Dear RC01 members

The planning for the International Sociological Association (ISA) Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution (RC01) Interim Conference in Stellenbosch, South Africa from 5-9 July 2020 is now well underway, and we are working hard to make this a memorable event. As announced, the call for abstracts is now open for both individual and panel sessions. https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc01-armed-forces-and-conflict-resolution/Conference Registration, with details of the registration fees, accommodation and travel arrangements will be posted on the RC01 Website and RC01 Facebook in January. At this point, I would like to ask all RC01 members to circulate this call and newsletter as widely as possible. Non-RC01 members are welcome to attend this conference, at non-member registration rates. To get the reduced fee, join RC01 now to gain maximum benefits for four years. Only RC01 members are eligible to present a paper at the forthcoming XX World Congress of Sociology 24-30 July 2022 in Melbourne, Australia. Both the Interim RC01 2020 conference and the World Congress 2022 are unique opportunities to expand your networks. I am making an active attempt to try and attract leading scholars from Africa to join this event, and we need to expand these networks to the Eastern Europe and Asian countries. I need your involvement to recruit more members.

About Stellenbosch University, its location and the conference: The University is currently ranked between 251-300 on the World University Rankings, which places it the top 1% of universities in the world. The University has ten faculties, including the Faculty of Military Science (Military Academy). The town Stellenbosch is situated 50 kilometers (31 miles) from Cape Town and about 30 minutes from the Cape Town International airport. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaYTDYkdyGl&t=120s. The university is located in the centre of Stellenbosch, which is without doubt one of the most beautiful towns in the country. The town is surrounded by vineyards and numerous mountain ranges and is known for its oak-shaded streets, lined with cafes, boutiques and art galleries. Cape Dutch architecture gives a sense of South Africa’s Dutch colonial history, as do the Village Museum’s period houses and gardens. What makes this the perfect conference location is that everything is situated in the heart of the town. There are plenty of shops, hotels and guest houses within walking distance of the conference venue. As part of the conference itinerary we are planning a visit to the South Africa Military Academy, located in Saldanha, on the West Coast, just under 2hrs drive away from Stellenbosch. This excursion will take place on Friday 10 July, after the conference (to be confirmed).

Besides this, there are numerous day trips and things to do in and around Stellenbosch. We will include more details in the next newsletter, but the most popular are the various Estate Wine Tours and tastings, tours of the Cape Peninsula and the Safari Game Lodge Tours. Visit the Stellenbosch Tourism website to get a sense of what is on offer in terms of day trips, activities and tours and the costs involved.
In terms of your conference planning, please make your visa applications well in advance and inform us of any information, or assistance you require from our international office. The link to the Department of Home Affairs for visa requirements is [http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/applying-for-sa-visa](http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/applying-for-sa-visa). Please do not leave this to the last minute. Also note, that South Africa has a poor public transport system, but good roads if you want to rent a car. So arrange an international drivers license if you are planning to stay a little longer. Remember in South Africa we drive on the left side of the road – a British legacy. Otherwise, download the Uber App as an alternative way to get around.

The theme for this conference is **Conflict Resolution, Power Politics and Political Populism**. At present, we see global powers becoming more confrontational regarding economic, political and social issues. The rise of populism, increasing authoritarianism, xenophobia and racism are giving rise to new forms of insecurities and risks, often drawing the military into internal security roles. As these increase, how is this affecting civil-military relations, militarisation, defence transformation and military/police relations? On the political level, international cooperation is losing importance and the classic power politics are back on the world stage. The political switch to (extreme) right wing party/populist governments in many countries leads to isolation and supports national unilateralism. How are these changes on the international state affecting the armed forces and cooperation between them? What is the impact on public opinion, the subjective sense of insecurity, increase in discrimination against minorities, increase in violence against women and minorities? With these developments, are nation states becoming stronger again, more inward looking? To what extent are multinational regimes losing their importance? While this is the conference focus, papers are invited on the following key themes:

- African security threats and armed forces
- Civil military relations, civil control and militarisation
- Cyber-security domain and the military
- Gender, race and culture
- Human resource management and defence transformation
- Military profession, institution and culture
- Military leadership, morale and cohesion
- Military and police relations
- Military veterans and society
- Media and public opinion
- Military families and welfare
- Military profession and military service
- Peacekeeping and multinational interagency operations
- Recruitment and retention
- Technological change and future war
- Violence, conflict resolution and security

**Submission and Registration Deadlines**

Abstracts for conference presentations should be a maximum of 200 words. Abstracts for panel proposals should contain no more than four presentations (with a maximum of 200 words per presentation). The overall panel description, as well as the abstract and names of the presenters of each component presentation should be included. Abstracts and panels can be uploaded on the RC01 Website platform from 18 November 2019.
Abstracts can be submitted via the following link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeplhw_4y6Gql03rN2MBYK1E5gB56Qez3jR6-OQksaYWwA/viewform

Point of contact for inquiries on panels and/or papers is Prof. dr. Lindy Heinecken lindy@sun.ac.za

Time line and important dates

Abstract submission open: 18 November 2019
Abstract and submission deadline: 17 February 2020
Acceptance decisions and draft programme: 23 March 2020
Deadline for early registration: 19 April 2020
Deadline for registration: 18 May 2020

Further information on the conference fees, travel arrangements, visa requirements and accommodation will be announced in January 2020. Please keep your eye on the RC01 Website (https://www.isasociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc01armed-forces-and-conflict-resolution/).


Thank you to all those members who responded and send me your latest publications. I am sure there are many more that could have been included, looking at the profile of our members. This newsletter is an opportunity to showcase the diverse topics and research projects we are working on. Below are some of the most recent and upcoming publications.

Books


Newsletter
December 2019

Book chapters


PHD announcements/publications

Marene Jansen. Educating for Military Realities, Radbound University, 2019 https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/handle/2066/204305

Security Threats, Militarisation, and the Democratic Accountability of the Use of Military Force

The collaborative international project examines the interrelationship between security threats, the militarisation of security policy, and the democratic accountability of the use of military force. Its main goal is the development of a theory of militarisation of the security discourse in democracies that are challenged by security threats, based on a comparative empirical analysis of new and established democracies in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. It is guided by three main questions: Why and under which circumstances do democratic governments mobilise the military to counter security threats? How do democratic governments legitimise the military’s deployment against external and domestic threats? What are the effects of militarisation on the democratic accountability of the use of military force? The first workshop was held in Hamburg in April, with project leader Dr David Kuehn, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg. This project will be published as a book in 2020.


The Military Personnel Theme (co-directed by Irina Goldenberg and Stéfanie von Hlatky) of the Canadian Defence and Security Network (https://www.cdsn-rcds.com/) will be hosting a workshop entitled The Many Faces of Diversity in Military Employment, in Ottawa Canada on April 28-29, 2020. A synopsis: An enduring question for armed forces is how to recruit, develop, support, and retain the best people, people who are smart, skilled, physically fit and willing to lay down their lives if necessary. The workshop will focus on the ability of the armed forces to meet its person-power requirements based on the establishment of an organizational culture of inclusiveness and cohesion. We will achieve this by showcasing research and practice which examines the recruitment, employment, and retention of under-represented groups as outlined in the Employment Equity Act, particularly women, visible minorities, and Indigenous peoples. Our workshop also seeks to address other forms of diversity and identity within defence organizations, such as the generational and LGBTQ2S perspectives. In line with the broadly adopted diversity lens, we will also examine diversity from a Whole Force perspective, including institutional distinctions related to regular and reserve force personnel, military members and defence civilians, as well as cultural differences among the military services. Retention of trained and experienced personnel is particularly important in the armed forces because militaries must select, train, and promote from within, yet retention is getting harder in today’s competitive job market. The Canadian Chief of the Defence Staff and others have argued that the military needs more flexible personnel policies to attract and keep talent, especially for specialized skills for emerging challenges. Is this something that other armed forces have done successfully? Understanding the concerns of specific groups is important to tackle integration challenges as the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence strive to become more diverse and incorporate cultural change at the institutional level.

NATO STO HFM Research Task Group on Retention in the Armed Forces (NATO STO HFM RTG-318)

The first meeting of the NATO HFM Research Task Group on Retention in the Armed Forces (co-chaired by Irina Goldenberg from Canada and Johan Österberg from Sweden) will take place 25-27 March 2020 at the NATO Science and Technology Headquarters in Paris. A synopsis is below. For additional information contact Irina.Goldenberg@forces.gc.ca.

Synopsis: Military personnel are critical to the effectiveness of the Armed Forces within which they serve. Although attrition is costly for most organizations, it is more costly in the military due to the unique factors related to military service (e.g., military service requires skills and knowledge that can only be acquired through institutionalized military experience; Armed Forces do not generally make use of lateral entry options, but instead require that personnel be selected, trained, promoted, and retained from within the organization). As such, personnel retention of trained and valued personnel is a critical objective for the Armed Forces, one that is continually challenged in today’s competitive and changing labour context (affected by factors such as demographic change, increasing diversity and aging populations, globalization, and technological advances). This RTG aims to examine key retention-related challenges facing today’s
modern militaries and provide an exchange of policies, strategies, and programs for facilitating the retention of military members. A main focus will be on developing empirical methods and tools for collaborative cross-national inquiry, which will result in a pooling of resources and scientific approaches that can be leveraged by the participating nations. The key beneficiaries of will be Military Personnel Commands, G1s within the military services of the Army, Navy, and Air Forces, as well as defence S&T/personnel research organizations.

**Proposed RC01 Book project: Military Sociology, public influence and engagement**

Much has been written about the civil-military gap, especially the knowledge gap that exists between wider society and the military and how this affects civil-military relations, informed decision-making and broader understanding of military matters. As an RC01 project, I would be very keen to coordinate a project that showcases how military sociologists and members of other disciplines who belong to our research group partake and debate military issues within the broader public domain, and with what impact. The proposal would be to take an important issue facing the military in a particular country, i.e. recruitment, internal deployment, unionisation etc and to demonstrate how your own academic research infuses into the public domain, how this is being debated by non-academic audiences and through which medium (radio, newspaper, television, twitter, other ‘non-academic’ forms of communication). In other words, how is our work having an impact beyond the military, within the public domain? I know there are many of you working and commenting on important issues, and I would love to hear from you. Let me know if you are interested in contributing and we can arrange a session on this at the Conference. Lindy@sun.ac.za.

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Thank you to Irina Goldenberg and Kathryn Marie Fisher for assisting with the compilation of this newsletter. I hope you find this informative and enjoy reading all the wonderful contributions of our members in terms of their publications.

*From the RC01 Executive and Board, enjoy the festive season and may 2020 be a Happy New Year!*