argued that, the “*Institutional*” model of Samuel P. Huntington does not fit well to the exigencies of the African political landscape. According to him, real civilian control over the armed forces is wielded via a range of subjective interfaces and partnerships of which formal mechanisms are either a component or are, alternatively, merely the formal expression of these power relations, what he calls “*Collaborative partnership*” model of civil-military relations.

Schiff (2009), also argued that, effective subordination of the armed forces to civilian control is not a necessary outcome of the institutional separation of the armed forces from the civil authorities, rather effective civil-military relations are achieved via the extent to which the political, military and civil actors find agreement and accommodate one another in the definition of the values and objectives of the armed forces, what she calls “*Concordance*” model (1998:23).

Clemmenson (2013), on his part noted that, one cannot claim that one civil-military relation model is superior over another, rather choice of civil-military relations policy depends on the situational circumstances. He went on to argue that, though Huntington’s civil-military relations model looks impressive it lacks a coherent theoretical framework. In spite of the fact that these critics challenge those traditional civil-military relations models, articulated by Huntington on “The Soldier and the State” (1957), and Janowitz’s “The Professional Soldier” (1960), they are not dismissive of these traditional conceptual frameworks altogether, especially of those fundamental ones: “Professionalism or Objective Civilian control” and “Subjective Civilian Control” (Baker, 2006: 117-118). For example, Williams (1998: 25), acknowledges the relevance of Huntington’s theory with respect to the importance of “securing the professional and political separation of the armed forces from the body politic”.

All the contemporary critics seem to agree on the corporate identity of the armed forces, as being that of the professional, apolitical soldier, loyal to the government of the day and possessing its own value framework, without being subservient for a single political party. According to

Williams (1998:24), forexample, the armed forces eschew politics and concentrate their energies on developing and applying their functional military expertise. Feaver (1999: 228), also noted that, “objective control” and maximizing “professionalism” is best achieved by getting the military out of politics and similarly getting the politician out of the military that is getting the politicians out of directing tactical and operational matters.

Furthermore, these critics conceded that their subjective (non-institutional) mechanisms may not be premised on democratic civil-military relations and can include such arrangements as party penetration of the leadership echelons of the officer corps, ethnic manipulation of the composition of the officer corps to ensure loyalty, manipulation of the military mission to prevent its intrusion onto the party political terrain, monitoring the activities of the armed forces via other non-military intelligence agencies, and the establishment of security “counterbalances”, to the influence of the armed forces in the form of police, intelligence, or para-military agencies (Rahbek, 1998: 25, Feaver, 1999: 231).

At this juncture it is worth noting the cliché cited above “the military is the last barrack of defence for the /political system/Constitution”. In addition to the above cited policy document, in the Defence institution this often-repeated motto has been echoed by every military personnel starting from the top military brass up to the rank and file. Although, this phrase is one of the most cited maxims in the Defence Force no one seems certain on its precise meaning or its practical relevance.

As ambiguous as it is, one can guess it could simply mean that the military will provide assistance when all other security forces are overwhelmed in the course of protecting the constitutional order. Another can guess it could mean that the military will step-in when all State institutions fail the Constitution (Daniel, 2013). Or the military will fill the political vacuum whenever the civilian politicians create government paralyses or entangled in a political stalemate. Whatever the precise meaning of this mantra may be one thing seems clear; it resonates with what Daniel (2013), called the “custodian mindset of armed forces in post-colonial Africa”.

The crucial observation in our case is that, the government, the ruling party and the opposition parties have been irresponsible in their approach to civil military issues, which has always been

in terms of political gain rather than of national interests. In my view, the opposition parties are inexcusably irresponsible for their opposition to the Defence Force without ever articulating any realistic alternative to protect Ethiopia from security threats. Yet the ruling party and the government have also utterly failed to ensure the political neutrality of the Defence Force. In the end, both sides showed their reluctance on the issue by failing to lay a healthy foundation for solid civil-military relations.

To sum up, the evidences found from the present empirical survey and some studies suggest that the Defence Force's legitimacy is highly questioned when examined in light of partisanship and how the Defence reacted in some of the domestic political incidents that have occurred in recent memory. In contrast, the Defence's official perception is that the institution has been neutral from politics and is conducting its functions in a manner free from any partisanship. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a wide divergence in perception between the Defence institution and the majority of student, parent, veteran, and military personnel respondents on the issue under consideration.

3.4. Perceptions of Confidence

To examine the perception of respondents regarding their confidence on the capability of the F.D.R.E. Defence Force, different categories of respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the following statement "Our Defence Force is capable of protecting our country, do you agree? Hence, 257 preparatory students, answered this item using a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1= "strongly agree" to 5= "no opinion". Accordingly, 92 (35.8%) of them said "strongly agree", 151 (58.8%) said "agree", 3 (1.2%) said "strongly disagree", 5 (1.9%) said "disagree", and 6 (2.3%) said "no opinion".

The same proposition was posed to 21 Staff College officers, 20 (95.2%) of them said "strongly agree", 1 (4.8%) said "agree". Again, the same question posed to 14 veterans, 9 (64.3%) said "strongly agree", 5 (35.7%) said "agree". As the above descriptive statistics indicate there is a consensus with regard to the capability issue among all categories of respondents.

Moreover, I asked the preparatory students "Are you satisfied with the overall performance of the Defence Force?" Using a 4 point rating scale ranging from 1= "Very satisfied" to 4= "I don't

know”, 39 (15.2%) said “very satisfied”, 107 (41.6%) said “somewhat satisfied”, 35 (13.6%) said “not satisfied”, and 76 (29.6) said “I don’t know”.

To capture the ‘confidence’ item I also asked these preparatory students ““How do you rate the Defence Force’s contribution to the well-being of our country?”. Using a 4 point rating scale, 120 (46.7%) said “high”, 105 (40.9%) said “moderate”, 22 (8.5%) said “low”, and 10 (3.9%) said “don’t know”. The same question was posed to 14 veterans, and all of them (100%) chose “very high”.

The above statistics suggest that solid majority of respondents have favorable impression of the Defence Force with respect to its capability, contribution and overall performance. Indeed, the general impression from the data surely is one of consensus. Thus, no significant perception gap has been found with regard to confidence between the students, parents, veterans, military personnel and the Defence, albeit some variations in degree. Meaning the preparatory students seem more modest in their overall assessment than the Staff College officers and the veterans, of course, for obvious reasons, as the organizational attachment has something to do with it.

Regarding the general consensus on the positive evaluation, I feel this trend needs some explanation. Unlike the prestige issue, with regard to the question of confidence majority of respondents think that the Defence Force is capable of accomplishing its assignments. At first glance this seems contradictory to the data just analysed above suggesting that the Defence has low prestige and its legitimacy is questioned. However, this paradox can be easily understood if one keeps in mind that the respondents have made a clear distinction between the capabilities of the Defence Force and its prestige or legitimacy.

There might be several explanations for this positive perception and rating. According to my observation many respondents seem to be well-informed about the good track record of mission accomplishment of the Ethiopian military: its impressive record of battlefield success which has evolved from the armed struggle period and fought several wars against the Derg regime, Eritrea, as well as several domestic insurgent groups, which was very effective in tackling different kinds of threats since its inception.

Beyond a mere appreciation that the military is capable of doing what it is asked to do, many people also seem to know its *modus operandi* largely characterized by proactive strikes against

different external threats, especially those brewed from the hard-to-govern peripheral areas and Somalia. The Defence Force's good reputation in International or Regional peace keeping missions, in technology, in construction and in disaster relief works could also reinforce this positive impression. Hence, it would be difficult not to give due credit to the capability, efficiency and effectiveness of the Ethiopian Defence Force.

3.5. The Defence Force's Ethnic Composition

In Ethiopia, as a means of correcting historical injustices: political marginalization, ethnic inequality and economic exploitation ethnicity has been postulated as fundamental organizing principle in the new political dispensation that occurred since 1991. Therefore, in the Ethiopian federal system ethnic identity has become the most relevant identity in any social, political and economic life of the people (Frank, 2009: 3).

After, the adoption of the Federal constitution in 1995, the government continued a policy of ethnic balancing at all levels of the government in recognition of the impetus that accommodation of diversity is necessary, though its practical success is subject to controversy (ibid: 4-5). Joireman and Szayna (2000: 195), noted that, the E.P.R.D.F. led government has made an effort to open cabinet-level leadership and the composition of the Army to other ethnic groups but such measures are widely perceived as less than genuine if not an outright sham.

According to the F.D.R.E. Constitution, reflecting fair and equitable ethnic diversity in the national Defence Force is a matter of constitutional principle. The constitution under article 87/1 states that, "The composition of national armed forces shall reflect the equitable representation of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia". This principle is also underscored in the preamble of the Defence Force's proclamation N°809/2013 implying that, one of the major aims of this law is "[T]o embody the equitable representation of nations, nationalities and peoples ... (in the Defence Force)". The same principle was also underscored in the Defence Military Doctrine (1996: 52).

Literatures suggest that in a multi-ethnic state, the armed forces need to reflect adequately the composition of society, if the population is to have confidence in the armed forces, and if the armed forces are to be able to fulfill their mission effectively (DCAF, 2006: 1).

Heinecken (2009), for example argued that, it is a democratic imperative that the armed forces should be broadly representative of the populace with respect to ethnic composition, race, social class, religion and gender. She went on to say that there are a number of reasons why diversity management has assumed greater political prominence in military affairs.

According to her, the following are some of the major reasons among others: constitutional stipulation that prescribes more inclusive military is necessary, the need to preserve legitimacy in broader society, the desire to tackle the growing problems of recruitment, and retention associated with the shift to an all-volunteer force, the need to improve the effectiveness of the armed forces, especially in the field of humanitarian missions and the need to enhance civil-military cooperation (Heinecken, 2009).

In Ethiopia one can contemplate more or less similar reasons that stem from the constitutional commitment that recognizes and celebrates the value of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious diversity in public life, and the pragmatic reasons in gaining or maintaining legitimacy and effectiveness in the Defence Force (Defence Military Doctrine, 1996: 53).

According to DCAF (2006), for most countries, managing national and ethnic diversity in their military structures presents major challenges. This observation also holds true for Ethiopia, though, it is often down played in the official political discourse.

Heinecken (2009), for example warned that, for some accommodation of diversity may seem a minor issue as compared to other Defence priorities, yet it could have unintended ramifications for the Defence and for the country concerned as well. She further cautioned that, not only a lack of sensitivity to diversity issues increase misperceptions, leading to discontent, discrimination, ill-discipline and poor workplace relations but it also affects the operational effectiveness and legitimacy of the armed forces.

Before examining the ethnic composition of the Ethiopian Defence Force it is important to look at the table below to put the composition issue in perspective. The table provides the top ten populous ethnic groups in Ethiopia based on the 2007 CSA's census.

S/No	Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
1	Oromo	25,488,344	34.5
2	Amhara	19,867,817	26.9
3	Somali	4,581,793	6.2
4	Tigray	4,483,776	6.1
5	Sidama	2,966,377	4.0
6	Gurage	1,867,350	2.5
7	Welayta	1,707,074	2.3
8	Hadiya	1,284,366	1.7
9	Afar	1,276,372	1.7
10	Gamo	1,107,163	1.5

Source: F.D.R.E. Central Statistics Agency: 2007

What does the Defence Force look like in terms of ethnic composition? The following data gathered from the Defence Human Resource (2015), may provide ready indications in this regard.

Out of the total number of Private soldiers in the Defence Force, Oromo holds the first place which accounts 38.2%, followed by S.N.N.P. which accounts 24.7%, Amhara 22%, Tigray 10.8%, and other ethnic groups represent 4.3%. The distribution of ethnic groups at this particular rank seems to suggest a fair representation given the fact that Oromo is the largest ethnic group. With respect to Lance Corporals S.N.N.P. stood first 31.7%, followed by Amhara 30.2%, Oromo 23.2%, Tigray 9.2%, and others 5.7%. In the case of Corporals again S.N.N.P. stood first 31.3%, followed by Oromo 27.5%, Amhara 24.7%, Tigray 12.3%, and others 4.2%.

Here I would like to remind that, S.N.N.P. is taken as a single group for convenience purpose. In order to reduce the impact of this shortcoming, I have attempted to show some of the ethnic groups who belong to S.N.N.P. that represent significant percentage of military personnel in all ranks. Hence, from the S.N.N.P., in these three ranks (Private, L/Corporal and Corporal) Wolayta ethnic group holds the majority followed by Sidama.

When we look at Sergeant rank, still S.N.N.P. stood first representing 28%, followed by Oromo 25.8%, Amhara 24.6%, Tigray 18%, and others 3.6%. With regard to Master Sergeants, Amhara stood first 36%, followed by Oromo 26.5%, S.N.N.P. 20.6%, Tigray 14.2%, and others 2.7%.

From the S.N.N.P. in both ranks (Sergeant and Master Sergeant) still Wolayta ethnic group holds the majority followed by Sidama.

As can be gleaned from the above statistics, S.N.N.P. only leads at the Lance Corporal, Corporal and Sergeant ranks, yet it will be dominated by other ethnic groups all the way up starting from the Master Sergeant rank. This trend is likely to fuel the prevailing perceptions that ethnic composition of the officer corps is dominated by a single ethnic group.

At the 2nd Lieutenant rank, Amhara stood first representing 36%, followed by Oromo 23%, Tigray 21%, S.N.N.P. 18% and others 2%. At the Lieutenant rank once again Amhara stood first representing 35%, followed by Tigray 24.3%, Oromo 20.7%, S.N.N.P. 16.7% and others 3.3%. From the S.N.N.P. it is interesting to see that still Wolayta ethnic group holds the majority of officers in these three ranks, but Sidama is overtaken by Silte ethnic group, except in the case of 2nd Lieutenants. With regard to the percentage of Captains Tigray holds the first place representing 36.7%, followed by Amhara 29.3%, Oromo 18.7%, S,N,N,P, 12.8%, and others 2.5%. It is also instructive that the pattern of imbalance fundamentally shifts starting from this particular rank all the way up.

When we look at the rank of Major, Tigray stood first representing 65.7 %, followed by Amhara 16.2%, Oromo 12.8%, Silte 0.7%, Wolayta 0.6%, Hadiya 0.3%, Agew 0.2%, Somali 0.2%, and others 3.3%. At the Lt/Colonel rank, once again Tigray stood first representing 62.9% o, followed by Amhara 18.7%, Oromo 15.5%, Wolayta 0.8%, Agew 0.6%, and others 1.5%.

With regard to the percentage of Colonels, Tigray holds the first place representing 59.7%, followed by Amhara 20.6%, Oromo 13.9%, Agew 1.5%, Silte 0.8%, Hadiya 0.7%, Wolayta 0.6%, Sidama 0.4%, and others 1.8%. It is very interesting to see how the ethnic groups shift positions when it comes to the higher officer ranks.

At the Brigadier General rank, Tigray holds the first place representing 42 %, followed by Oromo 25.8%, Amhara 17.8%, Agew 3.2%, Sidama 3.2%, Gofa 1.6%, Keficho 1.6%, Gamo 1.6%, Hadiya 1.6%, and Kembata 1.6%.

It is also very interesting to see that, comparing with other S.N.N.P. ethnic groups Wolayta has greater share in the soldiers, NCOs, junior officers' ranks, yet at the Major and Colonel ranks it

is overtaken by Silte; at the Brigadier Generals level unlike other major S.N.N.P. ethnic groups such as (Sidama, Hadiya and Kembata) Wolayta represents none.

At the Major General rank, Tigray holds the first place representing 64.3%, followed by Agew 21.4%, and Amhara 14.3%. Once again it is stunning to note there is no Oromo at this particular rank. With regard to Lieutenant General rank, still Tigray holds the first place representing 50% of Lieutenant Generals, followed Amhara 25% and Oromo 25% (*See, annex-L, tables 6-10*).

It is also worth noting, even among the major ethnic groups there is a wide margin, particularly, at higher officers' level which may cause a concern. In fact, the imbalance at the Senior Colonel and General ranks has historical roots as many of the members of Tigray, Amhara, and Agew ethnic groups were former middle or senior fighters during the armed struggle. However, at this point the skeptical reader is certainly entitled to ask "After 25 years, how is it possible to justify the Defence Force is unable to get the ethnic composition right, especially at the junior and middle rank officer corps? With some justice, at least part of the explanation for that lies in the lack of commitment for building a truly diversified force at all levels.

Ouedraogo (2014:16), remarked that, "a military organized around ethnic or tribal biases cannot defend the nation, much less the population. Instead, it can only defend narrow group interests". He further argued that, such kind of military is likely to face serious deficit in popular trust, legitimacy, and competency or merit that hinder its effectiveness. He went on to state that, in many African countries it is unfortunate to see the structure of the Armed Forces is still based on ethnic or tribal biases.

Other literatures also suggest that, a military composed of troops from communities across the country can create a strong foundation upon which a democratic State can built. A diversified force also creates conditions favorable to the professionalization of the armed forces as advancements are more likely to be merit-based rather than ethnic based, and allegiance would be to the nation as a whole rather than to a particular group (DCAF, 2006).

Although, no official information was available on the ethnic composition of the previous (monarch and military) governments' army officer corps, one unofficial source claimed that, in the early 1970s about 65 percent of officers at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and above were

Amhara, whereas 20 percent were Oromo. Below Lieutenant Colonel, 60 percent of officers belong to Amhara, while 30 percent were Oromo (Joireman and Szayna, 2000: 195).

According to same source, estimates published in the late 1970s suggested that 50 percent of the officer corps was Amhara, 20 percent Tigray, and 30 percent Oromo and Eritrean. This source added that, in the late 1970s, the ethnic composition of the enlisted (lower) ranks in the army was about 33 percent Amhara, 33 percent Oromo, and 25 percent Tigray, with the remainder coming from other groups (ibid). Though, this source does seem to suggest some factual figures, especially at the officer corps level, the figures at the enlisted level are questionable given the fact that significant number of army personnel were also drawn from different ethnic groups of the southern Ethiopia provinces.

In the contemporary Ethiopia, an ethnically diverse military that is more representative of its society is not a generous altruism, but it is a constitutional imperative. However, as the available data suggest one can get a sense of glaring ethnic imbalance in the Ethiopian Defence Force, especially at the officer corps level.

For that matter, in a country where ethnicity is highly pronounced and is central feature of national politics, the ethnic origins of military officers are presumably more than just a matter of statistical curiosity. In fact, this author knows that there are attempts done by the current Ethiopian Defence Force to correct the ethnic imbalance by giving rapid promotions to those who have been disadvantaged on ethnic considerations. *

However, with good intentions, the problem with such affirmative action-like initiative has produced limited results and reportedly compromise merit and professionalism; because such a scheme lacks competitiveness and does not depend on a large pool of qualified candidates. Some focus group participants expressed that in the Defence institution rank alone did not necessarily indicate an officer's importance. These participants also mentioned that there is apparent dissatisfaction from those who benefit from such generous promotions reportedly being assigned on less glamorous positions and from those who expect to be promoted owing to their ethnic origin, yet have not been considered at all. Therefore, I argue that, getting the numbers right means nothing, if those representing the numbers are not really competent, valued and respected

* For Example, one can get a sense of this ethnic consideration from the 2012 promotions to General rank.

by their superiors, peers, and subordinates. An institution that plays the numbers game tends to lose personnel confidence, so does from the public.

In this chapter, the analysis shows that the most obvious explanation for the low prestige of the military profession and the Defence institution is: low salary and and poor quality of life of the active duty military personnel and inadequate support, lack of respect and recognition to the veterans. Specifically, serious examination of the available data shows that the cost of joining the army does not match perceived benefits. As expressed from the outset, while the analysis does not directly address all of the potential factors that impact prestige, it provides a way to contextualize salary and other incentives so that decision-makers can decide how much and in what form the Defence institution should pay or incentivize its military personnel.

Moreover, beneath the superficial responses to an institutional support item, it has surfaced that public perception of the Defence Force with respect to legitimacy is less certain. Although, the charge of partisanship is not new and the military has always been implicated to politics, the level of perception has never been subjected to systematic scrutiny. Thus, beyond the lip service paid to the principle of non-partisanship, there is a wide gap in perception on the practical workings of the principle and what it means in the day-to-day context of the Defence Force. The analysis hence suggests that the legitimacy of the Defence may not be solid and stable as commonly reported on the mainstream media.

The above analysis also revealed that, confidence on the capability of the Defence Force remained strong even though, the Defence is not attractive or prestigious. This is due largely to its impressive track record in mission accomplishment. It is also interesting to note that the Defence Force is characterized by marked ethnic imbalance at the officer level ever since its formation, yet there seems reluctance to reduce such deficiency before it affects its legitimacy. Although, the aim of the constitutional principle “equitable ethnic representation” in the armed forces is to sustain diversity and achieving the highest level of organizational effectiveness, in the areas of recruitment, retention, assignments, and promotions, the Defence is short of meeting its declared commitment, which is likely to affect its legitimacy.

While the findings do not suggest any civil-military crisis or unbridgeable gap in the issue areas, they do suggest that the perceived concerns expressed by the respondents are worthy of note to

inculcate robust civil-military relations culture and building professional Defence Force. Following from the above analysis, chapter four below discusses and interpretes the perception gap that prevailed thus far.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion and Interpretation of the Perception Gap

4.1. Recruitment Challenges

One of the consequences of the low prestige is that the Defence Force has faced challenges with regard to attracting highly motivated and talented recruits. In this title ‘propensity to serve’ refers to whether an individual indicates interest in military service. According to available data explored below, recent years have seen a decline in propensity for military service, particularly among young Ethiopian urban men and women.

In 2009, the Defense Human Resource Main Department conducted a study in all Regional States including Dire Dawa, with regard to the youth interest in military service. In this study the participants were representative samples drawn from Zonal and Wereda local authorities, high school students and parents of young men and women. The study identified numerous factors that might explain the decline in propensity.

The quantitative and qualitative data from the study and my own survey provide an indication of the prevalence of various factors in the youth and parental population, of differences of perceptions between the civilians and the Defence, Force. These data are examined to determine to what degree these factors account for either the recent decline in propensity or for differences in interest in military service in the Regional States. The key propensity measure in the study is based on a series of questions asking the youth the likelihood that they will be serving in the Army.

The Defence Human Resource Main Department study (2009:49-50) shows that all Regional States have had difficulties in meeting their recruitment targets. For example, In 2006, recruitment cycle S.N.N.P. met 55%, Tigray 52%, Oromia 42%, and Amhara 21.6%. In 2007 recruitment cycle S.N.N.P. met 65%, Oromia 56%, Tigray 50%, Amhara 38%, and Afar 5%. In 2007 second recruitment cycle S.N.N.P. 48%, Oromia 37%, Tigray 21% and Amhara 16%. According to Defence Human Resource reports (2015), the decline in propensity is persistent to

this date. It seems plausible that the shortfall in recruitment targets have been caused partly by declines in prestige and legitimacy.

As can be gleaned from the Defence's survey (2009:62), the lowest level of interest to join the military by the youth is registered in Tigray Regional State, followed by Amhara, S.N.N.P. and Oromia respectively. In these Regional States the total percentage of respondents (local authorities) who said the propensity to join the military is "very high and high", accounting 39%, whereas those who said "very low and low", accounting 59% (*See, Annex-L, Table 12*).

According to the same survey, the level of interest for military service in the less developed Regional States did also showed more or less the same trend. Thus, Hareri's youth showed the lowest level of interest for military service, followed by Dire Dawa, Gambella, Ben-Shangul-Gumuz, Somali and Afar respectively. In these less developed Regional States the total percentage of respondents who said the propensity to join the military is "very high and high", account 38.6%, whereas those who said "very low and low", account 57.4%. Thus, in both categories of Regional States the youth's interest to give military service or to join the Defence is at best "low" at worst "very low".

According to the Defence Human Resource Main Department study (2009: 51), local authorities from Amhara Regional State participated in the study indicated that, the major reasons for the declining interest in military service were: "the perception held by some people that the Defence institution is dominated by a single ethnic group, Defence is serving only the interest of the ruling party, current government officials are maintaining their power by sending the disadvantaged poor to risky business (military service) *parenthesis added*, the larger public is becoming a victim of opposition political parties' damaging propaganda that discourages the youth to join the military.

In addition, the study also identified supplementary reasons reflected by Amhara Zonal and Wereda Security and Militia Sector local authorities: "the public does not consider the military profession as a viable career option, the public assumes that those who join are immediately deployed to war zone as if death is their ultimate destiny, the public perceives those who join the military are people who don't have other options, and the military is for the poor and illiterate". Moreover, the lack of incentives in the defence, lack of support for veterans, the unwillingness of

the defence to discharge those who request release upon the completion of their contractual service term also contribute to the persistent decline. As a result of these many parents are highly influencing and discouraging their children not to join the military.

In this survey (2009:52), it has been also described that, local authorities from Tigray Regional State indicated that, those who were fighters during the armed struggle were not properly rehabilitated as a result they endured harsh economic hardship, they felt betrayed, the Defence institution pays very low salary to the active duty personnel, which does not commensurate with the amount of sacrifice and hard ship they are undergoing.

These local authorities reportedly added that, the Defence does not compensate properly for those who are maimed while on combat duties, it does not provide proper compensation or support for the families of those who have fallen on battlefields. Many of those who returned from military service also convey a negative message about the treatment they get from the Defence and the government, and they warned young adults saying “ take a lesson from us” implying don’t join the military.

I have found consistent response from my two veteran interviewees. These interviewees have expressed that “the deplorable life that we are living itself is enough to convey a negative image of the Defence”. They went on to say that, “while the government provides resettlement benefits for former anti-peace elements who came from Eritrea by way of amnesty, yet it fails to provide the same treatment to its veterans”. One of the interviewees added that, “I have 18 years old son he often asked me that, you are a wounded veteran, you have sacrificed a lot for the sake of your country, why is the government sent you off without any kind of retirement benefit?”

The Defence study (2009), revealed that in Oromia Regional State and S.N.N.P.: low salary, dislike regimented life, low impression for military profession, yearning for other opportunities, including migrating abroad, were cited by local authorities as probable reasons for declining interest. In the rest Regional States though, to a lesser degree respondents from the Zonal and Wereda Security and Militia Sector local authorities reflected similar reasons.

This study (2009:65), also presents the young adults’ reasons for the declining interest for military service. Some of the reasons cited by young-adult respondents were: dislike to regimented life, dangers associated with combat mission, low impression for military profession,

perceiving the military service as a job for the illiterate, not willing to go far away from home, seeking other opportunities (such as small and micro industries), other career interests, being hostage of opposition parties detrimental propaganda, and lack of awareness about the constitution. This study discovered that more or less common responses in my survey are consistent with the evidences revealed by the Defence's own study.

In the questionnaires preparatory student respondents have been asked whether they consider joining the military. Out of 257 respondents 231 (90%) said "I don't want", only 25 (9.7%) said "I want to join" 1 didn't respond. Stating their reasons for such attitude, solid majority 153 (66.2%) of these respondents said that they have "more attractive opportunities elsewhere" suggesting they see a university education as indispensable in gaining job security and they see military service as inconsistent with their goal to pursue higher education; others offered reasons tabulated as "dislike military life" (9.5%), "low salary" (7.4%), "fear of death/injury" (6.5%), "length of commitment" (5.2%), and "other opinion" (5.2%).

In relation to this, I have asked the Palace Guard NCOs and soldiers "How do you evaluate young adults' interest for military service?" Out of 13 respondents 4 said "very low", 6 said "low", 2 said "high", and 1 said "very high". Moreover, parents were asked of the preparatory students whether they think that these young adults have high interest for military service. Out of 8 parents, 5 said "they have moderate interest", 2 said "not interested at all", and only 1 said "have high interest".

The decline in interest also seems to push the Defence Force to appeal to a wide pool of economically and educationally disadvantaged, and to recruit those who considered 'trouble makers' and 'vagabonds' by the local community (Defence Human Resource Study, 2009). The same study revealed that, with rising living costs and unsuccessful for college entry, some youth have been willing to provide military service because they could not find suitable work in the cities and for others because of their desire to get some life skills or vocation in the Defence (ibid).

In fact, recruiters may not explicitly target "the poor," but there is mounting evidence that recruits are drawn from those whose career options are severely limited. The fact of the matter is

that the Defence tends to focus on those youth with few other outlets besides the military and economic pressure seems an undeniable motivation for those who decide to serve in the military.

To support this observation with empirical evidence Staff College officers were asked whether they think that overwhelming majority of the military personnel are from economically disadvantaged poor. All 21 respondents answered positively that, overwhelming majority of the military personnel are from economically disadvantaged background.

In relation to the above question the same respondents were asked whether they think the poor-rich compositional gap is attributed to the poor incentive on the part of the Defence, where 15 (71.5%) of them said “yes”, and 6 (28.5%) of them said “no”. Likewise, the same respondents have been asked whether they think the Defence is lowering its standards to solve its recruiting shortfalls, where 14 (66.7%) of them said “yes”, 2 (9.5%) said “no”, and 5 (23.8%) said “do not know”.

These data and the Defence’s own study suggest that the Defence is lowering its standards to meet its recruiting goals. According to the Defence study (2009: 132), recruitment irregularities are common; recruiters only focus to fulfill the quota they are supposed to meet and recklessly recruit people with some physical or mental disability, ex-soldiers, married men, over age, under age, recidivists and the like. Thus, the implication of low prestige means it led to less qualified, unmotivated, and ill-disciplined personnel in the end it is likely to affect retention and operational effectiveness.

Generally, it can be said that the interest in the armed forces is declining, especially among young people. As can be inferred from the Defence study (2009), the interest in becoming a soldier is lower, not only in the capital, but also in all regional states. The economic background of those serving in the military depicts exactly who will have to fight and die in defence of the nation seems to be determined by economic class.

The evidences suggest that, declining in propensity between urban youth and rural youth does not have significant difference, except variation of degree. Therefore, the Defence’s claim that most youth join due to the desire to "serve their country" does not sound convincing. Under conditions of economic hardship, intense political and social uncertainty, the traditional appeal to Ethiopian patriotism no longer resonates among Ethiopia’s youth. While patriotism may not be

totally underestimated as a motive for service, even, the Defence's own survey (2009), shows that the “sense of duty to serve country” motivates only a tiny portion of recruits.

Furthermore, the change of values in society is influencing the way on how the Defence Force is accepted and on how the gap between existing social values and military culture is increasing. Here, I am not to differentially valorize civilian culture over military culture or the other way around, nor to provide a comprehensive definition of the term-culture. Nonetheless, I found it necessary to borrow a short pragmatic definition of culture from Matsumoto (1996:16, as cited in Oatey 2012: 1). He defines culture as “the set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors shared by a group of people...”. This definition seems to fit well with what is intended to highlight below as regards the change in societal culture vis `a vis the Defence Force’s sense of “calling”.

The changed values in society seem to generate additional pressure on the Defence Force. Currently, the youth’s sense of “calling”, “duty”, “sacrifice”, and “service oriented” attitudes and values seem to diminish. Besides its entrepreneurial efforts, the contemporary youth do not seem to spare any chance of getting quick money, even daring to migrate through illicit routes risking their lives.

As will be illustrated below, there is a change in value even within the Defence itself, many soldiers see the military assignment as a normal job, which they commit themselves for a limited period of time. Indeed, as can be gathered from the focus group discussions, the present time recruits and fresh military personnel are prepared to serve for a while but, not, however, for a lifelong commitment to the Defence. The expressed opinions by respondent soldiers, NCOs and even junior officers clearly indicate that the military is losing its character as a special institution and that it is becoming a normal civil service.

In order to substantiate the above observation, the Palace Guard NCOs and soldiers were asked “Are you determined to serve until your retirement age? Out of 13 respondents, 6 said “yes, I do” and 7 said “no, I do not”. Many of those who are not willing to serve until retirement age expressed that, “they do not see bright future (economically) in the service”, according to them staying in service until old age is allowing “irreversible impoverishment”, so they are waiting for the completion of their contractual term of duty.

One should bear in mind that these respondents are assigned in Addis Ababa a relatively better duty post; the trend of leaving the service is likely to be worse in those military personnel who are assigned at frontlines and in high tempo operational tasks. Staff College Senior officers ranking from Major up to Colonel were posed the same question, in a stark difference from the rank and file, all of them (100%) said “yes, I do”.

As far as committing oneself for long service time is concerned, the junior officer class is relatively stable, and the higher officer class is much better, as compared to private and NCOs. Thus, the reasons for having such divergent attitude between the soldiers and officers seem to depend on rank, task and perceived future benefits. In order to explore this divergence further I asked the Staff College officers “What motivating factors were there for them to stay in the military service? These 21 respondents were offered seven options in answering the question, thus, 9 of them chose “UN peace keeping benefit”, 3 chose “education opportunity” 9 offer “other reasons”- to be precise, 6 of them said “given my long service years, I would like to secure my pension allowance”, 2 said “to serve my country”, and 1 said “I have no other option”.

Here, regarding the senior officers, one can sense three main determining factors for their choice to stay in the military until retirement age, namely- peace keeping benefit, expectation of good training and education opportunity, and securing pension benefit, a solid majority (85.7%), yet, “a general interest in the military” or “serving one’s country” accounted tiny minority (9.5%).

On the economic level the Defence Force is confronted with the present relatively competitive employment situation. It has to face market and compete with private construction and service industries, agri-business, and micro-enterprises for suitable human resources. Hereby, it can often only offer inadequate financial and non-monetary incentives. It is a terrible irony to observe that, even those youth who are unemployed with a slim chance of getting another decent job do not want to serve in the military.

According to some studies youth unemployment continues to be one of the serious social problems in Ethiopia despite some improvements in recent years (CSA, 2014: 220, 222, Nayak, 2014:34). Hence, one may assume that during such high unemployment climate recruitment is much easier. However, as was observed, this high unemployment rate does not always yield a positive contribution for recruitment due to the fact that not every person who is unemployed is

also interested in a military career. Therefore, youth unemployment does not necessarily determine a direct increase of the recruitment rate.

At this juncture it is important to ask how 'public support' manifests itself in the event of declining interest for military service. These days public support for the Defence Force seems illusive to comprehend. In order to explore this item I asked parents whether they think currently the Defence Force is enjoying high popular support. Out of eight respondents, 2 said "yes", 1 said "not at all" and 5 said is getting "moderate support". Again, those who said "yes, it is enjoying high support and moderate support" have been asked to provide explanations for their claim, where 4 of them said the public offers "moral support", and 3 said "it is difficult to explain in concrete terms". Staff College officers were asked a related question "How do you rate the public support to the Defence Force? In response, 3 of them said "high" and 18 said "moderate". Once again I asked these officers to substantiate the claimed public support for the military, where 19 of them said "not that concrete", and 2 said it can be explained "through recruitment".

In the focus group discussions, junior officers in particular felt that during the Ethio-Eritrean war public support was very strong as public emotions run high due to the visible engagements, yet after the war came to an end it begun to fade from memory. In my opinion, although public support might not be based on a full understanding of the Defence institution, offering some kind of support needs some level of information or interest.

However, preparatory student respondents seem readily admitted their ignorance, when they were asked "How often do you follow about the F.D.R.E. Defence Force or military issues? Out of 257 respondents, 13 said "follow always", 56 said "sometimes", 116 (45%) said "incidentally", and 72 (28%) said "not at all". As can be gathered from the responses majority (73%) of them are poorly informed about the Defence Force's overall activities and the day-to-day life of the its members: the hardship they are undergoing and the sacrifices they are paying. Therefore, one can see the level of indifference on the part of the public towards the Defence Force.

In the focus group discussions, military personnel generally felt that public attitude towards the Defence is positive, though; it is not readily expressed in concrete terms. Some of the participants recalling one exhibition organized by the Defence three years ago during the Army

Day ceremony, claiming that event had left a positive impact on what the public thinks of the Defence Force.

In fact, many of these respondents conceded that such improvement was not thought to be universal, and there is more to be done to improve the overall public perception of the Defence and the military profession. Some participants expressed that when they go out to cities or towns in uniform the reception they received from the general public is not that positive. Some of them also said that even in the absence of any negative attitude from the public they don't wear their uniform outside their duty post because they preferred not to stand out as a member of the Defence Force.

A colleague of this author (Civil claims officer) said that he had encountered negative reactions from some Court Judges in Addis Ababa and Adama when he appeared in uniform for litigation. Most of the focus group participants agreed that the choice not to wear military uniform in public areas is largely due to the individual preference of the military personnel rather than the perceived negative public reaction, yet minority argued that their uniforms sometimes attracted unease, if not disrespect from the public, claiming that even requesting some ordinary service while in uniform sends a wrong message to the requested person and met with negativity.

In sum, the widening gap in perception, if not in reality between the respondents and the Defence seem to have a wide ranging implications, especially, low salary and unfavorable living conditions have undoubtedly contributed to the declining interest in military service among the young adults as well as the parent population, that ultimately have a profound implication on recruitment. The widely claimed public support for the Defence Force also seems more of a lip service than based on a concrete desire to be helpful.

The way the respondents perceive the Defence Force and the military profession also does seem to have an impact on shaping the self-perception of the members of the Defence Force because the prestige that the wider public attributes to their institution is likely to have a strong influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In general, the available data suggest that, public support to the Defence remains an abstract notion and the connections Defence and the broader civilian population appear to be growing more distant, save those who have family members currently serving in the Defence Force.

4.2. Retention Challenges

The second implication of the low prestige of a military profession is the problem of retention which is widely felt in the Defence institution. With the exception of the higher officers, the Defence Force continues to suffer from severe shortage of manpower. For example, the Defence Human Resources data (2015) showed that, the four Commands were short on infantry personnel by 47%, combat service by 13%, and mechanized by 9%.

According to Defence human resource data (2015), between 2008 and 2015 the number of military personnel who left the service by desertion was 51, 810 majority of them Privates, Lance Corporals and Corporals. According to the same source, in the last 16 years 192, 416 have left the institution through legal and illegal means, of course, this figure includes those who left by retirement. However, many of them have left well before their retirement age, and this figure by far exceeds the current total number of military personnel in the Defence Force.

In the Defence Military Justice Department evaluation report (2016), desertion is the most recurring crime in the entire institution. According to this report, in the Central Command desertion accounts 36.8%, in Northern Command 35.2%, in Southern-East Command 31.8%, in Western Command 38.5%, and in the Air Force 16.7%. Another Human Resource data (2015) showed that, in a time period of four years, from 2011 up to 2014, 22,808 military personnel have quitted service by desertion.

According to the Defence study (2009), Defence evaluation (2015) and my observations, a variety of factors contribute to low retention: low salary, poor living conditions, leadership failure, human resources issues and job dissatisfaction. According to the focus group participants, other factors that may be negatively impacting the Defence Force retention are: the stress of frequent often unexpected deployments and long commitment that led to burnout, exhaustion, and battle fatigue. High operations tempo seems to jeopardize the already understaffed units that are supposed to undertake more missions that last longer. This dramatic increase in the deployment of Ethiopia's armed forces, without making any incentives to boost their morale, has had a detrimental effect on the overall combat readiness.

The survey also suggests that unmet expectations may be attributed to intentions to quit and turnover. For example, Staff College officers were asked, "Do the military personnel leave the

army before they are eligible to discharge or retire?” Out of 21 respondents 19 (90.5%) of them said “yes, there are many”, 2 said “they are few”. I also asked the same question to Palace Guard NCOs and soldiers, out of 13 respondents 10 (77%) said “yes, there are many”, and 3 said “they are few”. In relation to this I asked the Staff College respondents who said “yes”, “What are the factors that might explain the high attrition from service?” Out of the 19 respondents, 13 (68.5%) of them chose “unrealistic expectations”, 3 said “low salary”, and 3 chose “desperation on future career”.

The Defence Human Resource data (2015), showed that majority of deserters are relatively new comers. New comers enter the defence institution with a set of expectations because the expectations are formed prior to their entry, it is likely that they will not often be met and new comers may suffer from a so-called “reality shock”, if the discrepancy or gap between anticipatory expectations and the organizational reality is high.

According to Defence Human Resource officer, who wishes to remain unnamed (2015), many of the military's brightest and most talented military personnel, especially, engineers and medical professionals are leaving to find higher-paying jobs in the private sector. Even the Air Force, which historically does not suffer from recruiting or retention problems, has begun to have retention problems, due largely to a low salary and poor living condition.

Substandard housing is also another problem for morale because it has an immediate impact on military personnel and their families. While there are plans and concrete efforts to alleviate housing problems the availability is by far inadequate. Moreover, military personnel are continually forced to purchase their military uniform which often exacerbates their frustration.

Furthermore, according to the survey, most of the soldiers and NCOs were dissatisfied with the salary they earn and living conditions they are in and intended to leave the military after their current obligation or term of service ended. Due to these problems more and more low ranking military personnel are not willing to extend their contracts, as a result in many occasions the Defence institution resorted to impose “Stop Loss” measures on those who complete their contractual service time delaying their discharge for years.

For that matter the retention problem is not confined to the military personnel, many more civilian employees in the Defence have left the institution; most often after serving for an

average of two years (Defence Strategic Plan 2011-2015). According to my observations, many of these civilians were fresh employees (save gardeners and Cleaners) seeking to secure work experience in the Defence, then decide to leave in search of better paying employers. So, their major motive to join the Defence is to get work experience and sometimes to get free education opportunity, yet once they secured one or both they decide to quit.

The Reserve Force was also supposed to play an increasingly important role by maintaining a stable manpower pool, and reinforcing retention. However, judging from its performance, this institution does not seem up to the task, because it is insufficiently staffed, poorly organized and it lacks leadership (Defence Strategic Plan, 2008-2012 E.C.).

In recent times, I have seen significant changes in the quota and frequency of the recruitment cycle. The Defence has made call ups for recruitment twice a year in order to make up the manpower shortage resulted in by the constant attrition. However, there is a huge cost associated with such recruitment decision in the sense that it will not only be felt financially to train the new entrants, but also is necessitated by losing the already well-trained, battle proven and experienced personnel (Human Resource Officer, personal communication, January, 17/2016).

As military operations and their enabling technologies become increasingly sophisticated and complex, the training required to master them demands even more time and resources. Thus, in my view it is more effective and efficient to retain trained personnel by motivating them to remain in the service than it is to recruit and train replacements. Recruiting and training activities are both resource and time intensive, and limited assets are available to perform them. This reinforces the requirement to make continued military career attractive by providing adequate salaries and benefits, especially for the skilled personnel.

According to Gordon (2008: 10), these days tenure and performance of personnel are critical success factors of any human resource function. This also holds true for the Defence, since existing military personnel do have the right competencies, right attitude and cultural fit for the job, hence the institution should device strategies to retain these qualified personnel rather than resort to frequent call ups in search of fresh recruits. It seems odd that an institution that claims to regard “personnel as its most important asset”, does not adequately measure the cost of acquiring or losing that asset.

As it stands now, low retention presents the Defence with a series of challenges to maintain combat readiness. While there are clear signs that manpower readiness is a problem for the Defence Force, it is factually correct that Ethiopia's military has a gratifying record in mission accomplishment internal and abroad. However, our readiness can not be gauged by comparing Ethiopia's armed forces with neighboring states' weak militaries. Instead, the capability of Ethiopian Defence Force to support Ethiopia's national security requirements should be the measure of Ethiopia's military readiness. Such a standard is necessary because Ethiopia may confront threats from many different actors external and internal at once. Thus, I argue that the Ethiopian Defence Force operational readiness is uncertain given the volatility of the region, the persistent threat from Eritrea, other actual or potential adversaries and the looming local insecurity.

Here, I am not to evaluate the complex issues of military readiness in general, nonetheless, a few things should be clear; to fight effectively, the Defence Force must be manned, equipped, and trained to operate under dangerous, complex, uncertain, and austere conditions often with little warning. It requires the right personnel operating the right equipment with the right training to win. The most modern equipment is useless without highly trained personnel to operate and employ it. In addition to equipment, quality personnel with appropriate skills, ranks, and numbers are the most essential ingredients of combat readiness. The challenge, facing the Ethiopian Defence now is to provide appropriate incentives to retain the required numbers of quality personnel and to make the military career attractive.

Ethiopia's national security requirements dictate that the Defence Force must be prepared to defeat groups of adversaries from abroad and from within (Alemayehu, 2009: 6), and this needs manpower in sufficient quality and quantity. Ethiopia, as it aspires to continue playing a key role in the region, ensuring its military readiness should be taken seriously.

The evidences indicate that the Defence Force as it stands now does not seem satisfactorily ready in terms of manpower requirements. Moreover, regarding the broader capability to defeat groups of enemies, military readiness is likely to be affected given our missions often demand human intensive operations. The Defence Strategic Plan (2008-2012 E.C.), concludes that Ethiopia must have the capability to deter and, if deterrence fails, defeat large-scale, cross-border aggression

and internal security threats in overlapping time frames, yet needless to mention other deficiencies, the Defence does not seem fully equipped with adequate and motivated manpower.

Military readiness is vital because declines in Ethiopia's military readiness signal to the rest of the region that Ethiopia is not prepared to defend its interests. Therefore, potentially hostile nations and local insurgents will be more likely to lash out against Ethiopia's interests; inevitably leading to Ethiopia's involvement in prolonged armed conflict. A high state of military readiness is more likely to deter potentially hostile nations and non-state actors from acting aggressively against vital national interest, thereby preserving peace. At this juncture a critical reader may recall previous lessons learned from Ethiopia-Eritrea war (1998) and Ethiopia-Somalia war (1977) that incurred heavy price on the unprepared Ethiopian Forces (Alemayehu, 2009: 7).

To sum up, the above data are self-evident and telling how retention is becoming increasingly difficult and is often seen as a larger problem than recruiting itself in the Defence institution. The available data showed that, the Ethiopian Defence Force has registered a significant rise in turnover of military personnel since 2000. As a member of the institution I have witnessed that large numbers of my contemporaries decide to leave the institution over the years, and I have heard their individual reasons. Many of these, especially, those NCOs who enlisted during the Ethiopia-Eritrea war (1998), were great soldiers and their separation is truly a loss for the Defence.

Retention plays a significant role in maintaining the right number and experience mix of people in the Defence however; to date the Defence has not made any significant improvement to mitigate the high attrition, which mounts pressure on the existing combat personnel. Military personnel are the Defence's greatest asset; a ready Ethiopian military requires bright, well-trained, and highly motivated active and reserve personnel. Unfortunately, due largely to low prestige and lack of incentive the Defence institution is finding it difficult to retain military personnel in appropriate number and quality. There is no single point solution to improve retention. Defence retention rests in a combined approach, one that strategically considers military personnel's overall well-being to include improving organizational climate and quality of life. These in turn enhance sense of mission, job satisfaction, and trust in leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1. Conclusion

The motivation that sparked my curiosity to examine the public-military perception gap is the expectation to understand the extent of the difference in, values, attitudes, opinions, perspectives and their implications, if not ramifications to our civil-military relations. The logic behind this study is the recognition that, gaps in perception between the public and the Defence may lead to decreased support for the missions conducted by the Defence Force, and even for the military personnel themselves, damaging the morale and operational effectiveness of deployed troops. There is also the possibility that low prestige, checkered legitimacy or indifference towards the military and its missions could lead to alienation towards returning personnel, negatively affecting their reintegration into civilian society on their return from service.

Therefore, this study was set out to explore the perception gap between the representative sample of students, parents, veterans, military personnel and the Defence and has identified numerous factors that influence perceptions, on both sides of the spectrum. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the Defence Force's prestige and legitimacy among the many important civil-military variables. It has also sought to examine whether low prestige and legitimacy would have implications on recruitment and retention.

The study sought to answer three questions:

- 1) How does the public perceive the F.D.R.E. Defence Force and the military profession?
- 2) How do the Defence and the military personnel view themselves with regard to the image, prestige or attractiveness of the institution and the military profession?
- 3) What is the perception gap? (if any) And what implications does it have for recruitment and retention?

The frameworks of analysis used to diagnose the perception gap are: prestige, legitimacy, confidence and ethnic composition of the Defence Force. The first frame of analysis "prestige" or institutional attractiveness can be influenced by a complex and dynamic set of factors. However, for reasons of space and brevity, a small set of important variables from among a broader array of possible factors affecting prestige have been selected. Thus, salary has been

identified as one of the key variables since it is strongly associated with institutional prestige and reputation. Although, it is not possible to make precise comparisons of potential earnings of identical individuals in the military versus the civilian public sector, the comparisons must be taken only as indications of the level of disparity in earnings between the two sectors.

The general perception is that military personnel's salary is much lower than the salary scales in the public civilian sector, and this has a profound impact on Defence's prestige. The perception that the Defence is a low paying institution is shared by overwhelming majority of military personnel and significant number of respondents from the parents and veterans as well. This research also found that the military profession is not attractive in the labour market as can be proven from many of the respondents' opinions towards the career.

The second variable was military personnel's 'quality of life', to be gauged in terms of non-monetary incentives such as housing and provision of welfare facilities. The data collected by way of questionnaires, focus group discussions, interviews, personal communications and observations suggest that the Defence does not take good care of its personnel in terms of improving their quality of life.

The third variable dealt with the issue of veterans' 'support, respect and recognition'. Drawing from the structured questionnaires and interviews from selected veterans, I found that many of the veterans are often frustrated with the nominal support provided to them by the Defence and other government agencies. Majority of them said the Defence and the government are doing "unsatisfactory" or "poor" job in addressing the problems faced by veterans, and local authorities are lagging in their efforts to help them transition to civilian life.

Even those military personnel in active service believe the needs of the veterans are not being met by the Defence and government; this is also shared by the parent respondents. The study also found that many veterans feel they have been left behind on an uncharted civilian landscape, fighting for survival, struggling to secure a job. Moreover, the findings revealed that veterans do not feel they get the recognition and treatment they deserve from the public and the government. The study findings also suggest that military personnel who left the army portray negative image of the defence in the society, majority of them seem less likely to endorse military service and discourage young adults who potentially consider joining the military.

The second frame of analysis employed in this study was “legitimacy”. While the concept of legitimacy is expansive and can be operationalized using multiple indicators, for pragmatic reasons it is limited to one key variable i.e., “partisanship”. In the process of examining this particular issue, I have assessed the perception of respondents using multiple scale questions and the ruling party’s relevant documents. On top of that I have analyzed the practical responses of the Defence Force to some domestic political incidents that occurred in recent memory.

The empirical findings in this study suggested that there is a prevailing public perception that the Defence Force is not politically neutral, perceiving it to be a part of the ruling party’s political arsenal. However, this perception is not shared by the Defence institution; despite majority of the respondents from the military seem to admit it has a strong political affinity with the ruling party.

The third frame of analysis measures respondents’ “confidence on the capability” of the Defence Force to protect our country. When the series of responses obtained in this study are closely observed a clear consensus seems to emerge. All categories of respondents seem to profess a great deal of confidence in the Defence Force’s capability, from one perspective, this is hardly surprising given the impressive track record of the armed forces in mission accomplishment. Thus, the study finds no perception gap on this particular theme.

The fourth frame of analysis dealt with the issue of “ethnic composition” of the Defence Force. In this study reliable data provide a ready indication of the ethnic imbalance in the Defence Force. The findings from the composition tables reveal a remarkably straightforward story. The study found that the more the ladder of ranks goes up the more it has become dominated by a single ethnic group. A serious examination of public opinion data suggest that such imbalance has led to deepest resentment against the system and seem to affect Defence’s legitimacy.

The study further uncovered valuable insights regarding the implications of the perceived low prestige, questioned legitimacy and the ethnic imbalance. Although a primary source of data for this section is the Defence’s own survey, this study has also utilized empirical survey it conducted to examine the high school senior young adults’, parents and military personnel views about military service.

Close examination of the empirical data suggests that, interest and motivation to join the military is declining, especially among the young adults. A low impression towards the Defence Force

seems to be the key factor to this persistent negative attitude towards military service. This has reflected on recruitment as the low prestige of the Defence Force has a profound influence on the propensity of young people when thinking of joining the Defence Force.

One notable observation is that as parents are uniquely positioned to provide encouragement or affirmation of a young person's aspirations and career decisions, when it comes to recruitment, majority of them are found to be not supportive of their children when they contemplate joining the Defence Force. This research elicited substantive explanations for the precipitous decline in the youth's propensity for military service, and the parent disapproval for military service. On top of the aggregate results mentioned above, the changed values in society seem to generate additional pressure on the Defence Force. It must be stressed again that, the associated costs of being a military do not seem to match the perceived benefits. Thus, military profession seems to be less attractive compared to other career options.

Moreover, available evidence suggests that the abstract notion of 'strong public support' for the Defence Force seems to be less certain, it sounds merely a cliché, offers no meaningful help in the face of serious negativity in the public and persistent decline in military service among the youth. It is abundantly clear that, currently the Defence Force is unable to recruit high quality, motivated and talented youth and its recruitment targets are not met even sometimes it is forced to lower recruitment standards.

Another significant finding regarding the implications of the low prestige and legitimacy is that the persistent low retention which presents a serious challenge to maintaining combat readiness in the Defence Force. This item showed strong correlation with low morale in the military. According to data from the Defence Human Resources, questionnaires and focus group discussion, attrition rate in the Defence is terribly high.

According to this study, many of the low ranking military personnel still on active duty are contemplating to leave the institution as soon as their contractual term is ended. It is important to note that, although, such high attrition rate is the result of a myriad of factors, there is no doubt that, low prestige and checkered legitimacy, are likely to have profound contribution. Yet, despite the above mentioned public perception, the Defence's own narrative signifies a stark difference in perception with regard to the core issues examined. Even though, not all the

shortcomings were denied outright, the Defence seems to down play their scale, magnitude, and implications.

In sum, these findings confirmed the existence of a gap in perceptions between the representative public and the Defence institution with regard to the declining prestige, checkered legitimacy and the impact of ethnic imbalance. The most obvious explanation for the low prestige is partly low salary and poor living condition of the military personnel and the lack of support and recognition for the veterans. It is of interest to note that the Defence's legitimacy is highly questioned, because of the wide perception that it isn't free from partisanship.

There is also evidence to suggest that the Defence Force is not representative, especially at its officer corps level, which diminishes its role as a national symbol, if not its legitimacy. Although, respondents' confidence on the Defence's capability is high, such confidence doesn't seem to mask the latent decline in prestige and legitimacy. Finally; these findings have profound implications for military recruitment and retention, as the Defence institution does not seem to be successful on both domains.

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Declaration

I hereby certify this material, which I now submit for examination of the programme of study leading to the award of Master's degree in Peace and Security Studies is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such works have been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. This original work has not been also used to obtain a degree from this or another university.

Delared by: Berhane Zikarge

Date: _____

Signature: _____

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

Advisor: Dr. Yonas Adaye

Date: _____

Signature: _____