

CAPTURING THE EVENT



CONFLICT TRENDS IN THE NATAL REGION

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↳ Capturing the event : conflict ...

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CAPTURING THE EVENT

**CONFLICT TRENDS
IN THE NATAL REGION
1986-1992**

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INTRODUCTION

The debate on political conflict in the Natal region has unfolded as the cycles of conflict have shifted and changed in intensity in the region. In particular, the debate has changed substantially since February 1990, the month during which a process of transition to a more democratic form of government was officially announced for the country.

It is difficult to establish the nature of the debate during the two and a half years after that launch. It has often been polarised between those who lay blame on 'sides', and often been explained by pointing to the absence of 'rules of the political game' during this period of political transition.

Worsening socio-economic conditions in poor urban communities in the region, and in the country as a whole are often cited as additional causes. The presence, in the region, of Natal and of KwaZulu is regularly proposed as a fundamental context to the conflict. Accordingly, links of a material and ideological nature between the governments of these territories are often claimed, and support from state security forces added to the explanation. Reference to the development of a culture of violence and of revenge, particularly among the African youth, is also common.

In short, the debate is confused by the sheer complexity and unexpectedness of these persisting cycles of violence. As a consequence, information tends to be partial, often fragmentary, and frequently open to bias.

This publication aims to intervene constructively in this debate. One chapter proposes an approach to the analysis of conflict which is intended to be simultaneously comprehensive, multi-causal, and practical. The central idea is that of resource mobilisation. A second chapter aims to follow the trajectory of conflict in the region by discussing a series of case studies selected along this trajectory.

The main chapter aims to discuss empirically a number of trends in the conflict. To this end, a newly established database on events of conflict in the Natal region - covering a six year period - has been employed for the first time. Analysis of these quantitative data is supported by demographic and socio-economic overviews of the region as well as by short summaries of explanations often given for the conflict.

The database's unit of analysis is an event of conflict, and more than seven thousand events have been captured. This has been done - as described in a methodological appendix - in as comprehensive and as objective a manner as was possible. The database will be regularly updated.

It is hoped that these contributions will shed light on the complexity of the Natal conflict and, by so doing, lead to a better understanding of its nature and its causes.

POLITICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA A RESOURCE MOBILISATION APPROACH

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For more than a decade South Africa has been in the grips of the most violent period of its history. The country that used to be known for apartheid is now becoming known for its high levels of violence. While white South Africans find themselves insulated from much of the violence, members of the black communities are exposed to it on a daily basis. The AK-47 and the burning tyre have become weapons of death in virtually every black community.

More than fifty massacres with an average of twenty five deaths per incident have been recorded since July 1990. Boipatong, Phola Park, Thokoza, Zonkiziswe, Mpumalanga, Trust Feed, Sebokeng, Crossroads, Folweni, and Bisho are just a few names of past flashpoints. How many times will these names reappear and how many new names will be added to the list in the months - and years - to come? Strikingly absent from the list are the names of neighbourhoods such as Houghton, Waterkloof, Constantia, and Westville. When will they appear on the list?¹ When will we see an end to the violence? More importantly, why don't we see an end to the violence?

The conflict that has become endemic in South African society since the mid-seventies appears to be a struggle about access to and control of political power. Much of the conflict that took place before 1990 seems to have been between those excluded from the political process and those who were in control of the process. Since the beginning of 1990 the locus of the conflict appears to have moved primarily to those excluded from political power in South Africa.

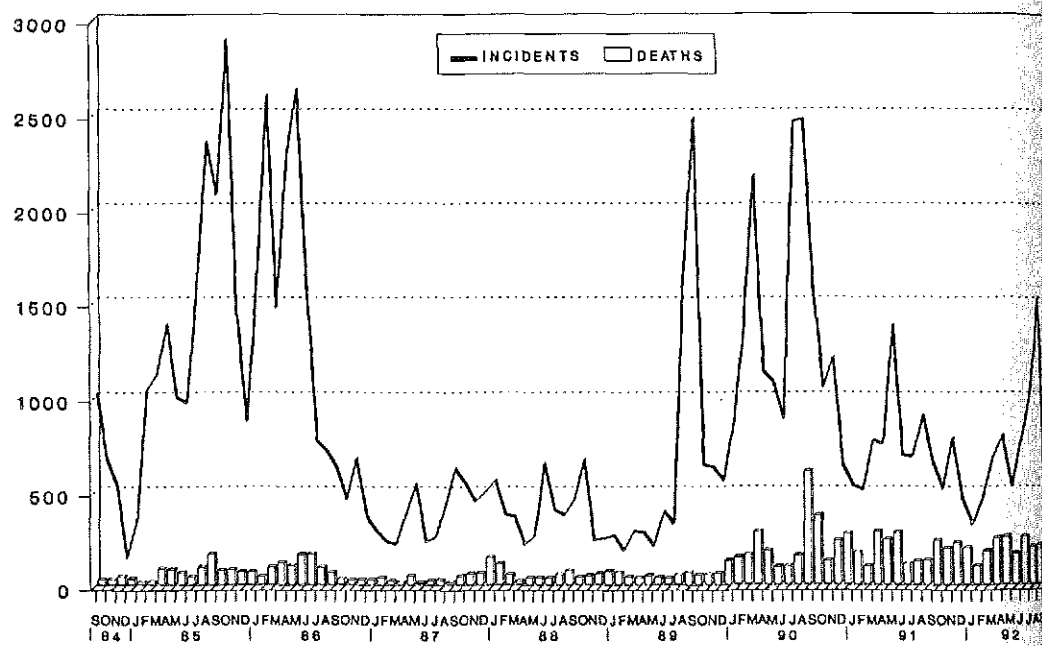
The scope of this conflict, measured by the number of incidents and its direct consequences, is enormous. Official statistics suggest that more than 86 000 incidents of civil unrest occurred during the eight-year period September 1984 to September 1992. Figure 1 shows that there was substantial variation in the incidence of civil unrest during this period. While there has been a decrease in the number of incidents, it is clear that the number of fatalities has increased significantly since 1990.

More than 20 000 individuals were injured and 10 206 people died in incidents of civil unrest during this period. From January to September 1992 more than 6 800 incidents were recorded. The number of individuals injured came to 2 142 and 1 746 lost their lives. Records kept by the Human Rights Commission and the Institute for Race Relations suggest that these official statistics are conservative.

The cost of the unrest, both economically and in terms of human lives, is dramatic. While one cannot put a value to a human life, the direct costs of the unrest run into billions of rands. Some of the indirect costs of the violence are to be found in demographic patterns, an increase in people's feelings of insecurity, lost productivity, lost tourism, and a loss in investor confidence. These costs cannot be calculated.

While the protracted violence is not the only factor which negatively impacts on the South African economy, its effect is significant. All sectors of the economy, both formal and informal, have been affected.

FIGURE 1
MONTHLY UNREST-RELATED INCIDENTS
AND DEATHS, SEPT 1984 - SEPT 1992



Source: South African Police

Retrenchments are a daily occurrence in the formal sector of the economy. Reports state that profits in for example the black taxi industry are down by 25% and the black building industry has also been hard hit. Likewise, the informal sector (e.g. stokvels) has not escaped the effects of the unrest.

The impact of continued instability on the South African economy could well be more severe than the economic sanctions imposed on South Africa by the international community. It is ironic that at a time when economic sanctions against South Africa

are being lifted, the high levels of violence, coupled with political uncertainty, make it difficult for South Africa to attract new investments. The continued instability is prolonging the country's economic malaise.

Needless to say, concern about the protracted violence emanates from across the political spectrum in South Africa. The National Peace Accord, signed by nineteen political groupings in September 1991, was the first multi-party attempt to address the violence. Under the Peace Accord several structures function to address various aspects of the violence. The more significant ones are the Peace Committee and the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation (generally known as the Goldstone Commission).

International concern for the protracted violence in South Africa is mounting. The recent decision by the United Nations to send fifty monitors to South Africa and the European Community and Commonwealth missions which visited South Africa recently, is indicative of this concern.

Despite all these efforts South Africans are faced daily with reports in the media of high levels of violence. It is therefore no surprise that the results of a recent survey showed that only 5% of the respondents were of the opinion that the Peace Accord could stop the violence. In a similar survey among top decision makers conducted in November 1991, only 21% held the view that the Peace Accord will succeed in reducing political violence. The results of a survey conducted in April 1992 suggest that the majority of South Africans (64%) are of the opinion that the government has little or no control over the violence.

Regardless of whether the initiatives to address the violence come from within South Africa or from abroad, they will have no lasting effect unless the real issues are addressed head-on. As Posel (1991:29) points out, 'For as long as the violence, and the fundamental factors precipitating it remain unresolved, the current process of political reform stands to be undermined'.

The fact that violence continues despite various efforts to contain it, suggests that South Africans have up to now been unsuccessful in addressing the root causes of the violence. Why did levels of violence increase after February 2, 1990? Why does it seem as if violence in South Africa is out of control? Why has the National Peace Accord failed to have any noticeable impact on levels of violence in South Africa? These and other questions are being asked by many in South Africa and abroad. Many attempts have been made to answer them.

Partial answers

These attempts vary in the degree to which they (a) address the real issues and (b) recognise the complexities of political conflict in South Africa. These explanations locate the principal cause of the conflict at different sources. There are those who blame apartheid, others see ethnicity as the major source, still others attempt to explain the violence in terms of socio-economic deprivation and crime, some view it as merely black-on-black violence, some blame the state, and others argue that

political competition and intimidation is the most important factor which explains the violence.

□ **Apartheid**

One of the common explanations offered suggests that apartheid is the root cause of the conflict. At first glance this explanation seems plausible. However, it does not explain why levels of violence were at their lowest during the heyday of apartheid. It cannot explain the steady increase in levels of conflict since the mid-seventies - the period during which the erosion of apartheid began. Now, exactly at the time when the last remains of apartheid are being removed, conflict has reached unprecedented levels. Furthermore, if apartheid is to blame, why are so few whites (they who were responsible for apartheid and have much to lose through its demise) the targets or the initiators of incidents? The vast majority of incidents are initiated by blacks, and particularly Africans, and directed at fellow blacks. This is especially true for the recent period.

□ **Black-on-black violence**

The explanation which suggests that the violence is merely black-on-black implies that it is in the nature of black individuals to kill each other. Apart from the racist undertones, this explanation turns a characteristic of the conflict into an explanation. The fact that much of the violence in South Africa is located within black communities is a characteristic of the violence, not an explanation.

□ **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity has always been and will remain an important issue in South Africa. While one cannot ignore ethnicity as an important element of South African society, ethnicity in itself cannot explain the vast majority of conflict incidents. Much of the conflict in Natal for example takes place between individuals who belong to the same ethnic group, namely Zulus. In other areas of the country, e.g. the Transvaal, where a number of ethnic groups live in close proximity, ethnicity has been a minor factor in explaining conflicts.

It should be recognised that people do mobilise on the grounds of ethnic sentiments both in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. Developments in Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Belgium, Quebec, Scotland, Rwanda, and more recently Germany, Italy and Spain, stand as a constant reminder that ethnicity is a potentially important mobilising force. Given South Africa's particular circumstances, ethnicity could become a much more important factor in political mobilization in future than it is at present.

□ **Socio-economic deprivation**

This explanation suggests that socio-economic deprivation is sufficient to cause individuals to mobilise. In other words, all that is needed are people who are discontented with their situation and that will lead to violence. Putting it differently, if the gap between what people think they should have and what they actually get becomes too big, people will mobilise.

South Africa has experienced an increase in levels of violence and protest exactly at the time when the economic position of blacks relative to whites improved - from the mid-seventies onwards. If the deprivation argument was correct South Africa should have had high levels of protest and violence during the period up to the mid-seventies after which time it should have decreased. Clearly, this was not the case.

Social science research of the last twenty years has shown that discontent in itself is not sufficient to cause people to engage in violent and non-violent forms of protest. A number of other factors need to be in place before people will engage in protest behaviour (see discussion below).

□ **Political competition**

There are those who argue that the violence in South Africa is the result of political competition between different political groups. The advantage of this argument is that it allows for the state and all the other political parties to become part of the explanation. This explanation does pose a problem. If political competition leads to violence, why is it that we see so little violence in the Indian, coloured and white communities? Clearly, the ANC, Inkatha and the National Party are also competing for support in these communities.

While it is clear that competition for political support is an important factor in the present-day violence, it should be recognised that political competition cannot offer an explanation of all the violence, or of the absence of violence in certain communities, in South Africa.

□ **Crime**

South Africa has witnessed a massive increase in crime during the last few years. This increase is evident in all sectors, from shoplifting, burglaries, vehicle theft and hijacking, robberies and fraud through to rape and murders.

For many whites safety and security became a political obsession. In fact some observers have suggested that much of the rise in rightwing resistance is not so much due to the political reform but more to increased feelings of insecurity which are caused by the unprecedented rise in the crime rate.

There can be no doubt that much of the crime culture in South Africa has its roots in politics. Four decades of apartheid had severe effects on the social fabric of our society. A breakdown in family life in the black communities, poor and inadequate education, economic exploitation, poverty and high levels of unemployment are just some of the factors which contributed to this. The availability of arms, poor police-community relations and the massive release of prisoners during 1991 are additional factors which contribute to the increase in crime. It has been estimated that of the 60 000 prisoners released, only 13% could be regarded as political prisoners. The rest were common criminals.

There can be no doubt that a certain level of criminality is present in the political

violence. Criminals have learned to use the guises of political actors to 'decriminalize' their actions and present their actions as being politically motivated. Clearly, one can hardly suggest that every incident where an AK-47 or a burning tyre is involved, is politically motivated.

Another argument suggests an additional level at which crime has been politicized. In particular that crime is one facet of the redistribution of wealth from the white communities to the disadvantaged black communities. While it is highly unlikely that any political organization would support such actions, it is quite possible that this could be a motivation behind the actions of some individuals. Furthermore, this argument does not explain the high levels of crime that black communities are subjected to.

□ **The State**

Another explanation blames the state and its agents, in particular the South African Police (SAP), the South African Defence Force (SADF) and other members of the security establishment, for the violence. It is alleged that the state contributes to the violence through acts of omission and commission.

Countless allegations have been made in this regard. In particular that the SAP is not impartial in the violence and that it supports Inkatha. Revelations about the SAP's financial support of Inkatha and the Trust Feed case give credence to these allegations. Similar allegations have been made in the context of the taxi wars in the Western Cape and in conflicts on the Reef.

The credibility of the SAP as an impartial law enforcement agency has long been, and to a large extent still is, seriously questioned. One of the major factors that explains this is the traditional role the SAP had to play as political agent of the apartheid state.

Deaths of political prisoners in police custody/detention (e.g. Steve Biko) and the deaths of political activists under questionable circumstances or through assassinations (e.g. David Webster), suggest a close link between the SAP and the rest of the security establishment. The recent revelations by Dr Jonathan Gluckmann that post mortems he had conducted revealed that 90% of 200 deaths in detention had probably been caused by police action, sent shockwaves through South Africa. Twelve more people died in police custody in the two months after his revelations in July 1992. This and the unfolding saga of the Matthew Goniwe case where senior government officials are alleged to have been involved, reinforce the perception of a partisan police force.

One of the clearest examples of partisanship by the SAP is the well publicized Trust Feed case. Police Captain Brian Mitchell collaborated with local Inkatha officials against the Trust Feed Crisis Committee (TFCC), alleged to have been ANC/UDF aligned. This culminated in early December 1988 with the detention of some 11 TFCC members and the confiscation of weapons. Police special constables under Mitchell's command raided a house on the evening of December 3, 1988

and killed eleven people, some women and children. In subsequent court proceedings the Supreme Court found that the massacre was the final event in a joint SAP-National Security Management System operation to disrupt the Trust Feed community and to give Inkatha control over the Trust Feed settlement. Senior police officers were implicated in a cover-up attempt and the judge criticized the police's own investigation of this incident and called for a public inquiry.

Closely linked to the above are suggestions that members of the SAP and their military counterparts are actively engaged in a clandestine campaign to disrupt the negotiation process by committing acts of terror and fuelling sectarian township violence. Recent political violence has been characterised by the assassination of ANC and Inkatha officials and by a spate of what seems to be unmotivated massacres of black civilians. There is mounting evidence that conservative elements in the security forces, generally referred to as 'the third force', have been responsible for perpetrating many of these acts. Recent findings of the Goldstone Commission lend support to the claims that there are a group of organised individuals in the security establishment who are involved in a 'dirty tricks' campaign (Goldstone, 1992).

While it is quite certain that there are individuals within the security establishment who have an interest in destabilizing the negotiation process, it is clearly not possible to explain endemic violence in South Africa by this factor alone.

□ **And the Fourth Force?**

One of the contributing factors which has received little or no attention, is the role played by politicians with regard to both their actions and what they say. Politicians in South Africa have frequently blamed the media and other individuals for 'irresponsible reporting' that can fuel violence. Politicians have frequently, and some would argue conveniently, looked for the causes of the violence in places removed from themselves. Politicians themselves can in fact play a major role in fuelling the violence. They have on numerous occasions used the violence for political ends, either by playing victim or by taking credit for apportioning blame to an opponent.

Another way in which politicians make a contribution is by making irresponsible statements. This was evident during the recent mass action campaign where cabinet ministers equated mass action with violence. More recently certain politicians in Natal concluded from the fact that AK-47 rifles were used in attacks in Folweni that the attackers must be ANC supporters. Deductions like these are not only dangerous but are indicative of a lack of understanding of the realities of the violence in South Africa.

Similarly, President De Klerk's visit to Boipatong a few days after the massacre was ill-advised. One could accept that he visited Boipatong because he had real empathy for the victims, and that the visit was not merely a public relations stunt. However, one only needed to read that week's newspapers and need not have had access to elaborate security information, to conclude that such a visit would be

ill timed. The events that followed his visit, which included three deaths and twenty individuals being injured, were the direct result of his visit (*Sunday Times*, June 21, 1992).

To express one's concern about the violence and to offer solutions and apportion blame has become behaviour which is 'politically correct' in South Africa. Politicians from across the political spectrum have engaged in this kind of behaviour in an attempt to make political mileage out of the violence. One would expect higher levels of political maturity at this time in South Africa's history.

It should be recognised that if politicians had a clear understanding of the complexities of political conflict in South Africa, we would not be seeing the high levels of violence that South Africa is experiencing at this time.

IN SEARCH OF AN EXPLANATION

None of the above explanations adequately explain the complexities of the political conflict in South Africa. If this is so, can another explanation be offered?

The past fifteen years saw a gradual erosion of the South African government's apartheid policies which enforced tight boundaries between ethnic and race groups. This set in motion a process of social change which is affecting the South African society as a whole. These changes have been experienced in the economic, political and social areas.

The most important of these changes happened in the area of politics and had a significant impact throughout society. Most importantly, these changes altered traditional power relations in the South Africa, which in turn changed the way in which South Africans engage themselves in political behaviour. These changes created a new political opportunity structure for insurgency, the implications of which have been most significant in the area of political conflict. It relates to both violent and non-violent forms of political behaviour.

The competition for scarce resources is probably one of the key driving forces in society. This is equally true in the market place as it is in politics. Political power is **the** scarcest resource in human society - those individuals or groups who control political power, control access to most, if not all of society's life chances. It is therefore no surprise that struggles for political power have been the most violent struggles in the history of humanity.

The perceived link between periods of social change and civil unrest has resulted in renewed interest in studies of social change in recent times. Collective violence is viewed as a natural by-product of social organization whose forms change as the distribution of power changes. In fact, a key problem is understanding how changes in the strength of contending groups and the repressive power of a state affect collective violence and social revolution.

Recent developments in the social sciences place greater emphasis on the political

and organizational determinants of movement development and less emphasis on social-psychological determinants of participation. In contrast to the earlier tradition, the new perspectives emphasize the continuities between movement and institutional actions, the rationality of actor's behaviour, the strategic problems confronted by movements, and the role of movements as agencies for social change.

In contrast with traditional views which stressed the importance of sudden increases in short-term grievances created by the structural strains of rapid social change, resource mobilization theorists have argued that grievances are an insufficient cause of violent and non-violent forms of protest. The reason for this is that grievances are always present. Proponents of resource mobilization theory claim that the generation of insurgency develops from a significant increase in the level of resources available to support collective protest activity and not from an aggregate rise in discontent among aggrieved groups. An important contribution of the resource mobilization perspective is its view of social movements as political rather than psychological phenomena and that the outcomes of movements are determined by the larger political environment.

ON ETHNIC MOBILIZATION

The competition model of ethnic mobilization argues that ethnic mobilization is a consequence of the competition between groups for resources. This model is also consistent with the more general resource mobilization models, which argue, as we have seen above, that increased access to scarce resources results in political mobilization and collective action.

It is the creation of new competitive opportunities that provokes ethnic mobilization. In this perspective, ethnic relations are likely to be stable when ethnic groups in a poly-ethnic situation occupy distinct positions in a functional division of labour, or when ethnic groups are territorially separated. Stable relations are disrupted by economic changes if these changes cause formerly separated but independent ethnic groups to compete for the same rewards and resources.

Thus, the argument presented here suggests that three variables are of key importance in explaining high levels of violence and protest behaviour in South Africa:

- discontent among certain sections of the population;
- increased access to resources previously not available; and
- changes in the political opportunity structure. These changes made it easier for actors to operate in the political arena, especially after February 2, 1990.

Given the fact that ethnicity may become a much more prominent mobilising force in South Africa than it has been in the past, I will now apply some of the arguments made to the local situation.

Four factors have been identified as being of key importance to our understanding of ethnic conflict in South Africa (Olivier, 1990 & 1991). These factors are (1) the breakdown of traditional boundaries that existed between racial/ethnic groups, (2)

changes in demographic trends, (3) an increase in resources available to formerly disadvantaged groups, and (4) economic contraction which together with the other three factors led to increased levels of competition.

□ **Breakdown of traditional boundaries**

With the gradual demise of apartheid came a systematic breakdown in traditional (official) boundaries between the races. This changed power relations between individuals and groups and created relations which were not possible previously. This in turn, increased the likelihood of direct confrontations between ethnic/racial groups.

A good example is the changed relations between farm workers and farmers which may come into effect when trade union rights are extended to this sector. Also, the prospect of a Land Claims Court is reportedly causing farmers in the Eastern Transvaal to evict tenants from their farms. The reason behind the evictions is a fear of land claims by those labour tenants with generations' old tenure. Many farmers are now moving from a labour tenant relationship to a wage relationship with labourers.

South Africa has witnessed an increase in rightwing activities, both violent and non-violent, during the last two years. The Afrikaner-Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), led by Eugene Terre'Blanche, is the most well known rightwing organization because of its involvement in numerous acts of violence such as bomb blasts or shootings. Some of the other rightwing groups are the Wit Wolwe (perhaps best known for the actions of Barend Strydom who killed ten people in Pretoria in 1989); and the Orde Boerevolk whose leader Piet (Skiet) Rudolph admitted to committing acts of sabotage.

When one considers that whites used to enjoy a position of exclusive access to resources (for instance jobs, land ownership and education) via apartheid structures which have been eroded in recent years, it is obvious that the rightwing needs to adjust to these changes. Action in this regard may take various forms and can be classified into broad categories, for instance: those which centre around the negotiation process, especially with reference to a Volkstaat; acts of violence, which, to date, have been limited to fringe organizations; and a passive acceptance of current developments. This may change in the near future depending on the direction of political developments in South Africa.

□ **Changing demographic trends**

The scrapping of influx control saw the removal of formal barriers that restricted black individuals' freedom of movement. Increased levels of urbanisation and the resultant development of informal settlements around most large urban centres, increased demands for jobs, housing, and basic services. On more than one occasion those who controlled these services or who gained control over them, used this control for political ends - e.g. warlords in Natal.

The establishment of informal settlements close to former whites-only

neighbourhoods have resulted in rising tensions on more than one occasion. Reports of direct confrontations between whites and individuals who live in these informal settlements have increased in recent times.

Another area closely linked with this is the hostels. The hostel system has probably been one of the most controversial aspects of the migrant labour system. Ethnic division formed an important part in controlling the migrant labour system. Designed as single sex living quarters for black males from rural areas working in towns and larger metropolitan areas, the hostel system had devastating effects on black family life.

The extreme conditions under which hostel residents live have created several social problems by forcing them into informal sector activities like shebeens, prostitution and drug dealing. Tensions between hostel dwellers and the surrounding communities regularly result in overt acts of violence. These conflicts in many instances had their roots in competition for scarce resources such as community amenities, jobs, women, and more recently, political power bases. Ethnicity has been an important contributing factor on more than one occasion.

Zulu hostel residents from Natal sided with the police during the 1976 Soweto uprising and attacked township residents with pangas and 'kieries'. The ethnic grouping of inmates became a decisive factor in the violence on the Reef after July 1990 when the Inkatha Freedom Party was formally launched in this area. Since the hostels were dominated by Zulu-speaking workers, largely from the rural areas of KwaZulu and Natal, Inkatha's recruitment campaign started with the hostels. This alienated hostel residents even more from the local communities. The net result of these developments was that "... perceptions about Zulu ethnicity became of overriding importance in the identification and mobilisation of the participants to the conflict in the Reef townships" (Minnaar *et al*, 1992:2).

Non-Zulu hostel residents were expelled from the Reef hostels and hostels became centres of refuge for Inkatha supporters. These hostels were used as bases from where attacks were launched against surrounding townships and squatter communities. The Independent Board of Inquiry found that 261 attacks were launched from hostels on the Reef between July 1990 and April 1992. The introduction of firearms into the conflict led to a dramatic increase in fatalities. An estimated 1 207 people lost their lives and 3 697 were injured in these attacks.

The close proximity of some of these hostels to the rail system on the Reef contributed to the trains becoming another location for the conflict. A total number of 23 train attacks have been reported between July 1990 and April 1992 which resulted in the death of 23 individuals and 277 injuries. After a brief period of peace on the trains, a number of train attacks took place recently.

The Boipatong massacre where more than 40 people died stands as a grim example of the conflict between hostel residents and the surrounding communities.

□ **Access to new resources**

A key variable which impacts on the ability to mobilize is the availability of new resources to ethnic/racial groups who previously found themselves in a disadvantaged position. These new resources may be any of a number which include: improved education; an improved financial position (i.e. income); job advancement; demographic concentration; and probably the most important resource, organization.

The significant growth in community based organizations in black communities since the early seventies has played an important role in enabling these communities to organize effectively. Labour unions and student organisations were prominent in the period during which the apartheid state subjected black political organizations to systematic victimization. The growth in labour unions and union activities during the seventies and early eighties as well as increased protest actions by students have provided important organizational skills, leadership and the strengthening of networks for the development of other organizations in black communities.

With the unbanning of political organizations on 2 February 1990 came the right to organize openly. This provided a further stimulus to organizational growth. During this period specific areas were targeted far more systematically than in the past, which led on the one hand to increased levels of protest, and on the other to increased levels of competition between organizations. The continued economic decline during this period led to increased demands by their constituencies on organizations such as unions and civics.

□ **Economic contraction**

South Africa experienced significant economic growth in the sixties and early seventies. Economic growth slowed down from the mid-seventies and has been on a downward path ever since. In fact, economists suggest that South Africa is now in the worst recession since the 1930s.

Some of the critical indicators are:

- South Africa's annual economic growth rate, which has been negative at times now stands at about 1%. The population growth rate stands at 2,7%;
- More than 1 300 businesses were liquidated and 2 234 individuals declared insolvent in the first seven months of 1992;
- More than 250 000 people lost their jobs during the past two years;
- It is estimated that six million South Africans are unemployed in the formal sector;
- Fewer than five percent of the 1992 school leavers will find jobs;
- Thousands of farm workers lost their jobs and more than 5 000 farmers quit farming;
- It is estimated that between nine and 15 million people are living below the poverty line in South Africa;
- Retrenchments in the middle and senior ranks are estimated to be higher than at any time in South Africa's history;

- Only the informal sector will be able to offer an increasing number of jobs in the next few years.

This state of affairs leads to increased levels of competition for fewer and fewer jobs. The situation will get worse before it gets better. There seems to be general agreement among economists that South Africa will not see the start of an economic upswing in the next 18-24 months. The Bureau for Economic Research at Stellenbosch expects an average 2%-3% annual economic growth rate for the country over the next five years. Should the South African economy grow at the optimistic rate of 5% per annum up to the end of the century, only 65% of the country's labour force would find jobs.

Thus, of central importance in ethnic mobilisation is the development of new competitive relations which develop between ethnic groups during periods of social change. The resultant changes in competitive relations is exacerbated if a period of social change coincides with a period of economic decline. This is exactly what has happened, and what is happening, in South Africa. This suggests that there is an increased likelihood of ethnic conflict in South Africa with the continuation of economic decline. Therefore, unless significant economic growth gets underway in South Africa soon, the potential for ethnic conflict will increase significantly.

CONCLUSIONS

The dynamics which underlie political conflict in South Africa have changed substantially during the last two decades. The period up to 1990 was for the most part characterised by conflict between the state and the disenfranchised majority. The recent period, especially since the beginning of 1990, saw the introduction of a horizontal dimension in the political conflict as more political groupings began to operate overtly in the political arena. This saw new political actors entering the political arena and old actors redefining their positions, which led to significant changes in power relations. It can be expected that this process will continue in the months ahead. However, the present government remains an important actor at various levels.

Political conflict in South Africa has presented itself by way of both violent and non-violent forms of collective action. The repertoire includes protest marches, boycotts, stay-aways, labour activities and acts of violence directed against the state and/or symbols of the state or other competitors.

A significant feature of political conflict in South Africa is the continued high levels of violence. It is clear from Figure 1 that while the number of incidents decreased in the recent period, there has been a marked increase in the number of fatalities.

Peaceful protest activities remain another important feature. The recent agreement between the SAP, the ANC and Inkatha on procedures for mass demonstrations (Heymann, 1992) is an important development that will contribute to the prevention of peaceful protest activities turning violent.

It is clear from the discussion that political conflict in South Africa is a complex and dynamic phenomenon which cannot be explained in terms of one or two causal factors.

The argument presented here suggests that changes in the political opportunity structure, discontent, and access to and competition over scarce resources, are key factors in understanding conflict in South Africa. Competition for scarce resources, ultimately political power, could be viewed as the primary driving force behind the conflict. However, this competition operates at different levels and is subject to constant changes in intensity. Economic contraction exacerbates levels of competition, with implications extending far beyond the labour sphere. Demographic trends are highly dependent on the state of the economy and affect not only competition for jobs, but also access to the means of daily livelihood such as water, land, housing, and political power.

The argument presented here acknowledges the key role that the economic situation plays and suggests that South Africa is indeed caught in two vicious cycles. One of violence and one of economic decline, with one exacerbating the other. Unless both cycles are addressed simultaneously and effectively, the situation will deteriorate even further. However, both these cycles are significantly affected by the political uncertainty.

The important role that politicians play in the violence can no longer be ignored. It is vital for politicians to recognise that they cannot insulate themselves from the conflict. Political opportunism should make way for real concern about the violence. What South Africa now needs is less political posturing and more coherent leadership.

It is important to recognise that a political solution in itself will not lead to a decline in the level of conflict and violence in South Africa. Unless the demographic, economic and social factors that, together with political factors, represent the causal structure of the present conflict are addressed simultaneously, levels of conflict may increase after a political settlement.

NOTE

1. The recent attacks by the PACs military wing APLA on King Williams Town and Queenstown and APLA's declaration of war on whites (*Business Day*, 7 December 1992), may result in white communities increasingly becoming targets. This would increase the likelihood of counter attacks from whites.

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CONFLICT IN THE NATAL REGION A DATABASE APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

Violent conflict in Natal/KwaZulu has been raging over the past seven years. A review of the debates on this conflict and of attempts to explain it reveals how complex the phenomenon is. There is no simple explanation, let alone simple solution.

The aim of this chapter is a modest one. A number of general conflict trends will be identified and subsequently discussed. These will be identified by using the database of the *Conflict Trends in Natal* project which provides quantitative data about events of political collective action in the Natal region over the period April 1986 - August 1992 (see Appendix 1).

The following trends have been selected for quantitative analysis and discussion:

- a the occurrence and nature of political collective action over time;
- a the spatial location of events;
- a the types of participants in the events; and
- a the changing intensity of the conflict.

In order to discuss these trends in a meaningful way, two preparatory sections have been written:

- a first, a demographic and socio-economic profile of the Natal region which focuses on the regional economy; its demography, migration streams, and settlement types; as well as its local state authorities (Section 1).
- a second, summarised outlines of interpretations and theories often used to explain the conflict. These have been neither exhaustively selected nor comprehensively discussed. They are presented in order to enable a more interesting description of the empirical data which the project provides (Section 2).

In short, this chapter does not aim comprehensively to explain the causes and nature of conflict in the Natal region. Rather, by way of a review of the region's demographic and socio-economic features and of a number of the interpretations given by informed commentators, we intend discussing four simple questions concerning the conflict. These discussions are based on quantitative data drawn from the valuable and recently established data base on *Conflict Trends in Natal*. The questions are:

- a when did the conflict occur?
- a where did it occur?
- a who participated in it? and
- a how intense was it?

SECTION 1
A DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE
OF THE NATAL REGION

ECONOMY

The economy of Natal/KwaZulu has fared poorly over the past five years. According to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), in 1990 the economy of Region E (comprising Natal, KwaZulu and Northern Transkei), when compared to other DBSA regions in the country, accommodated the second largest concentration of people and had the second largest number of children under the age of 15. In terms of recorded income, the population of the region was poor and, in terms of income and wealth indicators, reflected high levels of inequality. In addition, national social indicators reveal below average levels of social development in the region, especially in its rural areas.

The formal economy, in 1990, provided employment for only one third of the potential labour force, with a resultant high unemployment rate - the second highest in the country. Accordingly, there was a high outflow of migrant workers, and concomitant high ratios of male absenteeism and of dependency.

The largest sectors in the economy were manufacturing and community and social services, with the transport sector (including harbour-related activities) showing rapid growth. As the relative contribution from these sectors increased, the economy of the region became increasingly concentrated and more vulnerable to the recessionary economic conditions of the 1990s. In fact, these sectors tend to be more capital than labour intensive, and growth within them does not translate into large employment creation programmes.

As illustrations, the chemical sector which has grown relative to other industrial sectors, tends toward capital-intensity, and major industrial and mining developments presently in the pipeline - Mondi, Alusaf and Richards Bay Minerals in the Durban and Richards Bay areas - will create few jobs in relation to their capital investments.

Most economic activity, in fact, is concentrated in the Durban area, and the sector trends discussed above tend to reinforce this spatial concentration. Economic performance in other, more rural, areas - poor as it was in the late eighties - has declined further.

In short, viewed through the eyes of new entrants into the labour market (most of whom are young African job-seekers), prospects in Natal/KwaZulu which have been bleak during the recent past, are fading even more.

DEMOGRAPHY, MIGRATION, AND SETTLEMENT TYPES

The population of the Natal region

The total South African population will have grown from 38,1 million in 1990 to some 47,7 million by the year 2000. The African proportion of this population will also have grown, from approximately 74% to 79% of the total, attesting to its relatively youthful characteristics. In 1990, Natal/KwaZulu comprised about 20% of the total, and by the year 2000, this proportion will probably have grown to 23%. This implies an increase in regional population from a little less than eight million to a little less than eleven million.

The metropolitan sub-region which comprises the Durban Functional Region (DFR) and the Pietermaritzburg complex will also have grown relative to the rest of Natal/KwaZulu. This sub-region grew most rapidly during the 1980-1985 period - at an estimated rate of 6% per annum - and is presently home to a little less than four million people.

The KwaZulu/Natal boundary running through this metropolitan sub-region divides its population into two roughly equal sub-populations, one living in presently designated KwaZulu and the other in presently designated Natal. Close to one half of these urban dwellers may be classified as 'have-nots', living in shack communities located mainly on the peri-urban fringes.

Outside of this metropolitan sub-region, it is estimated that one million people live in formal urban centres, close to which an additional half million people live in informal shack settlements. The typical configuration of these urban centres embraces townships in KwaZulu (such as Madadeni/Osizweni) which are functionally linked to a town in Natal (such as Newcastle). Informal settlements (as found in the Madadeni district, for example) are scattered around these formal urban centres.

The Newcastle/Madadeni complex forms the largest concentration outside the Durban and Pietermaritzburg metropolitan sub-region, closely followed by Richards Bay/Empangeni. The next level comprises four urban concentrations: Ladysmith/Ezakheni, Port Shepstone/Ezingolweni, Vryheid/Mondlo and Estcourt/Wembezi. Some 400 000 people reside in each of the larger concentrations and some 200 000 in each of those on the next level. In addition, there are a number of smaller urban places in the region (see map: 19).

In short, it is estimated that, by 1989, more than half of the residents of the Natal/KwaZulu region were already functionally urbanised, living and working (or subsisting) in the urban-industrial world of the towns and cities of Natal/KwaZulu. Most of the rest - rural residents - live in Tribal Authority areas in KwaZulu.

Migration in Natal/KwaZulu

□ *Regional migration*

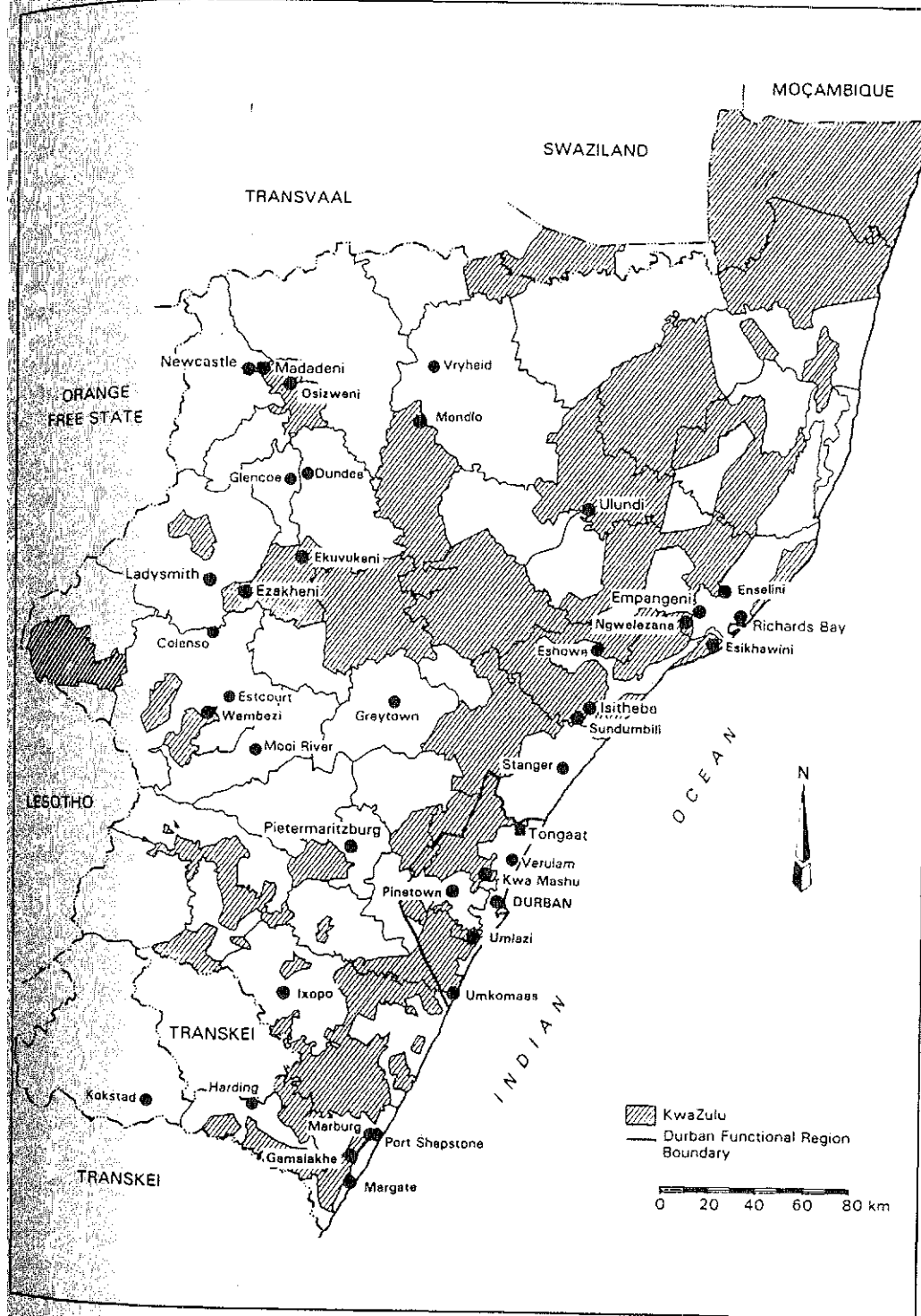
In order to paint a broad-brush picture of migration in the Natal region, let us divide the region into four analytically separate areas: the metropolitan sub-region comprising Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the coastal strip comprising densely settled areas which tend to have a relatively high bio-climatic potential, an inland strip (which includes a number of large urban places) connecting Durban to the PWV metropolitan complex in the Transvaal, and the rest of the hinterland which includes a number of inland areas with relatively low bio-climatic potential.

It has become common wisdom to expect residents of this region - particularly African residents who form the majority - to migrate from low bio-climatic to higher bio-climatic areas and from rural to urban (and especially to metropolitan) areas. Accordingly, urban complexes continue to accumulate population on the inland highway to the PWV, and the hinterland (in both KwaZulu and Natal) is losing people and families to the coastal strip and especially to the metropolitan sub-region. It has in fact been argued that a future coastal metropolis is developing which will embrace Richards Bay to the north, Port Shepstone to the south, and Pietermaritzburg inland.

This simple (and essentially correct) migration model is complicated by five factors (Bekker, 1992):

- the region is open to in- and out-migration. Large numbers of job-seekers enter the region from Northern Transkei, and latterly, from Southern Mozambique while many residents, especially those living close to the Transvaal, often quit the region in search of employment elsewhere, especially in the PWV complex.
- the new regional industrial development programme of the South African government attempts to 'level the playing field' with regard to the location of industries receiving new incentives. In essence, this will mean a lessening over the short-term, and elimination over the medium term, of industrial incentives at existing industrial growth points within Natal/KwaZulu. Expected growth on the 'inland highway to the PWV' may be slowed down significantly by this change.
- the effects of the 1992 drought on rural families in both KwaZulu and Natal will probably accelerate the rural-urban migration process. As means of supplementary subsistence dry up, and rural survival strategies begin to fail, many rural families have no other choice but to migrate to rural towns or urban areas.
- the border between Natal and KwaZulu cuts across virtually all urban complexes in the region. The Newcastle-Madadeni/Osizweni example referred to above is a typical case. These dualistic urban complexes reflect local differences in state subsidy levels for service tariffs, and in access to affordable residential land. As a result, large peri-urban settlements close to Natal towns tend to develop within KwaZulu (or, in some cases, on land that used to be administered by the Department of Development Aid and on what little African freehold land that exists). It is likely moreover that this trend of skewed residential development will continue until and unless the effects of this dualism are diminished through integrated public sector policy and practice.

MAJOR TOWNS OF NATAL/KWAZULU



□ it is tempting to sketch a simple 'gravity flow' picture of the migration process in the region: African people leave rural areas for peri-urban areas or small towns and subsequently leave those areas for the metropolis where they tend to remain in a fixed abode. The reality is probably much more complex. There is increasing evidence that many families do not follow the one way flow from rural to urban areas. Assumptions that 'retarded urbanisation' was due mainly to (now defunct) ideological factors such as influx control are being questioned. A complex set of circulatory migration streams - between rural and urban areas as well as within urban areas - is emerging. These streams appear to be fashioned by a number of factors: household survival strategies balancing rural and urban advantages; increasing costs attached to life in urban informal settlements; push factors associated with communal conflict; and cultural attachments to land. As the anti-urban apartheid policies of the South African government are laid to rest, the promise of an improved and stable urban-industrial quality of life does not seem to be emerging. Though more and more Africans live in urban areas, the rewards associated with rural roots, to ties with rural kin, seem particularly tenacious.

□ ***Informal Settlements in the Region***

One consequence of the process of urbanisation implicit in the pictures drawn above has been the development within the region's metropolitan areas and large towns of informal settlements. Best described as clusters of informal shelters, 'shelters constructed outside of the formal housing delivery mechanisms', informal settlements have emerged as a result of a number of historical currents. Today, they are being established at an unprecedented rate.

After the Second World War, as the ideology of apartheid took root, government attempted to block the intensifying process of African urbanisation. As a consequence displaced urbanisation in KwaZulu flourished, often in the form of the 'spontaneous development of dense settlements on whatever land became available in or close to urban places. The government freeze on the delivery of state housing outside of homelands, and rising fiscal constraints within homelands, led to the multiplication of informal settlements close to and within these urban centres and their African townships.

By the time this anti-urbanisation policy was scrapped, the extent of these settlements and their developmental requirements had become daunting. In particular, since free-standing informal settlements typically fall outside the jurisdiction of urban local authorities, the challenge to facilitate the establishment of such authorities to serve free-standing informal settlements, and to address their service delivery needs, may well be the most daunting of all.

It is important to distinguish between informal settlements and squatter settlements. The latter may be defined as settlements which occur without the consent of the landowner. Using this definition, most informal settlements in the DFR, for instance, are not squatter settlements.

Dwellings in these settlements are often of inferior quality. Services are sometimes totally absent. This is especially the case where informal settlements have developed

spontaneously, either free-standing or as clusters of backyard shacks. Many such settlements are located outside (though nearby) the areas of jurisdiction of city or town authorities and consequently are often not considered to be the responsibility of those authorities. As a result of these deficiencies in service delivery, the growth of informal settlements⁴ in Natal/KwaZulu as well as in the country as a whole - has emerged as a primary national development challenge.

In 1990, it is estimated that there were 2,8 million people living in dense informal settlements (in urban and peri-urban areas) within Natal/KwaZulu (Bekker, 1992). Since this is a conservative estimate, we may infer that at least 37% of the total population of the region lives in such settlements. Most of them are located in KwaZulu.

□ Migration within informal settlements in the DFR

Informal settlements demonstrate unique internal dynamics which govern diverse aspects of community life, from negotiation over service delivery to control over settlement. Generalisation is dangerous and difficult. Accordingly, the sketch below, based as it is upon recent research in the DFR (Cross *et al* (a), (b) (c) & (d)), is no more than a general description based on four case studies in the DFR.

New in-migrants into these informal settlements tend to be the 'middle poor': young nuclear families with comparatively few dependents, headed by a man who is often already employed or at least employable. These migrating families are therefore rarely the very poor or destitute.

Families do not settle permanently as soon as they enter the DFR. Migration into the DFR is complex, and the characteristic pattern is one of households which move around within the peri-urban zone of the DFR, rather than establish themselves in one permanent location.

The case studies suggest that:

- most adult in-migrants are still of rural origin but the rural percentage is falling;
- families moving into informal settlements increasingly come from closely adjacent communities (including townships);
- large-scale land-lordism may be weakening in the DFR generally; and
- informal communities want control over the settlement process and are moving, by establishing community organisations, to achieve this.

With regard to the management of the process of in-migration, research findings suggest a principle whereby existing communities recognise their obligation to accommodate the homeless whenever possible, but also insist on the right to approve outsiders who wish to settle, to ensure the preservation of their community climate.

The key finding in this regard relates to the role of community organisations. In the few areas with strong community organisation, in-migration may be kept down to levels which make management of the development process possible. Those outsiders who do enter and settle in the community are screened and approved by local voluntary community bodies. Good examples of this are found in most areas of

Mariannhill (as described in a case-study below), where the interaction between strong community organisation and effective service delivery has proven to be mutually supportive. Where no such institutions are in place, the in-migration of outsiders easily escapes community control, which often leads to violence and to tragedy.

In summary, migration streams into and out of the DFR as well as between informal settlements within the DFR are large. They are likely to remain so, if not increase. A variety of factors would appear to account for this high rate of population exchange. Among the most important are:

- ineffective community organisation and a high incidence of violence in many informal settlements;
- unsatisfactory state service delivery; and
- a deteriorating labour market in their environs.

(Cross *et al* (a), (b) (c) & (d)).

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER STATE STRUCTURES

Areas of Natal and areas of KwaZulu, when studied on a map, resemble a pattern of crazy paving. When this pattern is superimposed upon that created by the 'own affairs' local government policies of the seventies and eighties, a complicated, dysfunctional and overlapping mosaic of local authority areas of jurisdiction appears, a mosaic rendered even more fragile by the transitional nature of present state arrangements. The DFR may be selected as an illustration:

The Durban Functional Region contains a diversity of local state bodies, most of which are due for fundamental restructuring. These are not only presently structured along 'racial' (own affairs) lines but differ in size and in terms of the duties which they undertake. Local authorities under the control of the Natal Provincial Authority (NPA) differ in status. There are Boroughs, Town Boards, Town Committees, Health Committees and the City Council. Two Indian areas within the DFR have obtained borough status. African townships under NPA control have not yet reached either town or city council status. The Development and Services Board is responsible for development areas and regulated areas. In Trust land (recently transferred to the NPA), there is a township committee and a non-operative advisory board. The Indian and 'coloured' local affairs committees are advisory structures. There are also certain urban areas with no formal representation, which are served by the NPA. Local authorities in KwaZulu are controlled by the Department of the Chief Minister under proclamation 263/62 and are therefore subject to a different system of local authority. The DFR also includes a number of tribal authority areas. In 1991, a Joint Services Board (JSB), one of six in the region, was established for the DFR.

As noted above, most dense free-standing informal settlements lack a local authority which caters to their particular service needs. Typically, other authorities, located in the mosaic described above and charged with other primary areas of jurisdiction, attend to (or are supposed to attend to) service requirements in these settlements. This situation which differs from settlement to settlement, results in multiple and inter-related problems:

- the authority is rarely accountable to groups within the community;

- o acceptable affordability guide-lines are rarely in place, leading to little payment for service delivery;
- o tenure arrangements on the ground are little understood and often diverge from legal requirements; and, accordingly,
- o community needs of the informal settlement are not considered to be a high priority by the state authority.

In response to these difficult community circumstances, voluntary associations ('area committees', 'civics', and so on) establish themselves in informal settlements. These associations usually find it difficult to consolidate, and local government is accordingly usually in a very weak state. Access to land is usually open, and tenure institutions largely undefined. Under such circumstances, households experience deep levels of insecurity, and on-migration streams tend to remain high.

Three examples of the relationship between state authorities and free-standing informal settlements will be given to emphasize the complexity of this matter, and the inadequacy of such relationships:

- o *Lindelani in the Inanda/Ntuzuma (Durban North) area (Cross et al (b)).*
Originating from an invasion of state land in the early 1980s, Lindelani was subsequently legitimised and is now beginning to attract substantial development assistance from both the private sector and the government. Under tight centralised control by a local leader, Lindelani is located in KwaZulu. It is by far the largest of the bounded Inanda informal communities, most of which fall outside KwaZulu.

While Lindelani has drawn large numbers of new in-migrants during the past five years, the number of dwelling units appears to have decreased by roughly one quarter during the same period. Factors linked to this large outflow may include the absence of shops and schools, the presence of development initiatives which affect tenure and settlement, its location within KwaZulu, the prevailing political situation, and the high level of violence reported for the area.

At present, most of the Inanda informal communities are broadly aligned with the ANC, and over the last several years youth movements and subsequently civics have emerged. In contrast, Lindelani remains Inkatha-aligned, and connected into KwaZulu administrative structures. Its services (water, health, education, and so on) are delivered by KwaZulu state departments, often only to neighbouring formal urban townships.

- o *Mariannhill in Western DFR (Cross et al (a)).*
The Mariannhill Region which is located in administrative Natal, covers an area of approximately 176 square km. It includes the following informal settlements: Emmaus, Tshelimnyama, Mpola, Thornwood, Marianridge, Dassenhoek, Luganda, St. Wendolins, Southampton Park, Klaarwater, Savannah Park and Welbedacht. The region owes its origins to the establishment of the Mariannhill Monastery in the last century.

From 1975 to 1985, the Mariannahill region was under the control of a Natal Development Board. In the mid-eighties, administration passed directly to the NPA. The NPA administered the area until July 1990, when an agreement was signed between the Province of Natal and the Borough of Pinetown, in terms of which the management and development of Pinetown South, which includes Klaarwater, the Link Area, St Wendolins, Savannah Park, Southampton Park, Thornwood and Mariannahill II, became the responsibility of the Borough of Pinetown. The NPA is currently serving in an advisory capacity.

A number of broad-based community organizations (usually referred to as civics) operate in Mariannahill and appear able to maintain stability and a productive environment for planned development so long as they are able to ensure political unity among their constituents and at the same time keep control over the process of in-migration. Any such group which loses control of the rate at which new migrants arrive and settle - as has been the case in the informal settlement of Tshelimnyana - will be likely to lose legitimacy and popular support while being destabilised by the turbulence which accompanies uncontrolled in-migration.

□ *Umgababa on the coast immediately south of Durban (Cross et al (d)).*

Umgababa is located towards the southern periphery of the DFR, some 40 to 50 kilometers south of Durban, on the Natal South Coast. It is one of the few areas of KwaZulu to border on the coast, and falls within the Umbumbulu district which is predominantly a rural area. It is located on tribal land, and the responsible authorities are the KwaZulu government and the Umnini tribal authority.

Umgababa is an area of African occupation of long standing, and the immediate coastal area of Umgababa is a holiday resort. In-migration into the area has been heavy since the mid-1980s. Umgababa is currently characterised by a sector of elite income, and appears to represent a colonisation of tribal land around the holiday complex and transport link by relatively well-off Umlazi families fleeing violence.

The area enjoyed a long period of peace and tranquility until comparatively recently. Violence started after February 1990, with clashes between Inkatha and ANC supporters. The induna for the area was killed, and the chief of the area was expelled. An ANC-aligned youth committee seems presently to be in charge but does not have formal authority over the area.

The area suffers from a lack of urban infrastructure. Productive services, in the form of a marketplace for informal sector economic activities, are well-provided but the absence of water reticulation, of sewage disposal and of adequate roads is apparent.

SECTION 2 SOME EXPLANATIONS FOR THE CONFLICT IN THE NATAL REGION

In this section, a selection has been made of a number of explanations given by informed commentators for the causes and nature of the conflict in Natal/KwaZulu. Though differing sharply on particular points, they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they tend to emphasize different causes and different characteristics of the conflict.

The first type of explanation outlined below, focuses on the historical roots of political collective action in the region, and lays particular emphasis on the political dimension of the conflict. Such interpretations have frequently been used to explain conflict in the Natal region.

More comprehensive 'multi-causal' explanations follow which focus not only on political factors, but also on socio-economic conditions in violence-ridden communities, and on cultural and psychological factors which enable or encourage violent behaviour. Some of these explanations are explicitly multi-causal whilst others propose a particular important dimension required for a satisfactory explanation.

In the third place, resource mobilisation - a general approach to explain conflict which has been used by Olivier in Chapter 1 of this publication - is discussed together with a preliminary explanation - focused on the national level - proposed by Heribert Adam and others. This explanation makes the distinction between urban insiders and urban outsiders and introduces the notion of ethnic identity.

POLITICAL COMPETITION

Three explanations falling within this approach have been selected:

(i) *The state, Inkatha and the United Democratic Front (UDF)/African National Congress (ANC)/Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).*

The most important cause of the conflict in Natal/KwaZulu is the power struggle which has developed between Inkatha (often with the support of government agencies) and UDF/ANC/Cosatu groups. This struggle comprises both elements of competition for political power and elements of differential resource allocation.

According to this view, the allocation of resources has become deeply politicised in South Africa. Those controlling resource allocation are guaranteed some political support and power on the ground. The origins of the conflict in Natal, accordingly, are directly linked to Inkatha and its position in the structure of South African politics. The KwaZulu government, with Inkatha as its only ruling party, administers the KwaZulu region, controlling police, resource allocation and education. These activities have enabled the establishment of an extensive regional power-base. Many of these resources are made available to KwaZulu by the central government, and these links

between the state and Inkatha have implications for relations between Inkatha and liberation movements in the region.

Hence, as resistance to bus-fare and rent increases in Natal's townships, and to Bantu education in the region's schools escalated during the 1980s, conflict crystallised between youth groupings and UDF civic organisations, on the one hand, and state, local council, and Inkatha organisations, on the other. Cosatu strike and boycott actions were also opposed by Uwusa counter-actions (Gwala, in this issue).

A further strand of the argument refers to the role of the National Party and the central government, before as well as after 1990. Its pre-1990 policy identified extra-parliamentary movements (in particular, the ANC and PAC) as a threat to South African society. This 'total strategy' approach led to the formation of Joint Management Councils (JMCs) which created direct links between the military apparatus and local government structures. Inkatha, as the representative of a homeland, became directly involved in these activities. Through its participation in local councils, some of its members joined JMCs, thus forming direct links with government security personnel. This cemented ideological ties between Inkatha and security bodies, ties which have been maintained in the 1990s (Minnaar, 1992; Zulu, 1992).

Accordingly, both KwaZulu and the South African security forces have played an important role in shaping the relationship between the UDF/ANC, on the one hand, and Inkatha, on the other. Security bias towards Inkatha has been alleged and in various cases proven, as have direct financial and supportive links between the security forces and Inkatha. Violence perpetrated by the police and the military is not always random. Rather, both deliberate inaction as well as cases of active partisan involvement may be demonstrated (Minnaar, 1992).

It is important to point out that these arguments recognise that elements of the security forces may have acted on their own, independent of state policy, and that poor economic conditions have contributed to the sustained nature of the conflict. Both issues, however, contextualise rather than cause the conflict.

(ii) *The strategy of ungovernability and of 'people's war'*.

The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) has argued that the historical roots of the violence may be traced back to apartheid and the tactics used to enforce this policy, such as forced removals, pass arrests, race classification, and other laws which violate human rights. In addition, poverty, squalor and unemployment are important secondary causes (SAIRR, 1992).

Vicious cycles of attack and counter-attack multiplied in the mid-1980s. The ANC in exile, and affiliated liberation movements, adopted, in response to the exclusion of African people from representation in the new tri-cameral parliament, a liberation strategy which contributed to violence. This strategy was intended to destroy apartheid by rendering black communities ungovernable through the targeting of 'collaborators' (SAIRR, 1992). This was to be achieved through boycotts, stayaways and violent attacks on councillors, members of the police, and their property.

Homelands were also identified as a major target. The intention was to overthrow these governments which were perceived as collaborating with the state, and to use homeland areas as bases from which to continue 'people's war' (SAIRR, 1992). An important element of waging 'people's war' was the involvement of the masses, in contradistinction to mobilising guerilla forces. Youth were assigned a significant role in this struggle for liberation, especially since the ungovernability strategy involved disrupting education in black schools.

These strategies promoted violence in two ways. First, particularly among the youth, control of planned activities was often lost. In some cases, accordingly, the strategy of ungovernability resulted in anarchy. Furthermore, to mobilise people at a young age to act against 'collaborators' promoted the growth of a culture of violence which has persisted into the 1990s. The role of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) has also contributed to this culture of violence. Some Christian leaders in South Africa have helped to "legitimate violence as an instrument of liberation" (SAIRR, 1991:1).

Secondly, these strategies have provoked violent counter-attacks, and in so doing, have produced escalating cycles of violence which have gained their own momentum (SAIRR, 1992). The origins of the conflict between the ANC and IFP are explained in these terms. The strategy to target homeland governments and black local authorities has exacerbated existing antagonisms between the ANC and the IFP. These 'liberation' strategies were met by violent counter-strategies developed both by Inkatha and by others unwilling to conform.

It is important to point out that these arguments do not imply that Inkatha is an innocent victim, as both 'liberation' and conservative groupings have initiated violence, thereby contributing to the persisting cycles of violence (SAIRR, 1992).

(iii) *The UDF in Natal during the early 1980s.*

As the primary extra-parliamentary group organising during the 1980s, the UDF should be viewed as a major actor in the political process of the region. Its composition, activities and organisation up to 1985 have had implications for the high levels of violence which followed. Seekings (1992) sets out a preliminary account of the UDF from 1983-85 in Natal, focusing on leadership, on policy, on attempts to unite opposition groups, and on regional circumstances which affected these factors. Two features stand out: the relationship between Indian and African people, and the presence and role of Inkatha.

The Natal Indian Congress (NIC) was active in Natal from the early 1970s. It was the leading resistance (later, Charterist) organisation opposing the government's constitutional reforms, both before and after the establishment of the UDF. Once formed, moreover, Indian activists featured prominently in the UDF.

The ANC political organisation in the late 1970s and early 1980s in African townships was weak which may be attributed to the role of Inkatha (Seekings, 1992). Civic and political activity in the townships became more active after 1982 but organisation remained weak. Relations between Indian and African activists were characterised by

separate civic, youth and student structures, class divisions, and a growing "anti-Indianism" (Seekings, 1992:8).

During this period, relations between the ANC and Inkatha had deteriorated and interaction between Inkatha and both the newly-formed UDF and the NIC were strained. Verbal clashes between Buthelezi and Indian activists and the former's emphasis on African nationalism alienated Indians in UDF leadership positions. Seekings (1992) proposes that this limited the mobilising potential of the UDF among Africans. A strong Zulu nationalist strand existed in the ideology of activists in townships, and had the UDF presented itself as not anti-Zulu, Inkatha's claims to represent all Zulus would have had less impact.

The UDF's activities in Natal were largely focused on opposition to the Tricameral parliament and on building national and regional structures, rather than on developing grassroots structures, in African townships in particular. Thus, when disillusionment with Inkatha began to grow in these townships, the UDF was slow to mobilise potential supporters. The detention of many UDF leaders in 1984 and 1985 shifted the focus of activities to more centralised decision-making and to a preoccupation with the subsequent trials.

These events took place at a time when African communities were experiencing increasing civic activity and a growing militancy among the youth. "The character, activities and concerns of the UDF in Natal meant that opportunities were not seized, spaces not filled, which might have preempted much of the subsequent violence" (Seekings, 1992:24). Seekings thus proposes that the high violence levels may possibly have been contained, had the UDF organised successfully amongst Africans in the townships in this period.

THE MULTI-CAUSAL APPROACH

Once again, three explanations falling within this approach have been selected. In these cases, the focus is not only on political factors, but also on socio-economic and organisational conditions in affected communities. These explanations relate various dimensions of the conflict to one another. In so doing, they attempt to demonstrate that political, socio-economic, and organisational factors in the Natal region (as discussed in Section 1) function in an interdependent fashion as conflict emerges and persists.

(i) Hindson and Morris (1990) propose that violence has political and socio-economic dimensions; more specifically, the political factors originate in and are sustained by social and material conditions. They locate the conflict in the Natal region at four levels:

- National conflict and the balance of power in South Africa;
- Rivalry between political organisations within the Natal region;
- Antagonisms between local power structures in African residential areas; and
- Social divisions - based on different levels of material deprivation - within and between African residential communities (Hindson and Morris, 1990).

These socio-economic dimensions arise out of the weakening of apartheid and from the economic decline of the 1980s. As a result, class, ethnic and other divisions have re-emerged. Lifting apartheid regulations created opportunities which resulted in increased competition for resources at local level. Abandoning influx control, for example, led to rapid urbanisation and increased competition over land, housing and infrastructure. Migration trends, however, are complex, and an urban-industrial lifestyle does not hold as much promise for prospective in-migrants as has been suggested (see section on migration in this chapter). Increasing class conflict in African urban areas which results from past and present state policy promoting social and economic differentiation amongst urban Africans, exacerbates such competition. Violent conflict, accordingly, emerges between better-off residents in townships and the impoverished in squatter and informal settlements.

The political dimensions of the conflict are shaped by the collapse of local government structures in African residential areas, which has led to the creation of local power structures such as youth, civic and defence organisations, on the one hand, and vigilante and warlord structures, on the other. Since the mid-1980s, the struggle for political power has involved these new groups.

The conflict in the Natal region developed an ANC - Inkatha dimension as a result of the direct link between the KwaZulu government (and thus Inkatha), and local councils. These councils were contested by opposition and youth groups and by civics. Organisations on both sides of the conflict have been plagued by internal power struggles, criminal activities, and a lack of resources to address community requirements. Under these circumstances, violence has in many cases become institutionalised.

Since national and regional political organisations operate through local structures in order to establish and maintain support on the ground, and since local structures utilise the resources and support of national and regional power groups in their local conflicts, a close interdependence exists between local, regional and national branches of these political organisations (Hindson and Morris, 1990).

(ii) Taylor and Shaw (1992) offer a similar argument. They contend that explanations should address why the conflict has occurred where and when it has. In discussing why most violence has occurred in informal settlements on the border of Natal and KwaZulu, they point to forced removals of Africans from 'white' urban areas to 'homelands' which, in the case of Natal, are located close to one another. The failing 'homeland' economy was responsible for the migration of thousands of rural dwellers to peri-urban areas within the Pietermaritzburg-Durban corridor. After the scrapping of influx control, large-scale migration into urban areas of Natal took place.

Taylor and Shaw propose that apartheid policies caused impoverishment, material inequality, social and class division, and ultimately conflict (Taylor and Shaw, 1992:9). This is in contrast to Hindson and Morris' and Olivier's arguments (see the section on resource mobilisation below) which attribute similar causes to the removal of apartheid policies. Taylor and Shaw, like the authors mentioned above, stress the necessity of linking material conditions to the process of political identification with

a particular political group. This is necessary, they argue, in order to explain how these conditions manifest themselves in political conflict.

The role of Inkatha in allocating resources, both regionally and at local level in KwaZulu, and its role as an organisation representing the interests of chiefs, *indunas*, small-scale entrepreneurs and 'warlords', is fundamental to this process of political identification. Simultaneously, the interests of other groups have not been addressed by Inkatha. During the 1980s, the ANC/UDF/Cosatu opposition struggled, under the State of Emergency, to represent such interests (Taylor and Shaw, 1992).

As a result, much of the conflict in the 1990s is spontaneous. Due to a lack of satisfactory representation, local grievances tend to be channelled through whatever form of political organisation is available. Conflict often precedes political identification, rather than the converse. The authors propose that support for political groups needs to be understood in terms of prevailing local economic conditions. When survival is first priority, political identification becomes flexible and pragmatic, and is largely based upon what is perceived to be on offer or to be at risk.

(iii) The explanation proposed by Woods (1992) makes an important distinction between primary causes of the violence and 'instigating' factors which act as catalysts in the process. The most significant difference between this argument and others discussed in this section, is that this explanation focuses more on individuals and their responses to particular situations than on group dynamics.

As with Hindson and Morris's explanation (1990), the causes of the conflict are considered to be rooted in the process of urbanisation. African urban communities are characterised by high migration rates into and within areas, which result in "overcrowding, substandard living conditions, scarcity of resources, and endemic poverty" (Woods, 1992:39). Competition over basic needs is exacerbated by high unemployment and current negative economic growth rates; conditions which also lead to an increased crime rate.

For residents of these informal settlements without a sense of community identity, family life tends to disintegrate and traditional values dissolve. This affects the youth in particular who grow up insecure and alienated from their parents and peers. Added to this are the effects of a society undergoing rapid political and social transformation.

Under such conditions, a growing number of groups in these communities become predisposed to mobilisation by local leaders intent on criminal or political activities. Political competition, accordingly, is seen as a catalyst rather than as a cause of violence. It is the "discontent, insecurity and purposelessness" (Woods, 1992:42) of the situation which causes people to focus on issues of self-interest, which in turn makes them politically mobilisable. The fact that many participants in violent events are politically naive or even unaware of political currents underscores this argument. Thus, though most conflict situations do become politicised, with opposing parties aligning themselves to particular political organisations, the emergence of "new forces", such as hit squads, trained assassins and 'the third force' points to the superficial political nature of much of the violence.

A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE: REVENGE AND FEUDING

Many commentators have argued that violence in the Natal region has become endemic. The conflict has persisted since 1985, producing cycles of retribution which in many cases are linked to, and sustained by, local and regional power struggles. Argyle argues that whatever its initial cause, the conflict is eventually "motivated principally by the desire for revenge" (Argyle, 1992:1).

Argyle compares this conflict between groups, driven mainly by revenge, with blood feuds, which he has studied in the region over the past century. He argues that conflict in urban areas and the recent conflict in the Natal region resemble these feuds of earlier times.

The feud is characterised by the following features:

- seriality understood as a series or sequence of acts of violence rather than a single event.
- opposition groups are not politically autonomous, but part of the same overarching authority. Violence thus occurs between already existing groups, rather than between new groups formed during spontaneous, random clashes. Territorial affiliations usually delineate membership of the groups.
- group solidarity based on material resources (land, livestock, water) and the actions of members, or actions directed against members.
- the so-called "revenge mentality" which has implications for the way in which conflict situations unfold, and for the legal process of assessing the responsibility of those involved. Argyle proposes that responding aggressively to provocation or attack is perceived as a justified, if not legitimate, course of action by the participants.
- the revenge value system requires that group identity be identifiable at any time through clothing, headbands, place of origin. People are seldom perceived to be neutral.
- an elaborate set of codes exists which guard against provocative behaviour when in the territory of another side (Argyle, 1992).

With regard to the current violence in the Natal region, Argyle argues that political affiliation is an additional criterion leading to the formation of groups whose features correspond with those described above. He cites the formation of named territorial divisions incorporating either UDF or Inkatha supporters, and the importance of maintaining the borders between these areas. The reality of group identification and of solidarity, the seriality of the current conflict, and the revenge mentality which sees provocation as a defense, are also noted.

The existence of a culture of violence in Natal is also acknowledged by Collins (1992), although he does not suggest, as Argyle does, that the conflict is motivated mainly by revenge. In the communities of KwaNdengezi, Inanda and Ntuzuma around Durban, violence is increasingly the first option chosen in attempting to resolve conflict situations. This is exacerbated by the availability of firearms and ineffective law enforcement, which encourages people to take the law into their own hands. These circumstances also tend to engender a lack of fear amongst potential perpetrators (Collins, 1992).

As a result, a culture of violence in which revenge plays an important role, has infected African communities. Collins extends this notion beyond the African community, to include the recent wild shooting sprees launched by white men on innocent members of the public. He emphasises that similar events occur in other communities. In African areas, however, such attacks are politicised by the police, the media, local residents, and by political parties seeking the moral highground (Collins, 1992).

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In this publication, Olivier argues that theories of resource mobilisation contribute significantly to understanding the conflict, or, as defined by this theory, political collective action. Less emphasis is placed on socio-psychological determinants of conflict (which Woods (1992) covers), largely because grievances are assumed always to be present, and thus cannot alone explain conflict and violence. The focus instead is on political and organisational aspects of conflict, as these determine whether potential participants are at some point mobilised into political action. Organisation in turn depends on the availability of resources, both material (to enable protest activity and to provide incentives to participants) and political (in the form of political opportunities).

Applying this theory to the South African situation reveals some similarities with the explanations summarised above. The erosion of the apartheid system has caused deep-seated changes evident in:

- the breakdown of traditional boundaries which existed between racial/ethnic groups;
- demographic trends promoting the development of informal settlements;
- an increase of resources (particularly political resources) available to formerly disadvantaged groups; and
- (possibly short-term) economic contraction.

These factors have all led to increased levels of competition in the country. Olivier proposes that competition for scarce resources and ultimately for power, can be seen as the "primary driving force behind the conflict" (Olivier, this issue).

Theories of resource mobilisation also address the sustained and cyclical nature of political collective action. The protest cycle begins when people respond to deeply felt grievances. This usually happens when inequalities are deep and visible and when opportunities for protest emerge. The cycle is initially characterised by peaceful forms of protest action, which over time reach a peak of mobilisation and challenge. More unconventional, lesser known actors may become involved at this point. During this stage, intense competition between groups requires mobilisation for greater support and new forms of collective action are employed to attract supporters.

As power struggles between groups intensify, collective action rapidly becomes disruptive, confrontational, and violent. The theory states that competing groups are eventually faced with a loss of support as a result of exhaustion, repression, or reform. More radical (and often violent) forms of action which do not rely on a mass support base, are consequently adopted. The decline of the cycle results from the effects of a

combination of excessive violence, divisions within organisations, and the institutionalisation of protest (understood as better organisation, the routinisation of protest, and a shift from confrontation to bargaining) (Tarrow, 1989).

"INSIDERS", "OUTSIDERS" AND ETHNIC IDENTITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Adam considers the general nature of the conflict in South Africa by focusing initially on who the participants are and why they participate in conflict events. He poses the central question of why a seemingly inevitable black-white conflict in South Africa has been replaced by widespread inter-African violence (Adam, 1992). Addressing this question from an historical and socio-economic point of view, he draws a distinction between two groups: insiders and outsiders.

The term "insiders" refers to African people who historically had Section 10 rights and could accordingly legally reside and work in 'white' urban areas. This group has established itself permanently in urban areas. "Outsiders" refer to those excluded from permanent residence in 'white' urban areas by apartheid laws. Members of this group were left with the choice either of an impoverished life in the rural areas or of life as illegal residents in peri-urban shack settlements.

The abolition of these apartheid regulations removed state controls over rural-urban and intra-urban migration. This resulted in a struggle between insiders with access to scarce residential and infrastructural resources, and outsiders seeking access. The demise of apartheid thus facilitates the formation of class divisions in African urban areas, a point made earlier by Hindson and Morris (1990). These struggles manifest themselves in clashes between township and shack dwellers. Adam asserts that this type of conflict is often politicised, but that, in the case of Natal/KwaZulu, the narrow interpretation that conflict is rooted in an Inkatha-ANC or tribal feud is unsatisfactory since clashes between insiders and outsiders are occurring elsewhere in the country.

It is clear that many of the theories and interpretations summarised above identify the demise of apartheid as a fundamental watershed. A number go further and point to increasing ethnic tensions which result from the breakdown of apartheid structures. Adam notes that during times of transition, ethnicity becomes politicised. Political actors realise that ethnic identification may, through the exclusion of outsiders, reduce competition over resources. Ethnic exclusivity helps to rationalise deprivation and injustice, by assigning blame to other groups. Group identity also acts as consolation for the insecurity and hardships facing many during this crisis period. Adam cautions that this "ethno-nationalism" should not be reduced to material interests alone. This argument resembles that of Taylor and Shaw (1992) summarised above in that the process of political (and potentially, ethnic) identification is directly linked to the material conditions of a particular community.

Nonetheless, reality in South Africa today is that common history and common culture often do not determine political identification. Adam cites the examples of both Afrikaners- and Zulu-speaking people who within their language groups have clashed, sometimes violently, over conflicting political interests. Ethnic identity, while

remaining an important resource for political mobilisation, cannot on its own be identified as a cause for the conflict.

SECTION 3 TRENDS OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION 1986-1992

This section builds on the previous two. Selected trends drawn from the *Conflict Trends in Natal* database will be discussed by using appropriate data as well as the analyses and summaries given above. Data have been aggregated to address four questions.

THE OCCURENCE OVER TIME OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

□ "When did the conflict occur?"

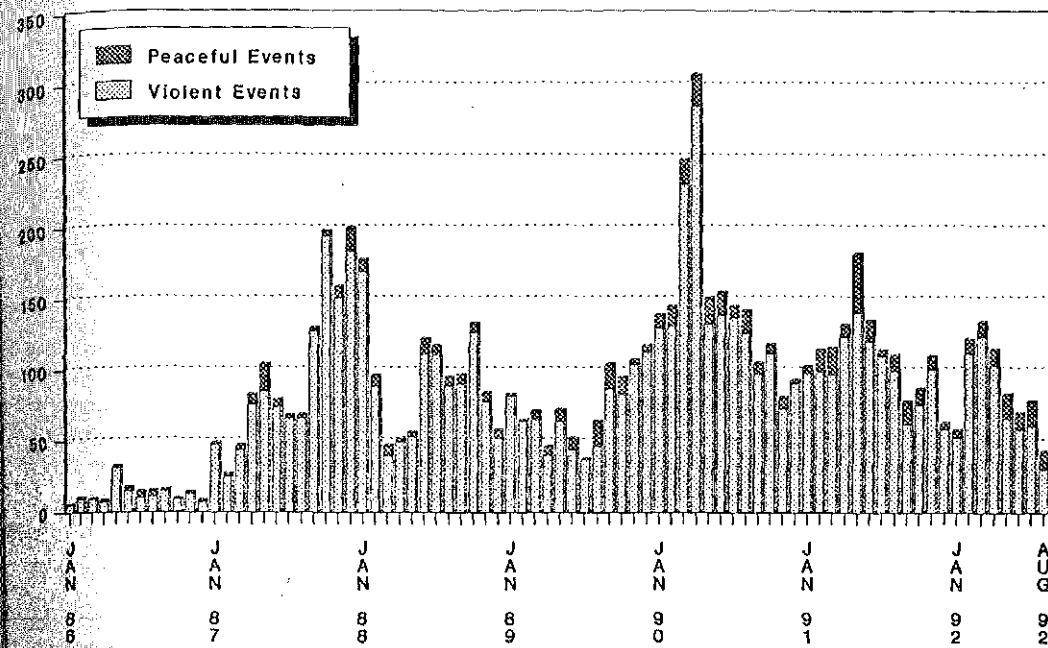
Figure 1 exhibits both peaceful and violent conflict events in the Natal region, recorded monthly. A general increase from 1986 to 1990 in the number of events is evident. From 1990 to 1991, levels dropped from 1 817 to 1 333 events. Four features of this graphic have been selected for further discussion. They are: the sustained nature of conflict from 1987; increases in conflict levels in 1987 and in 1990; the general decrease from 1990 to mid-1992; and the predominance of violent as opposed to peaceful forms of collective action.

(i) *The sustained nature of political collective action in the Natal region from 1987*

The sustained nature of conflict in the Natal region has become a disturbing feature of the South African political scene. Since February 1987, the monthly count of recorded events has not fallen below 37, indicating that for nearly five years there has not been a single peaceful month in this region. In fact, a monthly comparison between the number of conflict events and the number of reported fatalities in the Natal region (see Figure 10 below), underscores the sustained nature of violent events of conflict. A second comparison, between monthly fatalities in the Transvaal (Human Rights Commission) and in the Natal region, from January 1991 to May 1992, further illustrates the consistently high levels of violence in the Natal region. The highest count of recorded monthly fatalities in the Transvaal was 277 (March 1992) and the lowest, 13 (Feb 1991). In the Natal region, the highest was 162 (March 1992) and the lowest, 66 (Oct 1991). The persistence of this kind of conflict in the Natal region has created the conditions of what may be called a low-level civil war.

This sustained conflict may first be discussed by identifying conditions conducive to conflict which have persisted over the time period. Problems associated with poverty

FIGURE 1
RECORDED VIOLENT AND PEACEFUL EVENTS
OF POLITICAL CONFLICT BY MONTH



unemployment and a lack of infrastructure, outlined in section 1 above, and which Woods (1992) and Taylor and Shaw (1992) emphasise, undoubtedly provide the fuel which keeps conflict on the boil. Similar conditions, however, prevail in other areas of the country which have not experienced conflict on a similar scale.

Interpretations pointing to a culture of violence are also relevant here. The seriality of violent clashes; the implications of violence between defined, opposing groups; and the "revenge mentality" (Argyle, 1992) all contribute to the sustained nature of this conflict, as does the availability of weapons and inadequate law enforcement, which Collins (1992) has noted.

Three more observations can be made. Hindson and Morris (1990) argue that the conflict may be analysed along four dimensions (see section 2 above). Given the existence of Inkatha as a powerful regional political actor, two of these are particularly significant in the Natal region. The first relates to regional rivalry between political organisations. Competition between political organisations often leads to conflict over the control and allocation of material resources, particularly in urban areas. Hence, in the Natal region, clashes over the allocation of resources occur between formal and

informal ('warlord') local government structures aligned to the KwaZulu government and Inkatha, and youth and extra-parliamentary structures aligned to the UDF/ANC. The pertinent point is that, in this region, conflict develops between more evenly matched protagonists than is the case elsewhere in the country. In the 1980s, town councillors outside the Natal region, for example, lacked the resource base which Inkatha provided to those in the region (Booth, 1988), on which they could rely during times of attack by opposition groups.

Political competition at the national level comprises the second relevant dimension. During the present period of political transition, national and local organisations belonging to the same political movement have become deeply interdependent. As Hindson and Morris put it, "to gain power locally the major political organisations have to operate through the local power centres." Consequently, "in their local conflicts, local power structures draw on the resources and support of regional and national centres of power" (Hindson and Morris, 1990: 23). In short, it is in the interests of national political organisations to gain and sustain support in conflict-torn communities.

The ANC's strategy of ungovernability (SAIRR, 1992) has also contributed to the persistence of conflict. A breakdown of order in many communities has been promoted by the identification of members of the police as targets which, in turn, has created conditions in which a re-establishment of order has become a very difficult challenge. Strategies aimed at the targeting of 'collaborators' and the mobilisation of school-going youths, moreover, have also played a role.

(ii) The increase of political collective action in 1987

A major increase in the frequency of conflict events occurred over the five month period from September 1987 to January 1988, during which time the average monthly count was 172 - a significant increase from 67 in August 1987. Most events occurred in the Pietermaritzburg area (see Figures 4 and 5). It is worth noting, moreover, that the national State of Emergency imposed in June 1986, had succeeded in repressing conflict in the rest of the country during this period. Fatalities in political conflict country-wide had decreased from 1 352 in 1986 to 706 in 1987 (Bennett and Quin, 1989) while in the Natal region, they had increased from 171 to 644. This comparison raises two questions: Why did a sudden increase occur in the Pietermaritzburg area in particular, and why were state security forces unable (or unwilling) to control the violence in that area?

A number of commentators have pointed to factors in the area which were conducive to such an outbreak. Suffice it to say that these are not sufficient reasons to explain the conflict.

Socio-economic conditions and inadequate infrastructural development in Pietermaritzburg's townships have been cited. The region had high unemployment, coupled with low industrial and economic growth rates (Cross et al, 1988). The population of the Durban Functional Region and Pietermaritzburg complex had grown most rapidly from 1980-1985 (see section 1 on demography), which added to the strain

on resources. These conditions are conducive to the occurrence of indiscriminate violence. Taylor and Shaw (1992) suggest that this type of violence originates in poor socio-economic conditions, and occurs before people have identified with any specific political group. The inability of the political leaders in Pietermaritzburg to control grassroots violence during and after various peace talks which took place during 1987/88 illustrates this. These peace efforts eventually broke down.

Political competition at the regional level is the explanation most often given for this outburst of conflict. It has been argued that the conflict commenced when Inkatha acted to oppose and match the increasing strength of the UDF and Cosatu in the area, strength forged by their tactics of opposition to the state. These two organisations had succeeded in gaining substantial support from local community structures. Inkatha which had little bureaucratic control over Natal townships around Pietermaritzburg, resorted to coercive tactics which included forced recruitment drives. These served to further unite the affected communities against Inkatha (Gwala, 1988), which in turn, resulted in backlashes by activists and a spread of violence into Vulindlela which is situated in KwaZulu. The formation of Uwusa in 1986, a union supported by Inkatha, exacerbated the conflict.

The role of the security forces in the area during this period is also significant. Aitchison argues that the outburst was caused largely by Inkatha's bid to increase its support base in the area as that support base was diminishing elsewhere. Given Inkatha's alleged aims, the "curious inability or unwillingness of the state's forces to crush the violence raging in the region" (Aitchison, 1989:59) suggests mutually-beneficial links between the state security forces and Inkatha.

(iii) 1990: The peak of the conflict in the Natal region

The second major increase in conflict levels occurred during the first few months of 1990. Over the entire six-year period studied, the average monthly count is 88; in March and April 1990, 247 and 306 events were recorded respectively, the highest monthly counts in the database.

Since conflict events were high throughout the country during these months (see Figure 11 below), a national context needs to be developed within which these trends may be located. To this end, the resource mobilisation approach seems appropriate. In February 1990, the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela created political space in which the ANC could freely organise and mobilise. The launch of the process of political transition assured the ANC a role in national negotiations. The same could not be said for Inkatha. In addition, the SAIRR has suggested that the ANC's campaigns, launched in 1984, to make the townships ungovernable through mass action, were intensified in 1990, despite these moves towards national negotiations (SAIRR, 1992).

Accordingly, competition over organisational and other resources in the Natal region politicised rapidly, with both the ANC and Inkatha battling to gain support of communities. The 'Seven Days War' in the Pietermaritzburg area in March/April 1990 illustrates this (Minnaar, 1992). The establishment of Inkatha as a political party (the

Inkatha Freedom Party) in July 1990 and subsequent recruitment drives on the Reef underscore the political outcomes of this outburst.

(iv) The drop in the number of events and fatalities since 1990

During the period April 1990 to August 1992 (when data collection was temporarily suspended in order to begin analysis), average monthly counts dropped. For instance, during the first six months of 1992, 653 events were recorded, compared to 889 for the same period in 1991. This trend is significant since public perceptions seem to suggest that the conflict has escalated over this period.

As will be shown below, though the numbers of conflict-related events and fatalities have decreased over this period, the proportion of events in which fatalities occurred has increased (see Figures 7 and 9 below). These trends suggest a change in the nature of, rather than a resolution of, political collective action. It is worth noting that the only area where lasting peace, to date, has been established is Mpumalanga, between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It would appear that conflict no longer involves large groups or entire communities. Rather, smaller, more organised groups appear to execute well planned attacks on selected targets.

Conflict in the Natal region, accordingly, seems to exhibit at present features of both the middle and final stages of the protest cycle described by Tarrow (1989) (section 2). Intense, confrontational power struggles between groups; the presence of a variety of actors in the conflict; and the use of excessive violence characterise these stages. The theory states that competing groups are eventually faced with a loss of support as a result of exhaustion, repression or reform. In the Natal region, ordinary people are probably facing sheer exhaustion from the ongoing violence. The war between the ANC and Inkatha may well have alienated grassroots support, forcing these organisations to employ smaller, hit-squad type groups to carry out attacks, since mobilising ordinary residents has become more difficult (Minnaar, 1992a).

It is not apparent, however, that this intense violence signals the end of the protest cycle in the Natal region, as the theory suggests it should. The final, more violent stage of the cycle theoretically passes quickly. The Natal/KwaZulu region may well be suspended in this phase. It could be argued that two additional factors, repression and reform, which the theory suggests contribute to the conclusion of the cycle, are either absent or have been applied incorrectly in South Africa and in the Natal region. The persistence of poor socio-economic conditions facing conflict-torn communities is another issue retarding the completion of the cycle.

Finally, and probably crucially, the theory holds that the end of the protest and conflict cycles depends greatly on the establishment of a democratic political environment which facilitates bargaining, the institutionalisation of protest, and decision-making free of violence. These conditions are sorely lacking in South Africa at present.

(v) *The predominance of violent as opposed to peaceful forms of political collective action*

Figure 1 reveals that the vast majority of events over the study period have been violent rather than peaceful (see Appendix 1 for definitions). By comparison, research carried out on political collective action in the PWV area over the 1970-84 period found that 54% of all events were peaceful (Olivier, 1990). While the Natal region was not as politically active as the PWV during this period, this dramatic shift nonetheless has profound implications for the nature of protest politics and of conflict in the Natal region.

Numerous reasons for the violent nature of conflict in the Natal region have been suggested. At the most general level, the exclusion of the majority of South Africans from democratic decision-making is often mooted. Under such conditions, violence is widely perceived to be the only effective means of political expression available to those excluded. The ANC's ungovernability strategies were rooted in such perceptions. Other non-violent tactics like boycotts and stayaways often became violent either when coercion was used to enforce community compliance with 'liberation' policies (SAIRR, 1992), or when state security forces applied repressive measures. By way of comparison, in Italy, the protest cycle from 1966-73 was spared excessive violence by the functioning of a democratic system throughout the cycle (Tarrow, 1989).

At community level, bargaining and competition over resources are also hampered by undemocratic conditions. Local governments established by the state usually lack legitimacy whilst voluntary associations, particularly in informal settlements, struggle to consolidate (see section on local authorities). Mediating conflict under such circumstances is difficult, especially since procedures for dispute resolution relating to issues of crime and of conflict are generally unavailable. Access to the legal process, for most residents, is also out of reach and suffers from limited credibility as a result. In this environment, conflict is typically resolved by the use of force (Collins, 1992).

In short, these currents have all contributed to the establishment of a culture of violence. The State of Emergency remained in place for four of the six years covered by the database. It drastically limited freedom of expression and coincided with excessive state repression which continued from 1976 through the Emergency years into the 1980s. Violent actions against the security forces and ordinary peoples' distrust of the police flow from these measures and their applications. These too have contributed to the establishment of a culture of violence (Collins, 1992; Minnaar, 1992).

The role played by state security forces may be analysed in two ways. On the one hand, high levels of violence can be attributed to ineffectual security force intervention (see Minnaar, 1992). This produces a loss of faith in the security forces and ultimately in the legal process. Violence flourishes and facilitates the establishment of alternative legal or retributive structures, like people's courts. More generally, the perception may develop that revenge attacks represent the only viable means to resolving conflict.

On the other hand, an effective state security force may inhibit violence, by raising the costs of violent action for ordinary citizens. In South Africa before the mid-1980s,

when conflict was principally between the members of black communities and the state, the vastly superior resources available to the state probably constrained violent action. Since 1985, particularly in the Natal region, the nature of the conflict has shifted and now includes competing political groups whose repressive capabilities are not as effective as those of the state. Violent tactics become more viable under such circumstances.

The theory on protest cycles suggests that the conclusion of the cycle is in part due to state repression responding to escalating violence. To date, this has not occurred in South Africa. The Emergency was lifted in late 1990, the year in which conflict levels reached a peak in the Natal region. This raises two questions: first, should more repressive tactics aimed at containing the violence be employed by the present government or by a new government? Second, if repression has curbed violence in other parts of the world, does this suggest that ineffectual security force intervention is largely responsible for the high levels of violence in South Africa?

THE SPATIAL LOCATION OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

□ "Where did the conflict occur?"

(i) Urban areas as the primary location of the conflict

Figure 2 aggregates, on an annual basis, conflict events as they occurred in three settlement types:

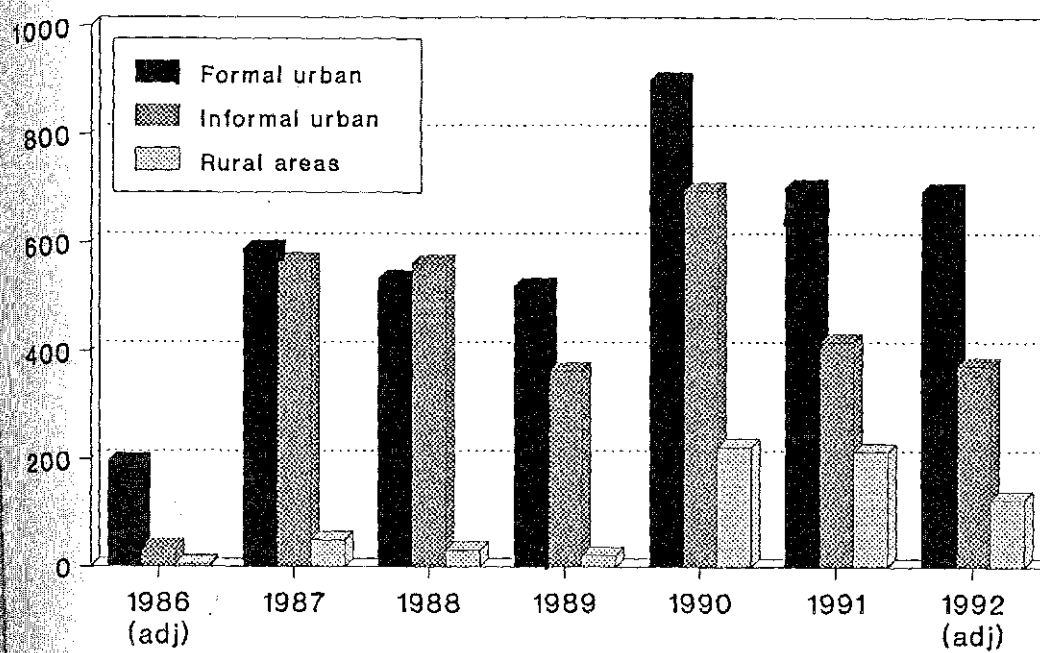
- formal urban areas;
- dense informal settlements within or close to urban areas (see section 1 for a discussion on informal settlements); and
- rural areas.

Most events occurred in urban areas. The dynamics of informal settlements, as described in section 1, suggest that conflict is more likely to result in these than in formal urban areas. Though the database suggests the converse, data capture difficulties in this regard (as described in the methodological appendix) may explain this apparent anomaly. Annual trends in the location of conflict events also reveal a substantial increase in rural conflict since 1990.

As has been shown, conflict in the Natal region is often explained in terms of the dynamics operating in urban areas. By 1989, more than half of the residents in Natal/KwaZulu were urbanised, with close to fifty percent living in shack communities (see section on demography). Problems associated with administration and meeting communities' needs in the vast informal settlements which resulted from rapid urbanisation, are immense (see section on informal settlements). Urbanisation, housing and infrastructural shortages, economic decline, and associated psychological effects of an alienating environment, are considered basic causes of conflict (Adam, 1992; Hindson and Morris, 1990; Taylor and Shaw, 1992; Woods, 1992). Migration streams into and within urban areas contribute to the strain on resources. In addition, without strong community organisations controlling in-migration, these migration streams often import violence.

FIGURE 2

RECORDED POLITICAL CONFLICT BY SETTLEMENT TYPE IN NATAL/KWAZULU



A number of commentators have argued that the Natal conflict is rooted in clashes between "insiders" who have access to scarce residential resources, and "outsiders" who when settling in urban areas, seek such access (Adam, 1992). "Much of the political conflict has centered around the question of the incorporation of Africans (or sections of the African population) into city life and government" (Hindson and Morris, 1990:21).

Olivier has argued that political collective action is more likely to occur when organisational resources are available to competing groups (Olivier, this issue). Without such resources, it is difficult to mobilise aggrieved people. The rejection of town councillors and the system of Black Local Authorities by opposition groups provided extensive organisational opportunities in urban areas. Many of these opportunities were exploited by forming alternative community organisations. These structures competed with existing ones for control over resource allocation, and thus for power at the local level. The examples of Lindelani, Mariannhill, and Umgababa (section 1) illustrate these dynamics.

As a result, a culture of violence in which revenge plays an important role, has infected African communities. Collins extends this notion beyond the African community, to include the recent wild shooting sprees launched by white men on innocent members of the public. He emphasises that similar events occur in other communities. In African areas, however, such attacks are politicised by the police, the media, local residents, and by political parties seeking the moral highground (Collins, 1992).

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In this publication, Olivier argues that theories of resource mobilisation contribute significantly to understanding the conflict, or, as defined by this theory, political collective action. Less emphasis is placed on socio-psychological determinants of conflict (which Woods (1992) covers), largely because grievances are assumed always to be present, and thus cannot alone explain conflict and violence. The focus instead is on political and organisational aspects of conflict, as these determine whether potential participants are at some point mobilised into political action. Organisation in turn depends on the availability of resources, both material (to enable protest activity and to provide incentives to participants) and political (in the form of political opportunities).

Applying this theory to the South African situation reveals some similarities with the explanations summarised above. The erosion of the apartheid system has caused deep-seated changes evident in:

- the breakdown of traditional boundaries which existed between racial/ethnic groups;
- demographic trends promoting the development of informal settlements;
- an increase of resources (particularly political resources) available to formerly disadvantaged groups; and
- (possibly short-term) economic contraction.

These factors have all led to increased levels of competition in the country. Olivier proposes that competition for scarce resources and ultimately for power, can be seen as the "primary driving force behind the conflict" (Olivier, this issue).

Theories of resource mobilisation also address the sustained and cyclical nature of political collective action. The protest cycle begins when people respond to deeply felt grievances. This usually happens when inequalities are deep and visible and when opportunities for protest emerge. The cycle is initially characterised by peaceful forms of protest action, which over time reach a peak of mobilisation and challenge. More unconventional, lesser known actors may become involved at this point. During this stage, intense competition between groups requires mobilisation for greater support, and new forms of collective action are employed to attract supporters.

As power struggles between groups intensify, collective action rapidly becomes disruptive, confrontational, and violent. The theory states that competing groups are eventually faced with a loss of support as a result of exhaustion, repression, or reform. More radical (and often violent) forms of action which do not rely on a mass support base, are consequently adopted. The decline of the cycle results from the effects of a

combination of excessive violence, divisions within organisations, and the institutionalisation of protest (understood as better organisation, the routinisation of protest, and a shift from confrontation to bargaining) (Tarrow, 1989).

"INSIDERS", "OUTSIDERS" AND ETHNIC IDENTITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Adam considers the general nature of the conflict in South Africa by focusing initially on who the participants are and why they participate in conflict events. He poses the central question of why a seemingly inevitable black-white conflict in South Africa has been replaced by widespread inter-African violence (Adam, 1992). Addressing this question from an historical and socio-economic point of view, he draws a distinction between two groups: insiders and outsiders.

The term "insiders" refers to African people who historically had Section 10 rights and could accordingly legally reside and work in 'white' urban areas. This group has established itself permanently in urban areas. "Outsiders" refer to those excluded from permanent residence in 'white' urban areas by apartheid laws. Members of this group were left with the choice either of an impoverished life in the rural areas or of life as illegal residents in peri-urban shack settlements.

The abolition of these apartheid regulations removed state controls over rural-urban and intra-urban migration. This resulted in a struggle between insiders with access to scarce residential and infrastructural resources, and outsiders seeking access. The demise of apartheid thus facilitates the formation of class divisions in African urban areas, a point made earlier by Hindson and Morris (1990). These struggles manifest themselves in clashes between township and shack dwellers. Adam asserts that this type of conflict is often politicised, but that, in the case of Natal/KwaZulu, the narrow interpretation that conflict is rooted in an Inkatha-ANC or tribal feud is unsatisfactory since clashes between insiders and outsiders are occurring elsewhere in the country.

It is clear that many of the theories and interpretations summarised above identify the demise of apartheid as a fundamental watershed. A number go further and point to increasing ethnic tensions which result from the breakdown of apartheid structures. Adam notes that during times of transition, ethnicity becomes politicised. Political actors realise that ethnic identification may, through the exclusion of outsiders, reduce competition over resources. Ethnic exclusivity helps to rationalise deprivation and injustice, by assigning blame to other groups. Group identity also acts as consolation for the insecurity and hardships facing many during this crisis period. Adam cautions that this "ethno-nationalism" should not be reduced to material interests alone. This argument resembles that of Taylor and Shaw (1992) summarised above in that the process of political (and potentially, ethnic) identification is directly linked to the material conditions of a particular community.

Nonetheless, reality in South Africa today is that common history and common culture often do not determine political identification. Adam cites the examples of both Afrikaans- and Zulu-speaking people who within their language groups have clashed, sometimes violently, over conflicting political interests. Ethnic identity, while

remaining an important resource for political mobilisation, cannot on its own be identified as a cause for the conflict.

SECTION 3 TRENDS OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION 1986-1992

This section builds on the previous two. Selected trends drawn from the *Conflict Trends in Natal* database will be discussed by using appropriate data as well as the analyses and summaries given above. Data have been aggregated to address four questions.

THE OCCURENCE OVER TIME OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

□ "When did the conflict occur?"

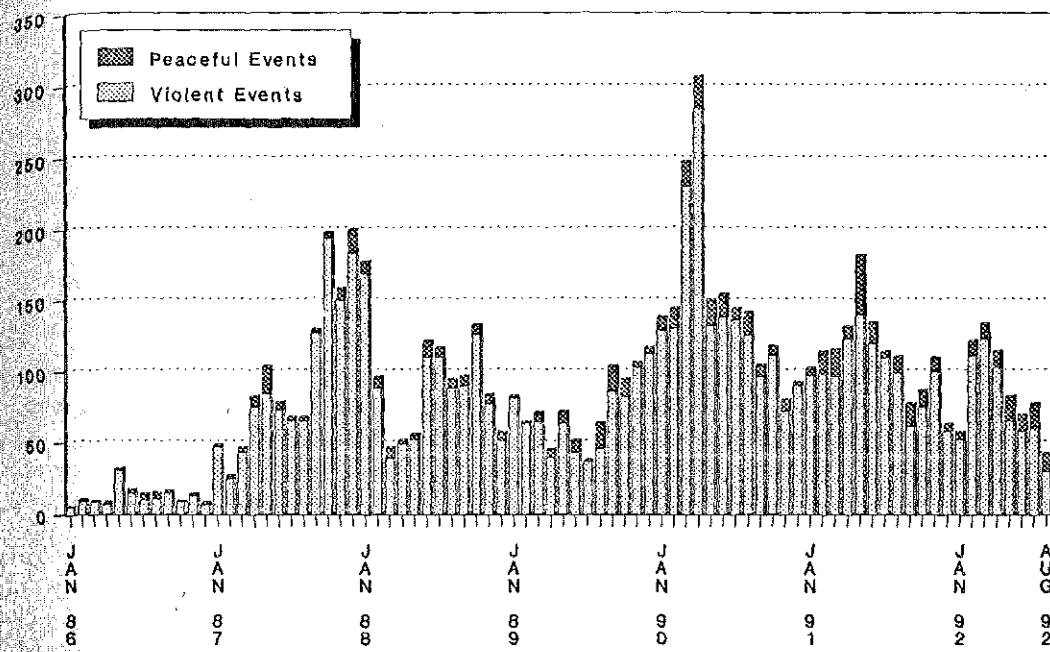
Figure 1 exhibits both peaceful and violent conflict events in the Natal region, recorded monthly. A general increase from 1986 to 1990 in the number of events is evident. From 1990 to 1991, levels dropped from 1 817 to 1 333 events. Four features of this graphic have been selected for further discussion. They are: the sustained nature of conflict from 1987; increases in conflict levels in 1987 and in 1990; the general decrease from 1990 to mid-1992; and the predominance of violent as opposed to peaceful forms of collective action.

(i) *The sustained nature of political collective action in the Natal region from 1987*

The sustained nature of conflict in the Natal region has become a disturbing feature of the South African political scene. Since February 1987, the monthly count of recorded events has not fallen below 37, indicating that for nearly five years there has not been a single peaceful month in this region. In fact, a monthly comparison between the number of conflict events and the number of reported fatalities in the Natal region (see Figure 10 below), underscores the sustained nature of violent events of conflict. A second comparison, between monthly fatalities in the Transvaal (Human Rights Commission) and in the Natal region, from January 1991 to May 1992, further illustrates the consistently high levels of violence in the Natal region. The highest count of recorded monthly fatalities in the Transvaal was 277 (March 1992) and the lowest, 13 (Feb 1991). In the Natal region, the highest was 162 (March 1992) and the lowest, 66 (Oct 1991). The persistence of this kind of conflict in the Natal region has created the conditions of what may be called a low-level civil war.

This sustained conflict may first be discussed by identifying conditions conducive to conflict which have persisted over the time period. Problems associated with poverty

FIGURE 1
RECORDED VIOLENT AND PEACEFUL EVENTS
OF POLITICAL CONFLICT BY MONTH



unemployment and a lack of infrastructure, outlined in section 1 above, and which Woods (1992) and Taylor and Shaw (1992) emphasise, undoubtedly provide the fuel which keeps conflict on the boil. Similar conditions, however, prevail in other areas of the country which have not experienced conflict on a similar scale.

Interpretations pointing to a culture of violence are also relevant here. The seriality of violent clashes; the implications of violence between defined, opposing groups; and the "revenge mentality" (Argyle, 1992) all contribute to the sustained nature of this conflict, as does the availability of weapons and inadequate law enforcement, which Collins (1992) has noted.

Three more observations can be made. Hindson and Morris (1990) argue that the conflict may be analysed along four dimensions (see section 2 above). Given the existence of Inkatha as a powerful regional political actor, two of these are particularly significant in the Natal region. The first relates to regional rivalry between political organisations. Competition between political organisations often leads to conflict over the control and allocation of material resources, particularly in urban areas. Hence, in the Natal region, clashes over the allocation of resources occur between formal and

informal ('warlord') local government structures aligned to the KwaZulu government and Inkatha, and youth and extra-parliamentary structures aligned to the UDF/ANC. The pertinent point is that, in this region, conflict develops between more evenly matched protagonists than is the case elsewhere in the country. In the 1980s, town councillors outside the Natal region, for example, lacked the resource base which Inkatha provided to those in the region (Booth, 1988), on which they could rely during times of attack by opposition groups.

Political competition at the national level comprises the second relevant dimension. During the present period of political transition, national and local organisations belonging to the same political movement have become deeply interdependent. As Hindson and Morris put it, "to gain power locally the major political organisations have to operate through the local power centres." Consequently, "in their local conflicts, local power structures draw on the resources and support of regional and national centres of power" (Hindson and Morris, 1990: 23). In short, it is in the interests of national political organisations to gain and sustain support in conflict-torn communities.

The ANC's strategy of ungovernability (SAIRR, 1992) has also contributed to the persistence of conflict. A breakdown of order in many communities has been promoted by the identification of members of the police as targets which, in turn, has created conditions in which a re-establishment of order has become a very difficult challenge. Strategies aimed at the targeting of 'collaborators' and the mobilisation of school-going youths, moreover, have also played a role.

(ii) *The increase of political collective action in 1987*

A major increase in the frequency of conflict events occurred over the five month period from September 1987 to January 1988, during which time the average monthly count was 172 - a significant increase from 67 in August 1987. Most events occurred in the Pietermaritzburg area (see Figures 4 and 5). It is worth noting, moreover, that the national State of Emergency imposed in June 1986, had succeeded in repressing conflict in the rest of the country during this period. Fatalities in political conflict country-wide had decreased from 1 352 in 1986 to 706 in 1987 (Bennett and Quin, 1989) while in the Natal region, they had increased from 171 to 644. This comparison raises two questions: Why did a sudden increase occur in the Pietermaritzburg area in particular, and why were state security forces unable (or unwilling) to control the violence in that area?

A number of commentators have pointed to factors in the area which were conducive to such an outbreak. Suffice it to say that these are not sufficient reasons to explain the conflict.

Socio-economic conditions and inadequate infrastructural development in Pietermaritzburg's townships have been cited. The region had high unemployment, coupled with low industrial and economic growth rates (Cross et al, 1988). The population of the Durban Functional Region and Pietermaritzburg complex had grown most rapidly from 1980-1985 (see section 1 on demography), which added to the strain

on resources. These conditions are conducive to the occurrence of indiscriminate violence. Taylor and Shaw (1992) suggest that this type of violence originates in poor socio-economic conditions, and occurs before people have identified with any specific political group. The inability of the political leaders in Pietermaritzburg to control grassroots violence during and after various peace talks which took place during 1987/88 illustrates this. These peace efforts eventually broke down.

Political competition at the regional level is the explanation most often given for this outburst of conflict. It has been argued that the conflict commenced when Inkatha acted to oppose and match the increasing strength of the UDF and Cosatu in the area, strength forged by their tactics of opposition to the state. These two organisations had succeeded in gaining substantial support from local community structures. Inkatha which had little bureaucratic control over Natal townships around Pietermaritzburg, resorted to coercive tactics which included forced recruitment drives. These served to further unite the affected communities against Inkatha (Gwala, 1988), which in turn, resulted in backlashes by activists and a spread of violence into Vulindlela which is situated in KwaZulu. The formation of Uwusa in 1986, a union supported by Inkatha, exacerbated the conflict.

The role of the security forces in the area during this period is also significant. Aitchison argues that the outburst was caused largely by Inkatha's bid to increase its support base in the area as that support base was diminishing elsewhere. Given Inkatha's alleged aims, the "curious inability or unwillingness of the state's forces to crush the violence raging in the region" (Aitchison, 1989:59) suggests mutually-beneficial links between the state security forces and Inkatha.

(iii) 1990: The peak of the conflict in the Natal region

The second major increase in conflict levels occurred during the first few months of 1990. Over the entire six-year period studied, the average monthly count is 88; in March and April 1990, 247 and 306 events were recorded respectively, the highest monthly counts in the database.

Since conflict events were high throughout the country during these months (see Figure 11 below), a national context needs to be developed within which these trends may be located. To this end, the resource mobilisation approach seems appropriate. In February 1990, the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela created political space in which the ANC could freely organise and mobilise. The launch of the process of political transition assured the ANC a role in national negotiations. The same could not be said for Inkatha. In addition, the SAIRR has suggested that the ANC's campaigns, launched in 1984, to make the townships ungovernable through mass action, were intensified in 1990, despite these moves towards national negotiations (SAIRR, 1992).

Accordingly, competition over organisational and other resources in the Natal region politicised rapidly, with both the ANC and Inkatha battling to gain support of communities. The 'Seven Days War' in the Pietermaritzburg area in March/April 1990 illustrates this (Minnaar, 1992). The establishment of Inkatha as a political party (the

Inkatha Freedom Party) in July 1990 and subsequent recruitment drives on the Reef underscore the political outcomes of this outburst.

(iv) The drop in the number of events and fatalities since 1990

During the period April 1990 to August 1992 (when data collection was temporarily suspended in order to begin analysis), average monthly counts dropped. For instance, during the first six months of 1992, 653 events were recorded, compared to 889 for the same period in 1991. This trend is significant since public perceptions seem to suggest that the conflict has escalated over this period.

As will be shown below, though the numbers of conflict-related events and fatalities have decreased over this period, the proportion of events in which fatalities occurred has increased (see Figures 7 and 9 below). These trends suggest a change in the nature of, rather than a resolution of, political collective action. It is worth noting that the only area where lasting peace, to date, has been established is Mpumalanga, between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It would appear that conflict no longer involves large groups or entire communities. Rather, smaller, more organised groups appear to execute well planned attacks on selected targets.

Conflict in the Natal region, accordingly, seems to exhibit at present features of both the middle and final stages of the protest cycle described by Tarrow (1989) (section 2). Intense, confrontational power struggles between groups; the presence of a variety of actors in the conflict; and the use of excessive violence characterise these stages. The theory states that competing groups are eventually faced with a loss of support as a result of exhaustion, repression or reform. In the Natal region, ordinary people are probably facing sheer exhaustion from the ongoing violence. The war between the ANC and Inkatha may well have alienated grassroots support, forcing these organisations to employ smaller, hit-squad type groups to carry out attacks, since mobilising ordinary residents has become more difficult (Minnaar, 1992a).

It is not apparent, however, that this intense violence signals the end of the protest cycle in the Natal region, as the theory suggests it should. The final, more violent stage of the cycle theoretically passes quickly. The Natal/KwaZulu region may well be suspended in this phase. It could be argued that two additional factors, repression and reform, which the theory suggests contribute to the conclusion of the cycle, are either absent or have been applied incorrectly in South Africa and in the Natal region. The persistence of poor socio-economic conditions facing conflict-torn communities is another issue retarding the completion of the cycle.

Finally, and probably crucially, the theory holds that the end of the protest and conflict cycles depends greatly on the establishment of a democratic political environment which facilitates bargaining, the institutionalisation of protest, and decision-making free of violence. These conditions are sorely lacking in South Africa at present.

(v) *The predominance of violent as opposed to peaceful forms of political collective action*

Figure 1 reveals that the vast majority of events over the study period have been violent rather than peaceful (see Appendix 1 for definitions). By comparison, research carried out on political collective action in the PWV area over the 1970-84 period found that 54% of all events were peaceful (Olivier, 1990). While the Natal region was not as politically active as the PWV during this period, this dramatic shift nonetheless has profound implications for the nature of protest politics and of conflict in the Natal region.

Numerous reasons for the violent nature of conflict in the Natal region have been suggested. At the most general level, the exclusion of the majority of South Africans from democratic decision-making is often mooted. Under such conditions, violence is widely perceived to be the only effective means of political expression available to those excluded. The ANC's ungovernability strategies were rooted in such perceptions. Other non-violent tactics like boycotts and stayaways often became violent either when coercion was used to enforce community compliance with 'liberation' policies (SAIRR, 1992), or when state security forces applied repressive measures. By way of comparison, in Italy, the protest cycle from 1966-73 was spared excessive violence by the functioning of a democratic system throughout the cycle (Tarrow, 1989).

At community level, bargaining and competition over resources are also hampered by undemocratic conditions. Local governments established by the state usually lack legitimacy whilst voluntary associations, particularly in informal settlements, struggle to consolidate (see section on local authorities). Mediating conflict under such circumstances is difficult, especially since procedures for dispute resolution relating to issues of crime and of conflict are generally unavailable. Access to the legal process, for most residents, is also out of reach and suffers from limited credibility as a result. In this environment, conflict is typically resolved by the use of force (Collins, 1992).

In short, these currents have all contributed to the establishment of a culture of violence. The State of Emergency remained in place for four of the six years covered by the database. It drastically limited freedom of expression and coincided with excessive state repression which continued from 1976 through the Emergency years into the 1980s. Violent actions against the security forces and ordinary peoples' distrust of the police flow from these measures and their applications. These too have contributed to the establishment of a culture of violence (Collins, 1992; Minnaar, 1992).

The role played by state security forces may be analysed in two ways. On the one hand, high levels of violence can be attributed to ineffectual security force intervention (see Minnaar, 1992). This produces a loss of faith in the security forces and ultimately in the legal process. Violence flourishes and facilitates the establishment of alternative legal or retributive structures, like people's courts. More generally, the perception may develop that revenge attacks represent the only viable means to resolving conflict.

On the other hand, an effective state security force may inhibit violence, by raising the costs of violent action for ordinary citizens. In South Africa before the mid-1980s,

when conflict was principally between the members of black communities and the state, the vastly superior resources available to the state probably constrained violent action. Since 1985, particularly in the Natal region, the nature of the conflict has shifted and now includes competing political groups whose repressive capabilities are not as effective as those of the state. Violent tactics become more viable under such circumstances.

The theory on protest cycles suggests that the conclusion of the cycle is in part due to state repression responding to escalating violence. To date, this has not occurred in South Africa. The Emergency was lifted in late 1990, the year in which conflict levels reached a peak in the Natal region. This raises two questions: first, should more repressive tactics aimed at containing the violence be employed by the present government or by a new government? Second, if repression has curbed violence in other parts of the world, does this suggest that ineffectual security force intervention is largely responsible for the high levels of violence in South Africa?

THE SPATIAL LOCATION OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

□ "Where did the conflict occur?"

(i) Urban areas as the primary location of the conflict

Figure 2 aggregates, on an annual basis, conflict events as they occurred in three settlement types:

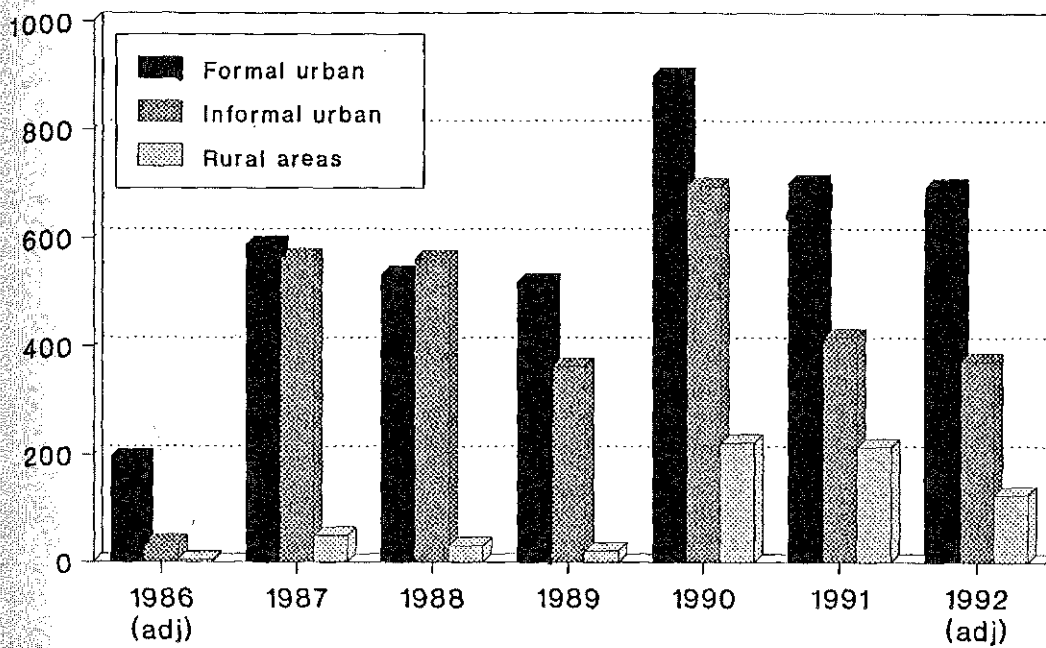
- formal urban areas;
- dense informal settlements within or close to urban areas (see section 1 for a discussion on informal settlements); and
- rural areas.

Most events occurred in urban areas. The dynamics of informal settlements, as described in section 1, suggest that conflict is more likely to result in these than in formal urban areas. Though the database suggests the converse, data capture difficulties in this regard (as described in the methodological appendix) may explain this apparent anomaly. Annual trends in the location of conflict events also reveal a substantial increase in rural conflict since 1990.

As has been shown, conflict in the Natal region is often explained in terms of the dynamics operating in urban areas. By 1989, more than half of the residents in Natal/KwaZulu were urbanised, with close to fifty percent living in shack communities (see section on demography). Problems associated with administration and meeting communities' needs in the vast informal settlements which resulted from rapid urbanisation, are immense (see section on informal settlements). Urbanisation, housing and infrastructural shortages, economic decline, and associated psychological effects of an alienating environment, are considered basic causes of conflict (Adam, 1992; Hindson and Morris, 1990; Taylor and Shaw, 1992; Woods, 1992). Migration streams into and within urban areas contribute to the strain on resources. In addition, without strong community organisations controlling in-migration, these migration streams often import violence.

FIGURE 2

RECORDED POLITICAL CONFLICT BY SETTLEMENT TYPE IN NATAL/KWAZULU



A number of commentators have argued that the Natal conflict is rooted in clashes between "insiders" who have access to scarce residential resources, and "outsiders" who when settling in urban areas, seek such access (Adam, 1992). "Much of the political conflict has centered around the question of the incorporation of Africans (or sections of the African population) into city life and government" (Hindson and Morris, 1990:21).

Olivier has argued that political collective action is more likely to occur when organisational resources are available to competing groups (Olivier, this issue). Without such resources, it is difficult to mobilise aggrieved people. The rejection of town councillors and the system of Black Local Authorities by opposition groups provided extensive organisational opportunities in urban areas. Many of these opportunities were exploited by forming alternative community organisations. These structures competed with existing ones for control over resource allocation, and thus for power at the local level. The examples of Lindelani, Mariannahill, and Umgababa (section 1) illustrate these dynamics.

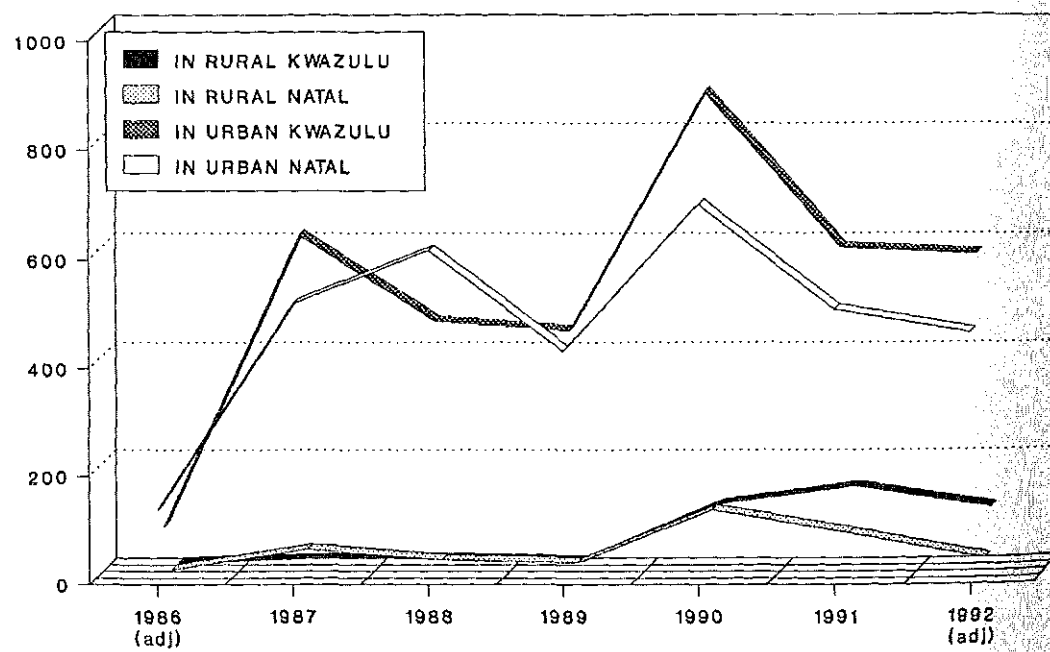
(ii) Conflict in KwaZulu and conflict in Natal

Figure 3 shows the frequency of events of political collective action which occurred in KwaZulu and in Natal (see map: 43). On an annual basis, within these two territories, the frequency of conflict events which occurred in urban (formal and informal) and rural areas is also exhibited.

According to Gwala, conflict (over increases in service charges and bus fares) began in townships located in Natal, such as Lamontville, Chesterville and Hambanathi. This conflict spilled over to include opposition to councillors who subsequently sought protection from Inkatha. The conflict infected KwaZulu townships through boycotts and protests against the Bantu education system, and riots after the assassination of UDF activist, Victoria Mxenge. These activities were violently suppressed by Inkatha (Gwala, this issue), which sparked off a cycle of violence between this group and the UDF-aligned groups in the urban areas of both Natal and KwaZulu.

Graphs in Figure 3 suggest that conflict trends in Natal and in KwaZulu are similar. There are roughly the same number of residents in urban Natal as in urban KwaZulu

FIGURE 3
RECORDED EVENTS OF POLITICAL CONFLICT
IN NATAL/KWAZULU (URBAN & RURAL)



KWAZULU/NATAL BOUNDARIES

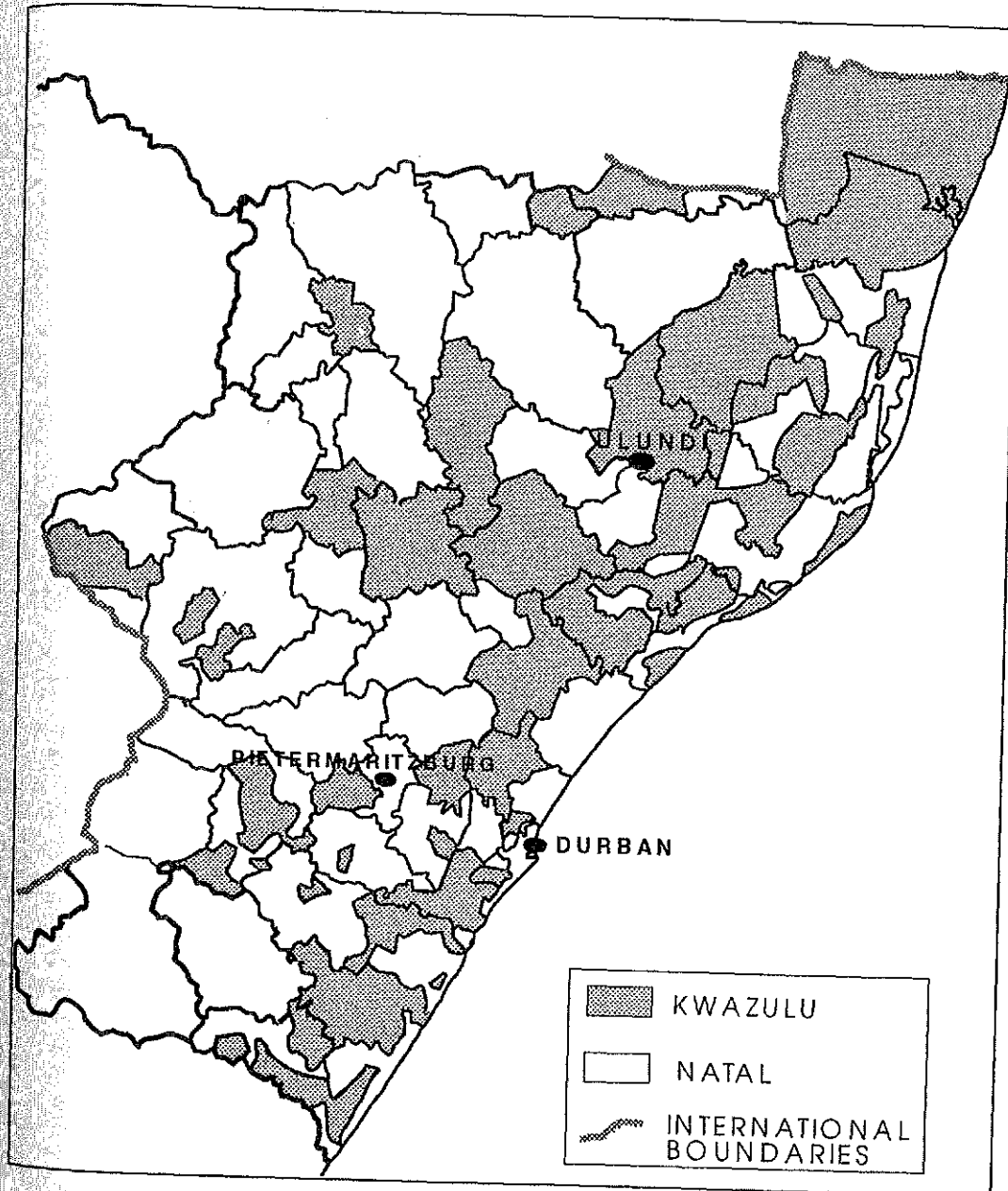
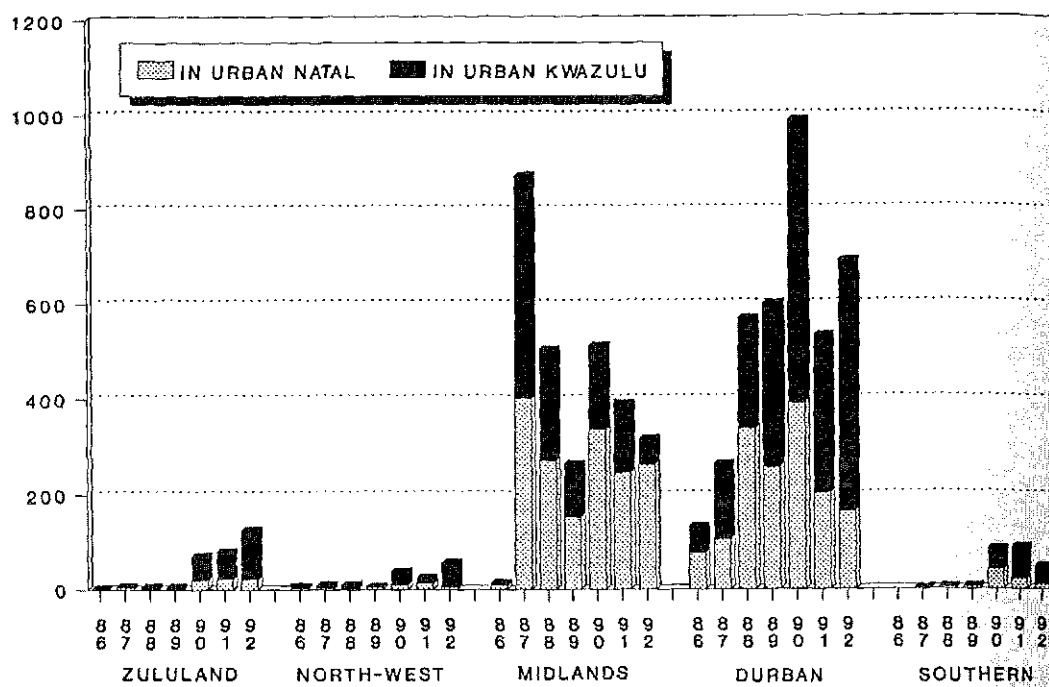


FIGURE 4
RECORDED SUB-REGIONAL POLITICAL CONFLICT
IN URBAN NATAL AND KWAZULU, 1986-1992



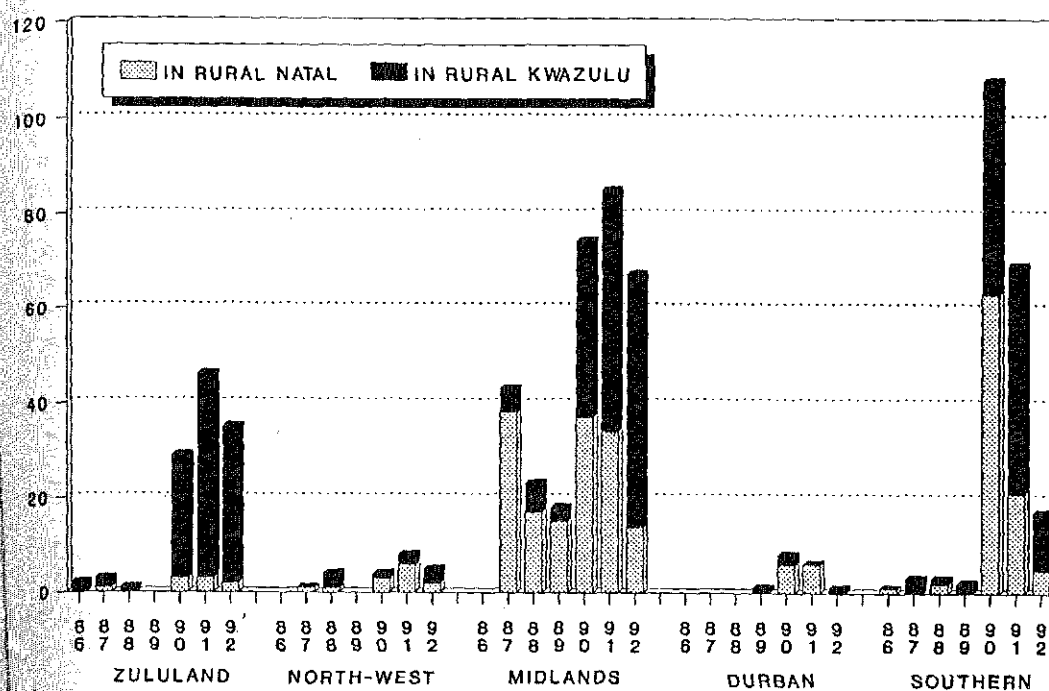
and the Natal/KwaZulu border tends to cut across nearly all urban complexes, resulting in large settlements developing in KwaZulu areas near the Natal towns. Most informal settlements are located in KwaZulu (section 1), and this may partially explain the higher levels of conflict in urban areas of KwaZulu during the 1990s, as competition over organisational resources moved more clearly into informal settlements in the 1990s.

Rural KwaZulu is governed by tribal authorities usually directly aligned to Inkatha. The presence of such formal governing structures has probably limited the outbreak of conflict in rural KwaZulu. In rural Natal, violence began in 'black spots', where similar structures were absent. Figure 5, however, shows that conflict has increased since 1990 in rural KwaZulu, and that most rural conflict before 1990 occurred in the Midlands sub-region.

(iii) Conflict in various sub-regions of the Natal region

Figures 4 and 5 exhibit, again on an annual basis, the frequency of conflict events within five subregions: Zululand, North-west Natal, the Durban Functional Region, the Midlands and Southern Natal (see map: 47). These frequencies are further

FIGURE 5
 RECORDED SUB-REGIONAL POLITICAL CONFLICT
 IN RURAL NATAL AND KWAZULU, 1986-1992



disaggregated according to their location in Natal or in KwaZulu. Figure 4 exhibits trends within (formal and informal) urban areas whilst Figure 5 exhibits trends in rural areas. A number of features are evident. Urban conflict occurred overwhelmingly in Durban and in the Midlands (which includes Pietermaritzburg). Starting from a much smaller base, urban conflict is on the increase north and south of Durban in the coastal sub-regions of Zululand and Southern Natal. Rural conflict remains small when compared to its urban counterpart but is increasing significantly in these same two sub-regions.

The predominance of political collective action in Pietermaritzburg and the DFR has already been discussed. In Pietermaritzburg, a large proportion of the conflict occurred in Imbali and Edendale, areas in Natal which have long been contested by the UDF/ANC and by Inkatha. In the Durban region, after 1989, the conflict has occurred largely in urban areas located within KwaZulu such as Mpumalanga, KwaMashu, Umlazi and KwaMakhutha.

An increase in rural conflict in the sub-regions of Southern Natal and of Zululand occurred after 1989. By early 1990, many of the South Coast communities had fallen under the control of ANC structures, at the expense of local chiefs. The latter

reorganised, using resources supplied by Inkatha, and attempted to expel ANC members and supporters (Minnaar, 1992a). Conflicts over control of territory - such as these - tend to promote cycles of violence which characterise much of the rural conflict in this sub-region. In the Zululand sub-region after 1990, similar territorial struggles took on the form of more cohesive, preemptive resistance to ANC attempts to mobilise support, probably because Inkatha is most powerful in the North Coast area (Ainslie, 1992). Town councillors, backed by Inkatha, refused to let the ANC meet or organise in the townships, and youths, pupils and residents perceived to be ANC supporters came under attack from armed groups (Minnaar, 1992a).

Before 1990, political control of most rural areas in KwaZulu had rarely been contested, since chiefs, backed by Inkatha, maintained extensive control over their communities. As violence mounted in the urban areas, many comrades fled into rural areas. Subsequent attempts by these youths to organise and take control of schools, often without consulting the local chief, tended to undermine the authority of tribal authorities (Minnaar, 1992a; Gwala, this issue). Reaction to these attempts has often been violent, and preemptive tactics aimed at averting the development of similar situations have been used.

PARTICIPANTS IN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

□ "Who participated in the conflict?"

The *Conflict Trends in Natal* database is designed to capture information about participants (both initiators and victims) involved in each event of political collective action. This information relates to the ages, genders, and occupations of the participants; to the organisations involved; and to the population groups by which they have been classified. In many cases, this information is not reported, in particular regarding age, gender, occupation, and organisations involved.

Information on population group classification is complicated by the fact that security force members are sometimes participants (as initiators or victims) in the conflict. In these cases, the population group of these members has not been captured. With this qualification in mind, let us turn to Figure 6 which disaggregates all participants in all recorded conflict events by population group. The figure shows that three-quarters of all events are reported to have involved exclusively African participants. In another 16% of events, the security forces were involved either as initiators or as victims. In only 3% of cases was participation by members of a number of population groups recorded. Accordingly, the inter-African nature of these conflict events is apparent.

Numerous explanations for this characteristic of the conflict have been discussed: the scarcity of material resources in African communities, the resultant competition over these resources, the politicisation of African local government and community organisations, and so on. Suffice it to say that this characteristic of the conflict, as Olivier points out in this publication, should not be transformed into an explanation, which some who classify the conflict as 'black-on-black' are inclined to do.

The SAIRR (1992) proposes that the conflict between black people stems largely from

JOINT SERVICES BOARD BOUNDARIES

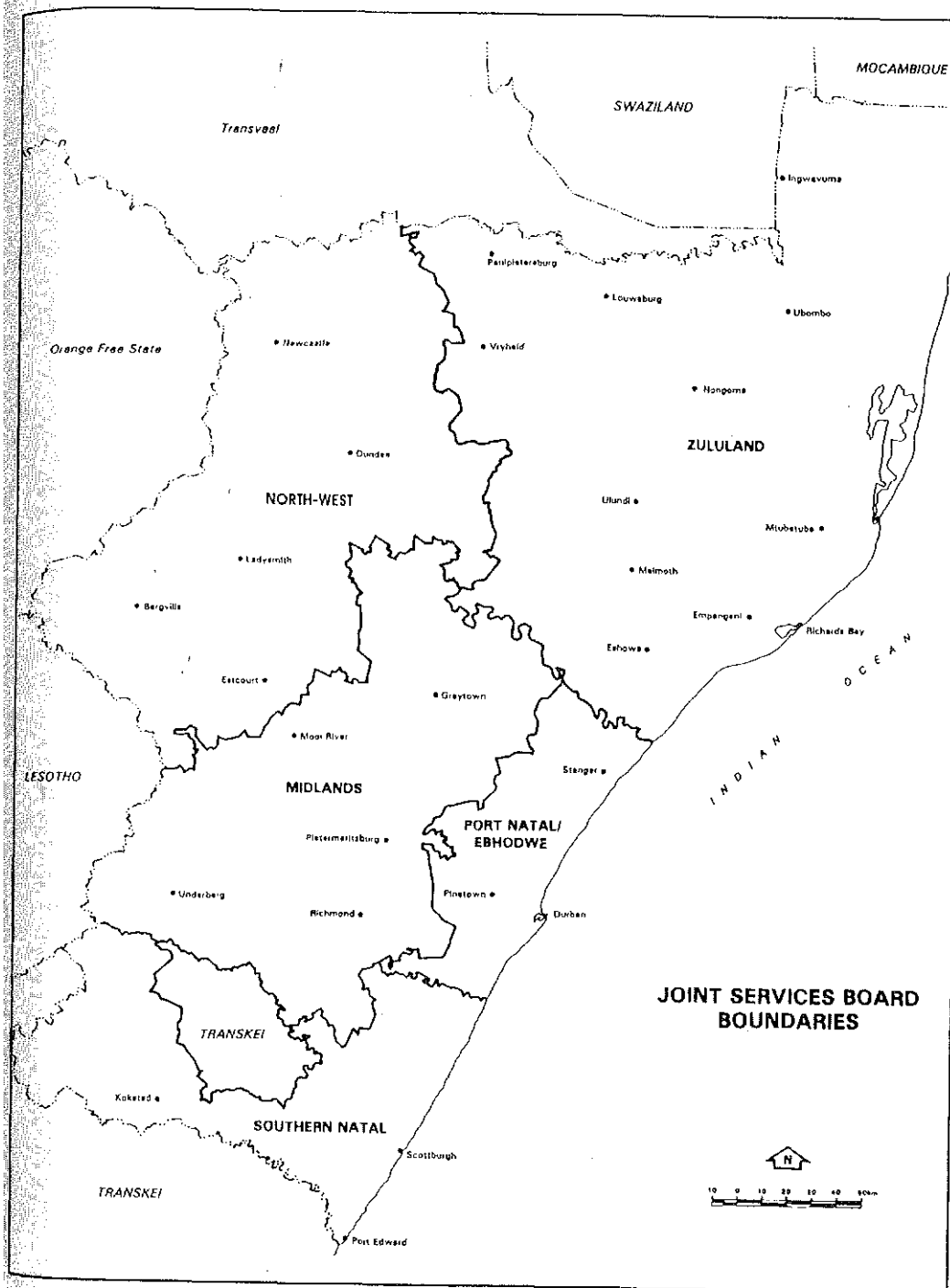
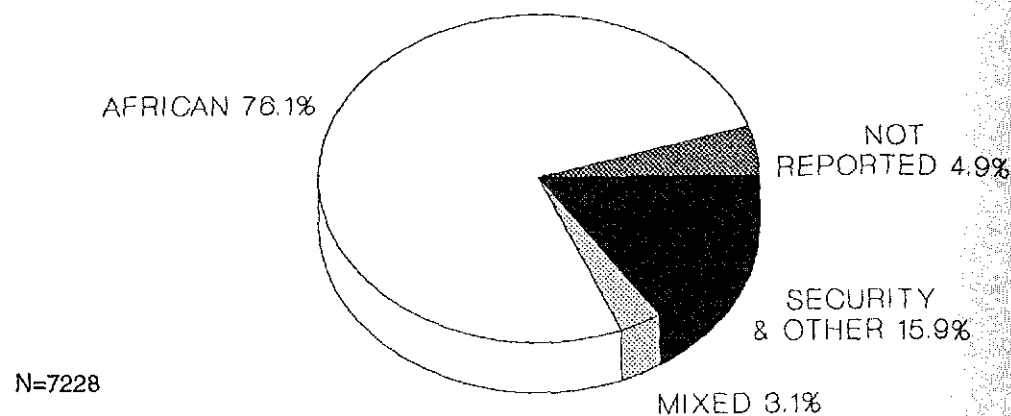


FIGURE 6

PROPORTION OF PARTICIPANTS
IN RECORDED POLITICAL CONFLICT



'liberation' policies adopted by the ANC and its affiliates in the mid-1980s. Coercion was regularly used to force black people to participate in consumer, rent, and school boycotts as well as in work stayaways. At a meeting of 16 black consciousness groups in 1984, for instance, leaders of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) stated that the recent stayaway had "alienated and antagonised a sizeable part of the working class" (SAIRR, 1992:10). These strategies also antagonised that portion of the black community in South Africa who were branded as 'collaborators'. The targeting of these people resulted in violent backlashes, and thus although "the people's war was partly directed at the state...it also amounted to a declaration of war against sections of the black community" (SAIRR, 1992:13).

Finally, it is important to point out that the data exhibited in Figure 6 refer to the population classification of participants in conflict events who were not necessarily the instigators of that conflict. As shown in a number of case studies, security force links have existed between elements of the South African government and of Inkatha (Minnaar, 1992). This indicates the probability of instigation by members of the security forces on a number of occasions. In short, overwhelming African participation in the conflict does not immediately translate into equivalent African instigation of that conflict.

THE INTENSITY OF POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

□ "How intense was the conflict?"

The intensity of political collective action may be measured by a wide range of variables. These include the extent to which an event is organised; the types of targets that are selected; the numbers of people killed or injured during an event, and the frequency with which this occurs; and the types of weapons used. By using the database, three such indicators have been developed:

- events during which five or more fatalities or injuries were recorded (Figure 7);

- events during which the use of lethal weapons, such as firearms, bombs, necklacing or a combination of these were recorded (Figure 8); and
- events in which ten or more people were killed or injured. These events are referred to as 'massacres' (Figure 9).

Figures 7 and 8 exhibit the changing proportions, on an annual basis, of intense conflict events in Natal and in KwaZulu. Figure 7 exhibits, as an indicator of intensity, the number of events during which five or more persons were killed or injured, whilst Figure 8 exhibits the reported use of lethal weapons as an indicator. Figure 9 exhibits both the number of massacres which took place as well as the percentage of massacres on an annual basis. These figures show clearly that conflict in the Natal region has systematically become more intense during the 1987 to 1992 period. The beginning of 1987 has been selected as the point of departure since this date also identifies the beginning of sustained conflict in the region.

This increase in intensity implies a greater emphasis on violence during the conflict cycle. Explanations for this trend have been discussed at length above. In particular, the theory of protest cycles which has also been discussed above, proposes that certain structural conditions, such as decline in support, or a more desperate struggle for

FIGURE 7
PROPORTION OF VIOLENT EVENTS RECORDED
WITH FIVE OR MORE DEATHS AND INJURIES

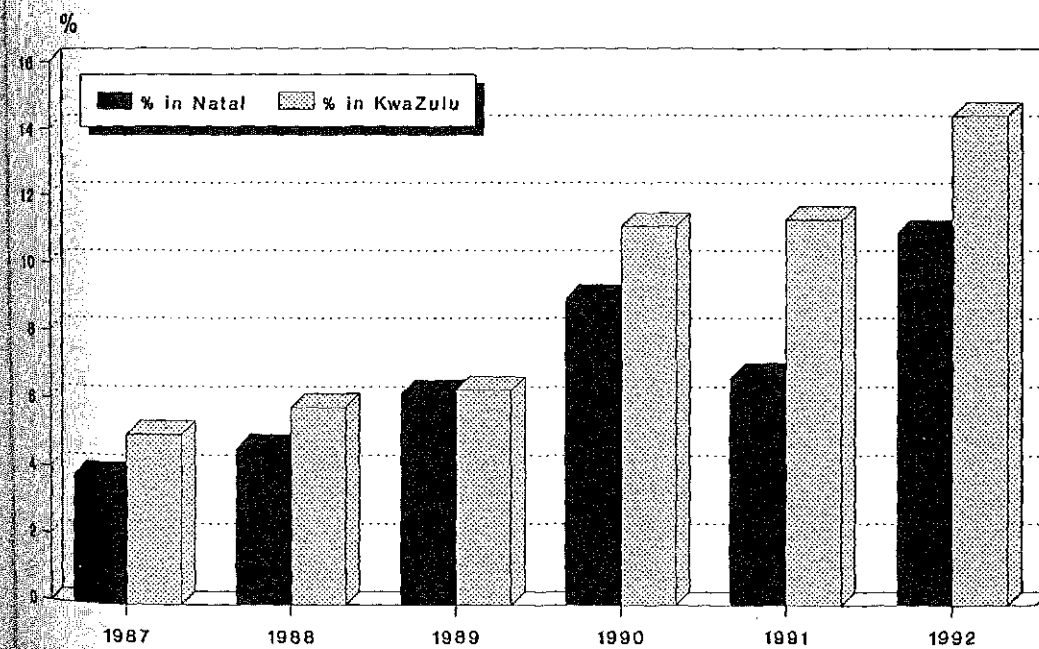


FIGURE 8
PROPORTION OF VIOLENT EVENTS WHERE LETHAL WEAPONS WERE USED

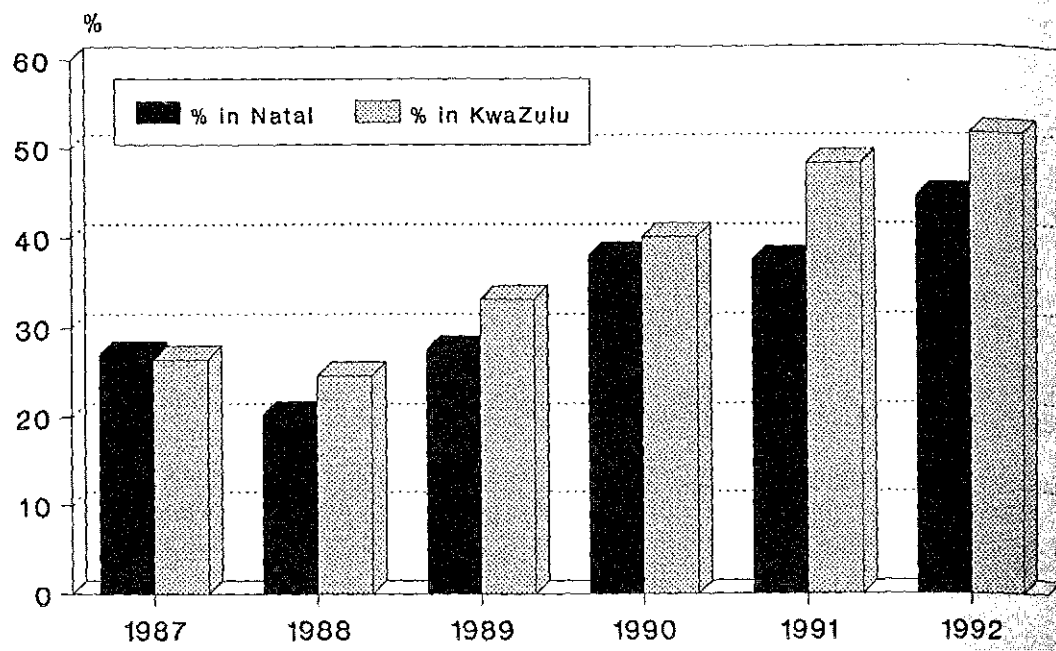
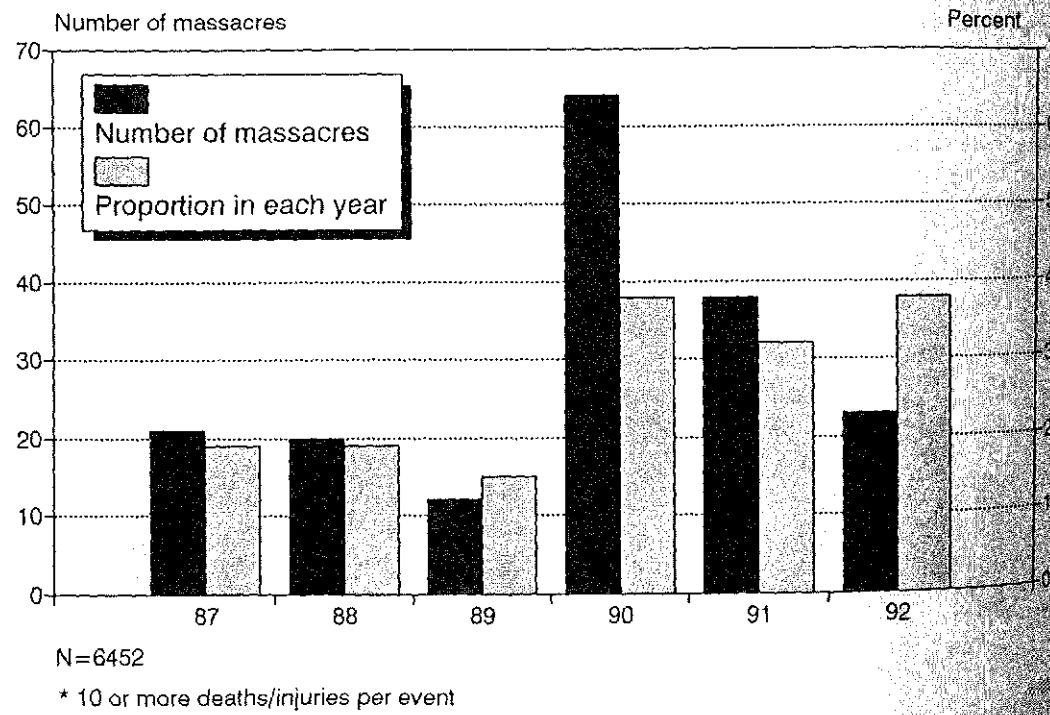


FIGURE 9
RECORDED NUMBER OF MASSACRES* AND PROPORTION OF THESE TO VIOLENT EVENTS EACH YEAR



power between groups, results in the excessive use of violence. It is probable that these conditions are present in certain regions of South Africa and may well be exacerbated by the absence of a democratic environment within which peaceful mobilisation of support and institutionalised competition for power can take place. It is evident that the widespread use of force becomes more likely under such circumstances.

Finally, the database records that fatalities have occurred in 46% of all events. This extraordinary statistic leads to the conclusion that violence in the Natal region is characterised more by the killing of people than by the destruction of property or by other violent acts. Some explanations for this trend have been suggested. The availability of firearms encourages the use of violence against people as a first rather than a last resort, particularly in areas where little law enforcement is expected (Collins, 1992). Such conditions are conducive to the development of a "revenge mentality" which leads to serial killings. Political stereotyping of people and of communities is another factor which leads either to the formation of new antagonistic groups, or cements existing group identities (Argyle, 1992). These explanations notwithstanding, it is clear that much more research into cultural as well as political aspects of the conflict is required so as to understand why fatalities caused by political collective action in the Natal region seem to be escalating, and how groups competing for political power in this region are able to mobilise people to carry out these deeds.

CONCLUSION

A selection of macro-trends relating to political collective action in the Natal region have been discussed in this chapter. These trends have been established by using the *Conflict Trends in Natal* database. While some of these trends are familiar to many commentators, they are rarely presented empirically on the scale which they appear here.

The database cannot be employed to analyse all the dimensions of the conflict. Its unit of analysis is a conflict event and events are recorded only if initiated by two or more people. This focus on collective behaviour or group dynamics is central to the study. Features of the conflict which deal with the actions of individuals, with leadership structures, or with the policy of participant groups, for example, are not recorded by the database. The data, accordingly, relate to structural, rather than to situational factors. It was for these reasons that two preparatory qualitative sections were included in this chapter. The first developed a social and economic profile of the Natal region, the second a summary of approaches used to explain the regional conflict. Accordingly, the aim of the chapter was to describe trends in regional conflict and to identify questions flowing from these trends. A number of these questions are itemised below:

1. Newcastle/Madadeni in the North-west sub-region is the largest urban complex outside the Durban and Pietermaritzburg metropolitan area (see section 1 above) yet very few conflict events throughout the six year period have been recorded in this complex (see Figure 4). Given the assumption that the conflict is urban-driven and urban-based, these low levels of political collective action are curious.

- The occurrence of rural conflict, while not on the scale of urban conflict, has become a prominent feature in the Natal region since 1990 (see Figures 2 and 5). Few conceptual approaches discussed in this chapter are able satisfactorily to analyse this new trend.
- The complex migration patterns within the region and within informal settlements, described in Section 1, appear to influence the changing patterns of conflict. Little attention has been given to this question.
- A comparison between the number of recorded conflict events and of related fatalities in the Natal region (Figure 10) and equivalent figures for the country as a whole (Figure 11), suggests further intriguing questions. This comparison is a weak one since Figure 11 is based on official SAP unrest statistics which record incidents (typically of short duration), rather than events (often of longer duration) (see Appendix 1). It is nonetheless of interest to note two sharp contrasts in this comparison. First, the ratio of fatalities to recorded events in the Natal region, is dramatically higher than in the country as a whole. This suggests that conflict in the Natal region is significantly more violent, and more clearly oriented toward targeting persons, than in the country as a whole. Second, as has already been noted above, there was a distinct 'lull' in political conflict in the country during the 1987/88 period. During the same period, the Natal region experienced its second highest upsurge in conflict during the six year period. Both contrasts pose interesting challenges to students of conflict.

FIGURE 10
**RECORDED EVENTS OF POLITICAL CONFLICT
 AND FATALITIES IN NATAL/KWAZULU BY MONTH**

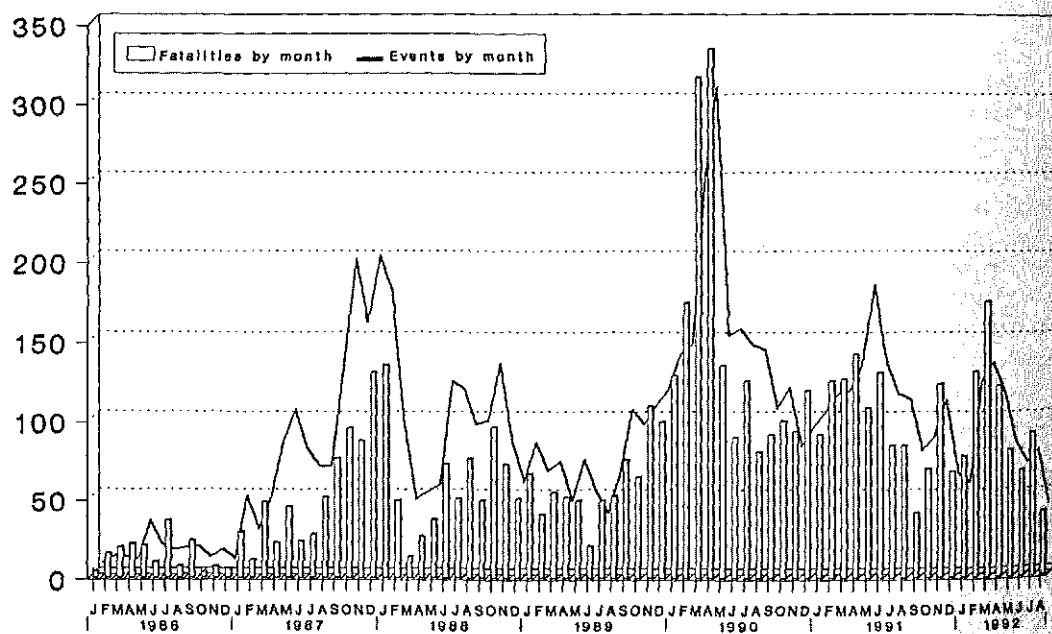
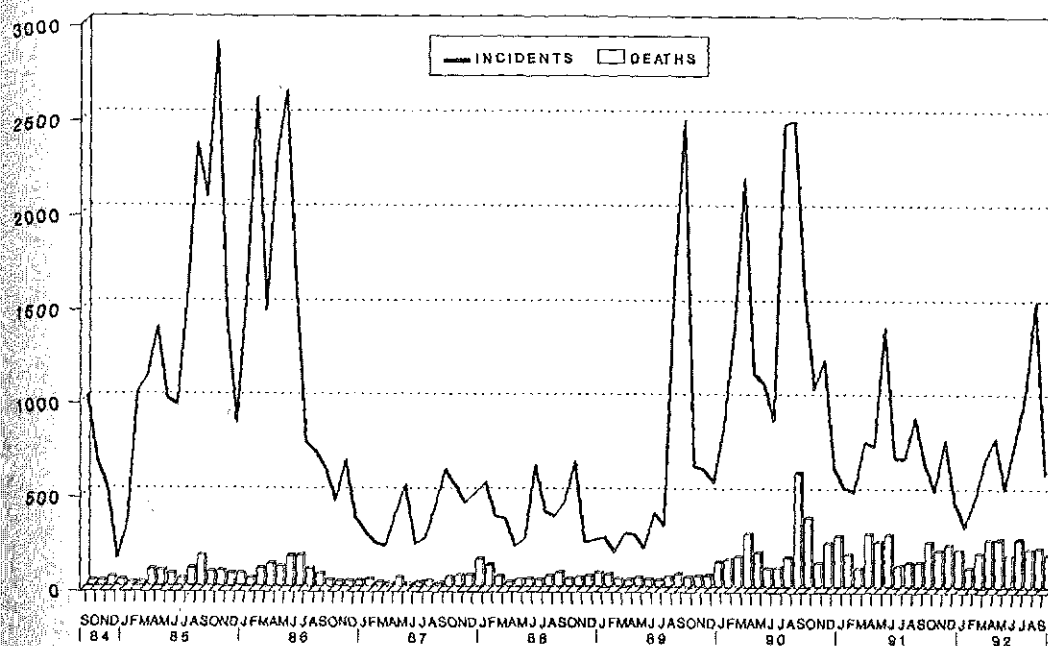


FIGURE 11
**MONTHLY UNREST-RELATED INCIDENTS
 AND DEATHS, SEPT 1984 - SEPT 1992**



Source: South African Police

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NATAL CONFLICT UNDER THE MICROSCOPE A CASE STUDY APPROACH

Zilondile Gwala

Theories regarding the causes of the violence that has become almost endemic in Natal have given rise to such controversy that the facts have become blurred by the politics. This discussion of the forms of violence may clarify the dynamics and help peacemakers in their hunt for solutions. There is no doubt that politics has in the first place caused and later sustained the violence, to the extent that any envisaged solution will have to take this factor into account. It has been suggested that a civil war situation has developed in Natal, and the configurations of this war are definitely political.

FORMS OF VIOLENCE

In Natal the violence has taken four forms:

(i) random and spontaneous collective action directed against the establishment, which has become deliberate and systematic with time. The establishment in this case includes the state and the extended state apparatus, and Inkatha is regarded as part of the extended state. Unsophisticated 'comrades' have frequently embarked on protest behaviour which has wittingly or unwittingly resulted in violence. In a number of instances, over-reaction by the state apparatus rather than by the protesters has precipitated violence. South African or KwaZulu security forces have reacted to a number of marches and demonstrations carried out by school children, by teargassing the crowds, who in turn have often responded by attacking the nearest target that represents state power. The usual outcome is that someone is killed, which sets off a spiral of retaliatory actions;

(ii) preemptive strikes by Inkatha and at times by the state security apparatus. This form of violence has been systematic and well planned. Examples include the elimination of comrades in the townships and later in rural areas, the rationale being that they are troublemakers;

(iii) retaliatory violence from the above forces. This entails group action where the aggrieved parties decide to take the law into their own hands. It must be emphasised that there is a perception by both the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), that the police are partisan both in their investigation and in intervening when called upon to restore peace. The outcome is that aggrieved parties feel they can settle the scores themselves; and

(iv) a systematic elimination of the leadership from the two contending forces, i.e. the ANC and the IFP. In this instance high profile political leaders have been assassinated.

Thug elements have benefited throughout the process described above, from the chaotic conditions which prevail, and a large amount of the violence has come from this quarter.

METHODOLOGY

There is great controversy regarding the causes of the violence in Natal and in the rest of the country (see Louw and Bekker; and Olivier in this publication). In this article, a historical case study approach, followed by a theoretical explanation of the underlying causes, has been adopted to facilitate an understanding of the empirical sequence of events as they unfolded. The advantages of this approach are that the narrative enables the reader to make objective inferences without being prejudiced by specific theoretical assumptions. This approach also facilitates the testing of theory against concrete empirical data instead of interpreting empirical data within the constraints of theory. The limitations imposed by space and by the purpose of this article, mean that the data used here is by no means exhaustive.

Case studies have been selected of key flashpoints of collective violence in areas which were closely monitored by the Natal Monitor, the Black Sash Repression Monitoring Group, the Democratic Party Unrest Monitoring Action Group and by the Centre For Adult Education at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In addition I have used the data compiled by the *Conflict Trends in Natal* project located at the Indicator Project at the Centre For Social and Development studies, University of Natal, Durban.

There are problems with the methodology. Firstly, choosing specific events above others imposes a certain selectivity in the construction of the narrative. Secondly, the comprehensiveness of the narrative is subject to the efficiency of the data collection process, which occurs in a dynamic and fast changing environment over which writers have very little control. Thirdly, acts of violence are by definition illegal and the process of data collection does not take place in an open theater but rather in an arena riddled with conflicting partisanship even among the informants themselves. Notwithstanding these problems, there is a constant pattern in the violence in Natal to warrant a fair amount of generalisation.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE VIOLENCE

The first signs of violence directed at a specific group of people in Natal appeared in 1980 when Inkatha forces sjambokked youths who were protesting against Bantu education in KwaMashu. Up to this point expressions of discontent had been directed at the property of the government and its administrative extensions. KwaMashu was therefore, a radical departure from the past and was to set the scene for large scale violence in the ensuing years. These incidents in KwaMashu are significant since they demonstrate that Inkatha (not the security forces) defended the state's educational policies. The rallying of Inkatha to the defence of the state was not accidental but rather a function of Inkatha's location in the structure of South Africa's political relations. Inkatha, as the only party in the KwaZulu government, controlled the very schools which constituted the source of discontent and consequently the protests.

A description of subsequent events by sequence and by area will demonstrate the interplay of different and often opposing forces in the resource allocation process. The impact which this has on the relationship between the distributors and the recipients of resources will be shown.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PRESENT PHASE OF VIOLENCE

□ *The Greater Durban Functional Region: Lamontville, Chesterville and Hambanathi*

The protracted violence which characterises the region began in 1984 in the townships administered by the then Port Natal Administration Board (PNAB). Lamontville near Durban was the first such township, and conflict spread from there to Hambanathi near Tongaat. The immediate cause was the increase in rent and service charges in 1982, followed later by the hike in bus fares in Lamontville. Residents in both townships soon came together in 1983, and formed residents' associations to articulate their grievances to these rent increases and to other matters affecting them as residents. The rationale for the formation of residents' associations was that the nature of town councillors at the time, meant they were structurally incapable of representing the residents. Up to this point the conflict had been between the administration board and the residents.

The formation of a residents' association in Lamontville and Hambanathi caused a split in the council, as some councillors felt slighted by this move. In Lamontville the struggle for power resulted in the murder of councillor Msizi Dube in 1983, by a fellow councillor, Moonlight Gasa. Dube had approved of the residents' association, and it was only after this "people's" councillor was murdered that the conflict shifted from one between the residents and the administration board to one between the residents' association and the councillors. Similarly in Hambanathi, two of the people's councillors, Richard Gumede and Ian Mkhize had to resign from the council after realising that participation was a futile exercise. Their resignation created a rift with Inkatha, as Inkatha councillors continued to serve.

In the Transvaal townships at the time, the increase in rent and service charges had led to the call for the resignation of all town councillors. This was accompanied by violent intimidation and in some instances the murder of several of those who resisted the call. The strategy soon spread to the rest of South Africa. The violence which resulted was limited in both magnitude and scope in so far as councillors were attacked as individuals, without any organisational base. In Natal, town councillors generally had dual affiliations - as councillors but also as members of Inkatha. Membership of Inkatha had come about as a result of the 1975 constitution of the National Cultural Liberation Movement, as the organisation was then called. The conflict with town councillors soon became one between Inkatha and the opposition, as town councillors mobilised their organisational base for protection. This accounts in part for the beginnings of the violent conflict in Natal.

Councillors in Lamontville were part of the Ningizimu Town Council, which included representatives from the hostels within the PNAB. This created a triangular

relationship, comprising Inkatha and the Council at the base with the residents' association constituting an oppositional apex. The conflict between councillors in Lamontville and the residents' association soon translated into 'war' between the council/Inkatha on the one side and the residents on the other. Between 1983 and August 1985, violent conflict in Natal was limited mainly to Lamontville, where the adjacent SJ Smith Hostel was used by Inkatha councillors to launch attacks against the township. Matters were further complicated by the proposed incorporation of Lamontville into KwaZulu. Residents who feared that this would deprive them of their hard earned urban status, fiercely resisted such a step, which further alienated the township from KwaZulu and Inkatha.

In Chesterville the war was waged internally, as there was no nearby venue, such as a hostel, from which the state and its extensions could launch attacks from outside the community. In 1985 a group calling itself the A-Team emerged and waged a fierce war against the 'comrades'. Homes were attacked and the township lived in a state of terror for over two years. The police offered no assistance to the harassed residents and there were numerous allegations, in the form of sworn affidavits, of security force collusion with the A-Team. Up to 1985 violence in Natal was relatively infrequent, with clashes limited to the townships governed by the Administration Boards. In August 1985, however, radical developments occurred which altered this course of events.

□ ***The spread of the conflict: Umlazi And KwaMashu***

In August 1985, Victoria Mxenge, a human rights lawyer was brutally murdered outside her house in Umlazi. This followed a similar episode four years earlier when her husband, Griffith, also a human rights lawyer, was assassinated ostensibly by opponents of the liberation movement. The assassination of Victoria Mxenge precipitated fierce rioting in the townships around Durban. Shops, belonging mostly to town councillors, were looted and burned, houses belonging to police 'informers' were destroyed and the youth erected barricades in the streets to prevent residents from going to work. The rioting lasted a week, during which approximately fifty youths were killed, mostly by police. This aggravated an already tenuous relationship between the police and the youth.

Relations between the councillors and the youth/extra-parliamentary opposition deteriorated when Sabelo, a leading councillor and member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, allegedly led a group of vigilantes, recruited from a nearby shack settlement, in an attack on mourners at the memorial service for Victoria Mxenge. Members of the Umlazi town council, notably Sabelo, were quick to proclaim that the violence and rioting were the work of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and elements opposed to KwaZulu. This was an open declaration of the existence of two opposing camps, and this division has continued to the present.

During the weekend following the week of the riots, busloads of Inkatha supporters, mostly from rural areas, arrived in Durban. The men conducted a "mopping-up operation" and left. If the youth had been provocative in the looting and burning of property, this response by Inkatha amounted to throwing out the baby with the bath

water. As one academic put it, " Inkatha won the battle but lost the war." Inkatha had come to establish peace, but had outplayed the comrades in the ensuing violence. After this incident, Inkatha forcibly took men from their homes to raid a number of houses where UDF elements were thought to be harbored. This was the beginning of vigilante attacks in which busses ferrying heavily armed men, accompanied by police vans and army vehicles, raided sections of townships looking for 'comrades', as the protesting youths came to be known. Victims were abducted and brutally murdered outside their homes. The targets were mainly members of organisations affiliated to the UDF, students belonging to the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and trade unionists. 'Comrades' retaliated by burning houses of leading Inkatha supporters and of policemen.

This unsophisticated war lasted about three months, during which time a number of families were attacked on the basis that they harboured 'comrades' on the one hand, or 'supporters of the system' on the other. In the process many innocent souls including women and children were brutally murdered. The first victim of this type of conflict, murdered allegedly by vigilantes, was Mokoena, a trade unionist living in V section in Umlazi. The police never succeeded in arresting anyone, in spite of the large numbers involved in the attacks. In many instances, family members provided sworn affidavits in which they even alleged to have seen the attackers. Inkatha officials, meanwhile, also resorted to attacking or intimidating mourners at funerals.

Violence levels in Umlazi and KwaMashu differed. This was probably a result of the variations in political culture in the two townships. Since 1980 when Inkatha attacked demonstrating school children in KwaMashu, relationships between the youth and the organisation were strained if not hostile. The rioting in August 1985 had given the youth space to organise both the youth league and the civic association, although the latter never grew into a force along the lines of the youth league. The consolidation of the youth league precipitated the formation of Students' Representative Councils (SRCs) in the schools in the township. This further intensified the animosity between the youth and Inkatha, since the latter controlled the schools and interpreted any attempts to form alternative governance as a direct challenge to its authority. During 1985, a number of homes belonging to KwaMashu Youth League members, were petrol-bombed, resulting in injuries to residents.

One of the worst incidents resulting from this animosity involved the kidnaping and subsequent murder of five schoolboys on their way from school in KwaMashu, by men from the Inkatha stronghold, Lindelani. The men were eventually convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The bitter conflict between schoolchildren and Inkatha took another turn in 1988 when a group of thugs clashed with SRCs in the township. The conflict was caused by the constant harassment of scholars, including the rape of schoolgirls. The SRCs had adopted a protective role towards students in almost all matters pertaining to their wellbeing. They took up the matter of the alleged harassment which led to a bitter clash with the thugs, most of whom were well known in the community. The community alleged that the thugs sought refuge in Inanda and that they had made contact with members of the security establishment. The security forces saw them as

allies against the UDF-affiliated KwaMashu Youth League which included the SRCs. These were the beginnings of the Amasinyora gang which terrorised the township for three years. Evidence of collaboration between Inkatha and the Amasinyora became public when the Attorney General of Natal ordered an investigation into the alleged assistance of the Amasinyora by members of the South African Defense Force (SADF), KwaZulu Police and Inkatha. By the time the Attorney General ordered the inquest, the Amasinyora had allegedly killed over 40 persons in KwaMashu (*City Press*, July 21 1991).

□ **Open Political Contestation : Clermont**

Clermont is one of the two urban areas in Natal where Africans enjoy free hold rights (the other area is Edendale near Pietermaritzburg). Clermont falls under the Department of Development Aid and is locally administered by a township manager assisted by an advisory council consisting of 'elected' members. Recently the administration of the township has been transferred to the Natal Provincial Administration. In 1985 the government announced its intentions to incorporate Clermont into KwaZulu. This was strongly rejected by the inhabitants, particularly members of the advisory council, who acted as spokespersons for the residents.

Politically, Clermont fell under the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly within the constituency of Intuzuma. Relations between members of the advisory council and the local KwaZulu member of parliament, Samuel Jamile, were strained. The issue was complicated by local civic politics which included a campaign against an increase in transport fares imposed by the Durban Transport Management Board which operated busses ferrying commuters from the township.

Between September 1985 and December 1987, the political rivalry in Clermont resulted in the killing of a number of civic leaders who opposed incorporation into KwaZulu. The opponents of incorporation were also guilty of harassment, and in one incident a petrol-bomb was allegedly thrown into a car in which three Inkatha officials were travelling, seriously injuring one man. The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly member, Samuel Jamile, was arrested following the attacks on those opposed to incorporation, and sentenced to life imprisonment for one of these murders. During the marathon trial which took over a year, evidence of complicity between the police and Jamile was led in court, further demonstrating the political nature of the conflict.

□ **The Natal Midlands: The Greater Edendale Area**

A number of explanations for the violence in the Natal Midlands have been advanced. Some analysts attribute the beginnings of the war in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area to the reaction by Inkatha to the formation of civic and youth organisations in 1985 and to the recruitment drive by Inkatha in 1987 (Aitchison, 1989). The situation was complicated by the inequitable allocation of resources in the townships and maladministration of the schools. Predictably, the principal protagonists were the youth (mainly school going children), and incumbents in local government positions. Inkatha was inevitably drawn into the conflict, partly because it was involved in a recruitment drive and partly because local government administrators were also

officials of Inkatha. The formation of UWUSA, an Inkatha sponsored trade union, also resulted in further conflict with COSATU, the dominant trade union federation in the country.

The intensification of the recruitment drive by Inkatha in late 1987 was met with strong resistance by the youth and the civics. A number of people from both sides of the conflict lost their lives in the process. The situation was confused by the actions of militant comrades, who forced Inkatha councillors out of their areas and proclaimed them liberated zones. Between September 1987 and January 1988 approximately 170 people were killed. In January 1988 Inkatha mounted a counter-attack on Vulindlela in an attempt to recapture lost territory. The onslaught was codenamed "operation clean up" and resulted in an attack by almost 15 000 men on Ashdown and Mpumuza. The situation was further aggravated by the detention of the leadership from the UDF, which sparked cries of state partisanship in the conflict. Tensions were not eased by the introduction of kitskonstables in March 1988, many of whom were recruited from Inkatha supporting areas and had criminal records.

The rest of 1988 was characterised by continual attacks and counter-attacks. Inkatha was allegedly assisted by kitskonstables and at times either actively or by default, by the regular police forces. The UDF and COSATU responded to this alleged police partisanship by staging stayaways, which were fiercely opposed by Inkatha, thus creating a further spiral of violence. This induced intervention by big business, which for the first time led to the confession by the Department of Law and Order that a number of Inkatha supporters had charges of violence brought against them.

□ **Phophomeni**

The strike by a COSATU affiliated union at B.T.R. Samcol in Howick near Pietermaritzburg, illustrated the deteriorating relationship between COSATU and UWUSA. In an attempt to force capitulation from management, workers at B.T.R. Samcol together with the civic organisation in the township of Phophomeni, where the bulk of the workforce resided, decided to embark upon a consumer boycott. Inkatha opposed the boycott on the grounds that it would result in intimidation of residents not involved with the strike. Local youths responded by trying to force a stayaway, which aggravated the tense situation. The conflict reached a peak when Inkatha supporters were bussed into Phophomeni in December 1985, resulting in the death of three COSATU shop stewards, allegedly murdered by Inkatha hit squads. (A subsequent inquest proved that Inkatha affiliated individuals were responsible for these murders.)

THE SHIFT IN FOCUS: RURAL AREAS ENTER THE CONTEST

Violence had been confined mainly to urban areas until early 1990. Incidents such as the Trust Feed massacre in 1988, were rare. Large scale rural violence centered around the peripheries of large towns, like Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Areas such as the Hillcrest, Molweni valleys near Durban and the Elandskop - Taylor's Halt areas near Pietermaritzburg, were affected. After February 2 1990 there was a dramatic upswing in the scale of the violence, which observers and monitors attribute to certain

salient developments. Firstly, comrades who had fled from urban violence had established themselves in rural areas. The local youth were activated against tribal authorities and the education system, both of which were corrupt and inefficient. The main weakness of tribal authorities is the feudal tendencies inherent in land based relations, and the inadequacies of Bantu education have historically constituted the main cause of unrest among schoolgoing youth. In both instances, developments pitted the youth against the KwaZulu administration and consequently, against Inkatha.

The ensuing violence took two forms: protests which generally entailed toyitoying by the youth and often resulted in violence; and preemptive strikes by Inkatha against those youths suspected of fueling the tensions in the areas. The momentum which the violence gained was almost impossible to halt. The security forces, particularly the KwaZulu Police, probably fanned the flames either through playing a partisan role or by directly initiating some of the incidents (see reports by the Natal Monitor, the Black Sash Repression Monitoring Group, the Human Rights Commission and affidavits made to the Legal Resources Centre in Durban).

The areas most affected were on the upper and lower South coast: Umgababa through to Umthwalume and Umzumbe, and the Port Shepstone - Izingolweni areas. The Indwedwe, Inanda, Umtunzini and Enseleni districts north of Durban were also affected. In the Natal Midlands the war has been concentrated mainly in the Richmond and Ixopo districts. In all these areas the pattern has been similar. Protests by the youth have challenged the tribal authority structures, which have invariably elicited counter challenges, culminating in violence.

FEBRUARY 2 1990 TO THE PRESENT

After February 1990 the pattern of violence changed suddenly from a generalised and diffuse form to intensified and localised attacks, such as those involving the Amasinyora in KwaMashu from 1988 to 1989. In Umlazi, this type of violence started in 1990 when the new mayor, Prince Patrick Zulu, announced that both his political and hereditary positions demanded that he communicate with all sectors of the population, irrespective of ideological positions. This open stance apparently angered certain political quarters, as an intended meeting on January 28 1990 of all interest groups in the township, was subsequently aborted in the face of an impending attack from heavily armed men.

Actions by the army heightened tensions when, on finding the Umlazi stadium where the meeting was to have been held, deserted, they marched to the house of a certain Shozi. Shozi was both an induna of the area and an active member of Inkatha. It is alleged that on their way the security forces were taunted by a group of youths in Z section, and in the ensuing conflict they attacked and killed a 14 year old boy. The youths in the area responded to the killing by staging a boycott of the Shozi shop. This started a protracted spate of attacks and counter-attacks which lasted until mid-1991 when two of Shozi's sons were convicted on a number of counts of murder and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

The imprisonment of the Shoji sons brought only a temporary reprieve to the violent-stricken area. In April 1992 attacks on mainly ANC supporters in the adjacent U section started. These involved men clad in balaclavas who attacked ANC aligned houses allegedly with help, if not active assistance from the KwaZulu Police (*Vrye Weekblad*, July 30 1992). Affidavits detailing these attacks are with the Lawyers For Human Rights and the Legal Resources Centre.

HOSTELS CONSTITUTE A NEW FOCAL POINT

Hostels have always played a controversial role in the conflict between the disenfranchised and the state. As early as 1976, hostels in Soweto were used by the government as an anti-insurgency force, when residents of Mzimhlophe hostel attacked local school children. By the middle of 1990 it was clear that Inkatha's influence in the townships and in a number of informal settlements was decreasing dramatically. The unbanning of the ANC had revived an independent opposition movement whose record was untarnished by association with the state. In addition, the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), with its history of active protest, had joined forces with the ANC. This provided continuity with the immediate past to which most of the youth could relate. Faced with rejection by township residents, Inkatha retreated to the hostels in which, however, it could not command total hegemony. The predominance of COSATU in the region has marginalised Inkatha from some of the hostels and reduced its influence even in those hostels where it has active branches. Inkatha has nevertheless used hostels as bases from which to make forays into adjacent communities.

In the Greater Durban area two hostels have been pivotal in the upsurge of the violence since February 1990. These are the KwaMashu and Umlazi hostels, both of which fall within the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu Police. Since about 1988 there have been sporadic problems between the KwaMashu hostel and the adjacent sections of the township, notably the E and B sections. The conflict between the E section and the hostel originated in the relationship between the youth in E section and the local councillor. This in turn affected the relationship with the local KwaZulu Police, who allegedly sided with the councillor. When the youth in the section introduced 'people's courts', this drew more venom from Inkatha and the police. There were allegations that the local councillor used Lindelani, a nearby Inkatha settlement, to assist in "putting the youth to order". There had also been close cooperation between the Inkatha branch at the hostel and councillors in the neighbourhood as early as 1985.

In September 1990 the South African Hostel Dwellers Association was formed. The intention was to resist the call by the ANC and COSATU to convert hostels into family residences, following attacks by hostel dwellers on townships in the Reef in 1990. This organisation strengthened Inkatha's stronghold in the KwaMashu hostel, as single residents felt threatened and marginalised by the neighbouring community. Infighting within Inkatha in this hostel, however, resulted in the killing of two leaders and the consequent weakening of the onslaught against residents in the township. Despite this, KwaMashu hostel is still regarded as Inkatha's foothold in the area and forays against ANC inclined groups are constantly conducted. The attack on train passengers on their way to an ANC rally in July 1991 demonstrates this.

The situation at Umlazi hostel (Unit 17) in some ways resembles that in KwaMashu, while certain differences also prevail. Up to September 1990 Umlazi hostel had no problems with the adjacent township or informal shack settlement communities. The formation of the Hostel Dwellers Association and the subsequent inauguration of an Inkatha branch in the same hostel in October 1990, marked the beginnings of the conflict. Shack dwellers in two adjacent areas, Uganda and Ekuthuleni, allege that on a number of occasions after Inkatha rallies in the hostel, strangers, particularly from Lindelani, attacked residents. (It is common practice for outsiders to be brought into areas for the launching of Inkatha branches.)

The first bloody clash between residents of Umlazi and adjacent communities occurred in December 1991. This followed two large meetings: the first was a rally held on December 16 at the Umlazi stadium, organised by the KwaZulu Chief Minister to protest against the exclusion of the Zulu king from CODESA. The second was a COSATU rally held at Curries Fountain in Durban on December 17. There are conflicting allegations regarding what precipitated the violent confrontation.

Hostel dwellers allege that on their way from the rally, residents of Uganda attacked and killed two of their compatriots. These residents, however, claim that early on December 17 men from the hostel, accompanied by KwaZulu Police, invaded the settlement and killed a number of people. Other hostel dwellers allege that the attack was planned, citing an instance when the Inkatha leadership in the hostel, together with KwaZulu Police, armed some residents in preparation for the attack. Tensions between the shack dwellers and the hostel had built up over a period of time. Some tensions had developed within the shack settlement itself and had led to some men fleeing to the hostel. Whatever the causes, it is significant that the violence assumed a political dimension. The shack area was seen to represent the ANC while the hostel represented Inkatha. Various reports, such as that by the International Commission of Jurists, state that overemphasising this chronicle is not warranted. It is significant that many clashes have occurred between these communities and that this has cost numerous lives and added another dimension to the conflict.

THE ROLE OF THE SECURITY FORCES IN THE CONFLICT

Throughout the conflict the security forces have had an important influence on the relationship between the extra-parliamentary opposition and Inkatha. Allegations of partisanship towards Inkatha abound and there is sufficient evidence to support this view (see the Trust Feed and Jamile cases and Minnaar, 1992). Reasons for the partiality lie both in official government policy and in the government's definition of national interest.

In the first instance, Inkatha's relationship with the government contributed to the success of the homelands' policy. Secondly, the extra-parliamentary opposition, according to the government, represented sinister forces bent on overthrowing the social order in the country, and were branded as the enemies of South Africans (see Mitchell's testimony in the 1991 Trust Feed Trial). The relationship between the security apparatus and the organisations engaged in the 'war' in Natal is critical to an understanding of the conflict. Despite some claims that politics is not always at

the centre of the conflict, attacks and counter-attacks have not been random, but have rather been directed at individuals with a high political profile, by both the contending forces.

The magnitude and scope of violence in Natal could perhaps have been reduced, had the security forces, particularly the police and to a lesser extent the defence force, been impartial in the conflict. It is beyond the scope and intentions of this paper to dwell on the activities of the security forces with regard to the course of the violence in the region. However, it is imperative to refer to the active role of the security forces in the perpetration of violent acts, particularly against the extra-parliamentary opposition, which alienated a large section of the population. Further, the role of the security forces has encouraged Inkatha to act with impunity as it can resist being called upon to account for its actions. Volumes have been written on the involvement of both the South African and the KwaZulu Police, either as active participants or by deliberate default (Ainslie, Coombe, De Haas, Irish, Minnaar, Osborn, Payze, Smith, 1992; Aitchison, 1989).

Evidence of direct police involvement increased with the handing over of police stations to the KwaZulu Police in KwaMashu, Umlazi and KwaMakhutha. The Natal Monitor, the Black Sash Repression Monitoring Group and the Democratic Party Unrest Monitoring Action Group allege that, in the greater Durban Functional Region in 1990 and 1991, incidents of police complicity in the violence exceeded those in which no mention of the police is made. The greatest number of killings in KwaMashu involved the Amasinyora gang and there is ample evidence linking this group to the KwaZulu Police under whose jurisdiction this area falls. Similarly, in KwaMakhutha the greatest number of killings occurred in 1988 and 1989, the majority of which involved the KwaZulu Police. In Umlazi, the KwaZulu Police were directly implicated in most of the killings which took place in 1990 and 1991. Investigations of these killings are the responsibility of the KwaZulu Police, which further bedevils the situation. The few cases where justice has been done have been where the SAP have taken over the investigations. This has prompted the conclusion that partiality, if not direct involvement of the police on the side of Inkatha, is largely responsible for the escalation of violence. Police action encourages political allies and relatives of murdered persons, who see no reason to pursue lawful means of redress, to resort to retaliatory actions in settling the scores.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

Three basic theoretical positions account for the present conflict and the violence which has been raging for almost eight years in South Africa:

- The first is that the violence is a result of the struggle for political control between those in power, represented by the regime in office, and those who seek access to political power, represented by the ANC as the principal liberation movement. There are two variants of this theory.

The first finds that the oppressive conditions created by the government are responsible for the carnage. Violence is seen as an expression of resentment by

the oppressed against their lack of democratic rights and the inhumanities and deprivation imposed on them by apartheid. The state's violent reaction to this unleashes counter-violence. The outbreak of violence between the ANC and the IFP is a function of the structural location of the IFP in the South African political economy. The IFP is seen as no more than a representative of the regime. The apparent struggle for hegemony between the ANC and the IFP in Natal is therefore, no more than an extension of the main clash between the regime and the forces of liberation.

The second variant of this theory places responsibility for the violence in the hands of the liberation movements. The violence is a product of revolutionary forces motivated by the ANC's revolutionary theory and its strategy of ungovernability through people's war (see Louw and Bekker in this publication). The other parties to the conflict, particularly the IFP and the security forces, are merely reacting to these tactics, and as such play the role of counter-revolutionaries.

- The second theory proposes that deteriorating economic conditions, particularly unemployment, have precipitated a struggle for scarce resources, and individuals have resorted to violence in order to access these resources. Economic conditions on their own do not however, constitute a sufficient explanation. Linking politics to the access of economic resources, politicises the conflict and the ensuing violence thus assumes political dimensions.
- The third argument is that the violence is orchestrated by a third force - a network of security personnel and politically-motivated individuals who engage in acts of violence in order to eliminate elements from the opposition. The theory is similar to suggestions of a "total onslaught" by the government in the 1980s, in which discontent was attributed to communist elements.

There are common elements in all three theoretical positions, in spite of their ideological divergence. All ascribe the violence to a bipolar relationship between the state and the extended state apparatus, on the one hand and the liberation movements on the other. Empirical evidence confirms that the violence has a bipolar configuration in that conflict occurs between those who control and allocate resources in the first place, and the recipients of the resources, in the second. The root causes of the violence thus lie in material inequalities, where access to resources is unevenly distributed within the black community. The determinants of access are political, and accordingly, violence becomes politicised. The principal combatants represent the two poles in the resource allocation process. The IFP is the ruling party in KwaZulu and therefore, the immediate representative of Pretoria. It also controls the allocation of resources in non-KwaZulu townships, in that the vast majority of township councillors are also officials in the IFP. The ANC on the other hand, is the principal representative of the liberation movement.

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CONCLUSION

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The three chapters of this publication have raised more questions about the contemporary conflict than provided answers as to why it is occurring. There are questions about which approach is most appropriate to explain the conflict, about which historical interpretation is most useful to understand the persistence and changing nature of the conflict, and about which facts are more or less reliable and which are most comprehensive. There is also the central question of why the conflict continues to be as violent as it is.

Implicitly, there is one more question, a vexing and exasperating one, which underlies discussions in the three chapters. A short review of approaches employed during the late 1980s to explain conflict during that decade will help to uncover this question. The *Indicator* project published two issues on political conflict (*Indicator SA* 1988, 1989) at that time. The white-dominated South African state, its security 'apparatus', and the policy of 'total strategy' were placed on centre stage, and the predominantly black exile movements and their internal allies were analysed in terms of their counter-strategies.

Indicator SA analysts debated whether these counter-strategies were fundamentally revolutionary, aimed at state targets and the eventual violent dismantlement of the state, or grievance-related, aimed at local councillors, officials and teachers so as to transform and thereby democratise local state institutions and their service delivery capacities. The heart of the debate concerned violence on the interface between white-controlled state organisations and black community organisations, violence in a fundamentally undemocratic society.

In 1992, a brief four years later, the heart of the debate has shifted. After the broadcasting of the government's new programme of democratic reform, after the unbanning of the exile movements and release of their leaders, after two and a half years of political transition and of negotiation over a new constitution, violent conflict appears to persist, particularly in the Natal region, at levels higher than those of the 1980s. The overwhelming majority of participants and of victims in this conflict, moreover, are urban Africans. Though state organisations and security forces have played a role, there is no doubt that the nature of the conflict is now different. Violent competition over local control, over local territory, and over local scarce resources dominate interpretations of the conflict. And this competition takes place predominantly in urban African communities in areas predominantly occupied by urban Africans. Why has this dramatic shift taken place? 'Why has a seemingly inevitable black-white racial conflict been replaced with much more wide-spread inter-black violence?' (Adam: 6)

In addressing this and the other questions identified above, the authors have provided a number of constructive ideas.

Gwala classifies events of violence into four types: those directed against the establishment; preemptive strikes by Inkatha against ANC-aligned organisations; retaliatory ANC-aligned actions; and the systematic elimination of leaders by these two warring constituencies. From this point of view, she discusses the historical trajectory of conflict in the Natal region by carefully selecting and documenting case studies. Its origins and early development are located in the Durban Functional Region. Its extension to the Natal Midlands in the late 1980s and subsequently to rural areas in the early 1990s are explained by the same general dynamic even though the types of violence characterising these phases change.

Finally, the roles of two specific institutions in this trajectory are highlighted. Hostels represent institutions within which control and mobilisation are comparatively easy to maintain. Accordingly, they have been employed by Inkatha on a number of occasions as launching areas or as safe havens. In the second place, Gwala points to the important and frequently partisan role played by the security forces in the Natal conflict. Throughout this chapter, a single dynamic drives the analysis: the 'bipolar relationship between the state and the extended state apparatus, on the one hand, and the liberation movements, on the other'. This approach which situates Inkatha and the KwaZulu government under the rubric of the extended state apparatus, proposes that there is more causal continuity between the 1980s and the early 1990s than is suggested by Adam's question cited above.

Olivier proposes that the resource mobilisation approach is the most useful to explain conflict in contemporary South Africa. When primary resources are scarce and organisational opportunities emerge and facilitate access to these resources, competition and conflict occur. Power is the most sought-after resource of all, and when opportunities to mobilise in search of power are present, the ensuing competition and conflict intensifies. South Africa in the early 1990s has created precisely such opportunities.

When employed with care, this resource mobilisation approach facilitates explanations about why current attempts to contain violent conflict have failed, and why the characteristics of the conflict (such as the fact that it is predominantly intra-African) are often incorrectly turned into explanations.

Louw and Bekker illustrate how a newly established database on conflict trends in the Natal region may be employed to discuss the nature of this conflict. By studying four trends (related to time, place, participation and intensity), a number of new issues are identified.

First, since the conflict is largely urban-based, why have so few events taken place in a number of large urban areas in the region? Second, during the early 1990s, the incidence of conflict has started to move into rural areas, and into rural areas in KwaZulu, in particular. Adequate explanations for this extension seem absent. Third, the conflict in the Natal region, over a six year period, appears to have been

consistently more intense than the conflict in the rest of the country. Again, no adequate explanations for this difference have been suggested.

Finally, in the late 1980s, when repressive actions seemingly had succeeded in containing the conflict elsewhere in the country, why was there a massive upsurge of conflict in the Natal Midlands, and what role did state security forces play - by commission or by omission - in this upsurge? In short, why during a period of state repression before February 1990 when political opportunities should have been strictly limited and the conflict interface clearly between white state and black community, did intense and wide-ranging violence occur within African communities in the Midlands?

This chapter also raises a question about the relationship between the changing location of the conflict, and migration streams in the region. Though regional conflict has persisted at high levels from 1987 to the present, this does not imply that it has continued to occur in the same locality. To the contrary, clusters of conflict events have probably shifted from one locality to another. Accordingly, residents of a particular area - particularly in informal settlements - experience an ebb and flow of conflict, and often decide to leave their area after local upsurges. One consequence is that these migratory moves to new areas may, as noted in the chapter, contribute to a rise in conflict in the new area. Complex and dependent upon local circumstances as it surely is, there seems to be a mutually reinforcing relationship between the occurrence of conflict and migration streams.

The need for more information tailored to address these new questions has also emerged. A number of these areas of information may be identified. The activities and attitudes of youth groups, both during the 1980s and early 1990s, have been underlined by each of the authors. In particular, the development in certain youth groups of a culture of violence and of retribution is a significant strand in much of the discussion. Little systematic data on these issues are available.

In addition, albeit often implicitly, the issues of gender and of ethnicity have also appeared. Most commentators assume that the conflict is largely male-driven and, where it is planned, male-managed. A number of the interpretations referred to the growing importance to the conflict of ethnicity and the politicisation of ethnic identity. Neither of these issues has been systematically addressed and little information for analysis is accordingly available.

Not only do the chapters in this issue introduce new ideas and questions about the conflict, but also illustrate a feature of the *debate* on the conflict. The wide range of differing interpretations of the conflict, and large numbers of allegations reported on by commentators, point not only to different conceptual approaches but also to the politicisation of these interpretations, of the evidence, and of the debate itself. Such politicisation draws all commentators into the arena of conflict. That the conflict is highly dangerous to those living in communities within which it is occurring is self-evident; that it is also perceived to be dangerous by those who report on it is less well-known. The fact that one author in this issue preferred to use a pseudonym is evidence enough.

This raises sharply the role that public information plays in influencing the nature and persistence of conflict. During periods of rapid social transition, rumours tend to multiply and spread rapidly. With regard to contemporary conflict trends, rumours (which are no more than claims about the nature of conflict events) are often exaggerated and characterised by claims of guilt by association. Since such rumours are spread more through their credibility than through their truth, they are also often one-sided, spreading most rapidly among those groups supportive of one or other 'side' (Fine, 1991). In the Natal region (as in the country as a whole), opposing 'sides' to the conflict may be labelled as liberatory versus collaborationist, or as extra-parliamentary versus conservative.

As noted on a number of occasions in this publication, this places a particularly important responsibility on the mass media and on the politicians - the fourth force - for it is primarily they who are able to broadcast, both to the public and to the citizenry, reliable information about the conflict, and sensible interpretations of this information. It is clear that they have often failed in these tasks.

In conclusion, what contributions have been made toward the development of a strategy to contain the conflict in the Natal region?

In the first place, since information on the conflict is often unreliable and often politicised or perceived to be politicised, the newly established *Conflict Trends in Natal* database - a public database accessible to all commentators - may gain sufficient credibility and thereby become a generally acceptable source of information on conflict events in the region. The data would then be able to serve all affected parties during discussions on the conflict as a common point of departure. It has been designed with this purpose in mind.

In the second place, reliable information and sensible interpretation is needed to scotch the rumours related to the conflict, and to improve the messages politicians send to their publics.

Finally, it has been argued effectively that there are many causes to the conflict. Accordingly, no single strategy developed to address a particular cause will suffice. As Olivier points out in this issue, before the containment of conflict can be secured, economic, social and demographic factors need to be addressed, at local and other levels, along with political factors.

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APPENDIX 1

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

The project on *Conflict Trends in Natal, 1986-1992*, began in Durban in February 1991 as a collaborative study of the Centre for Social and Development Studies (CSDS) and the Indicator Project SA, both at the University of Natal, and the Centre for Conflict Analysis at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria. It was initiated as part of a wider study being carried out by the Centre for Conflict Analysis, which deals with collective action countrywide as well as a comparative SA - USA study of collective action. The dramatic increase in violence in Natal in 1987 and the sustained nature thereof since, prompted the extension of the study to focus on this region. The HSRC-based project now covers the rest of the country, while the CSDS-Indicator SA project focuses exclusively on the Natal/KwaZulu region. The intention is to merge the two databases in order to establish a comprehensive, computerised database on collective action in South Africa which will be located at the Centre for Conflict Analysis.

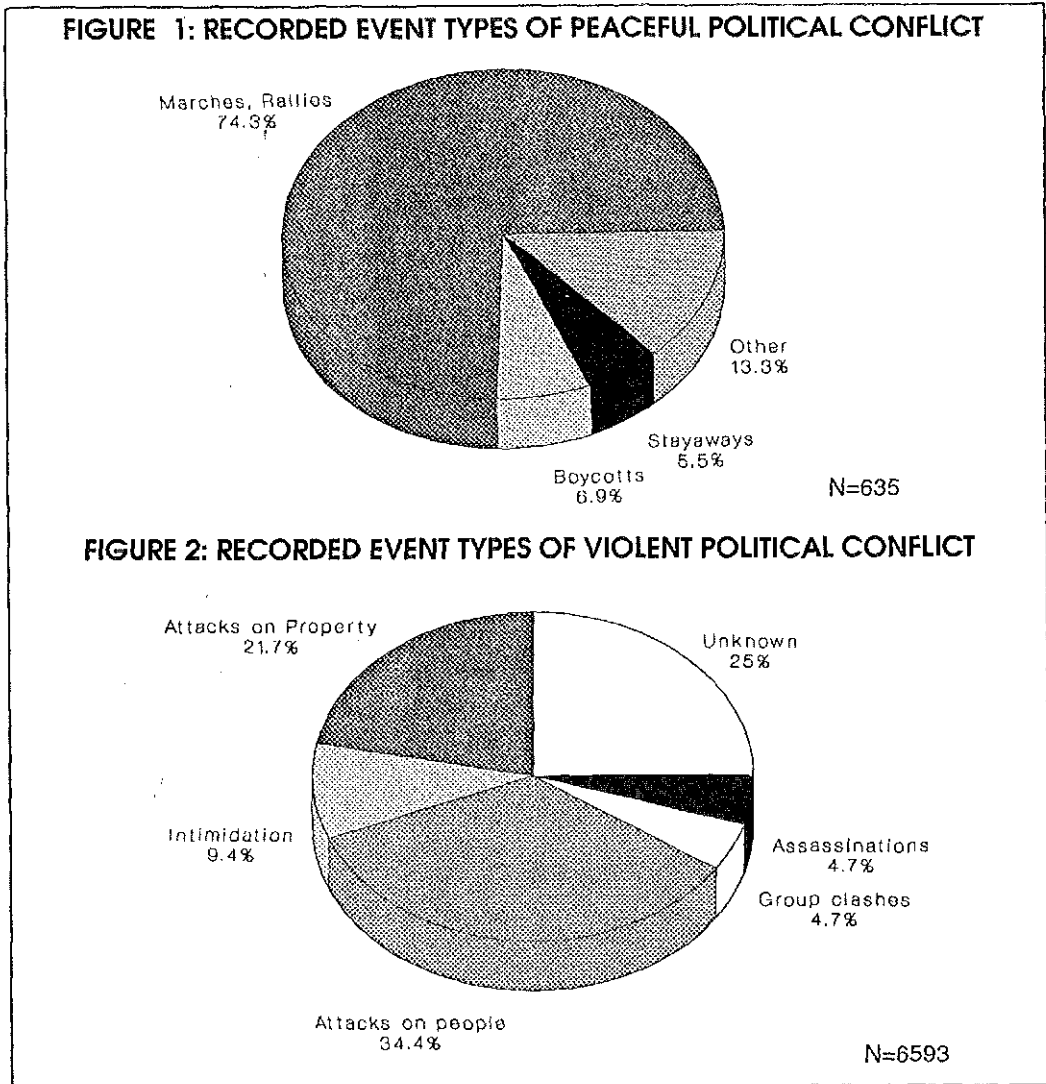
AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The aim of this project is to establish long-term trends in political collective action in the Natal/KwaZulu region over the period 1986 to the present, in order to identify and explain some of the dynamics of the conflict. This project focuses on collective action rather than individual activity, which enables an examination of macro-level indicators such as population size and movement, income distribution, employment and the repressive capabilities of the state in relation to the trends identified here.

METHOD

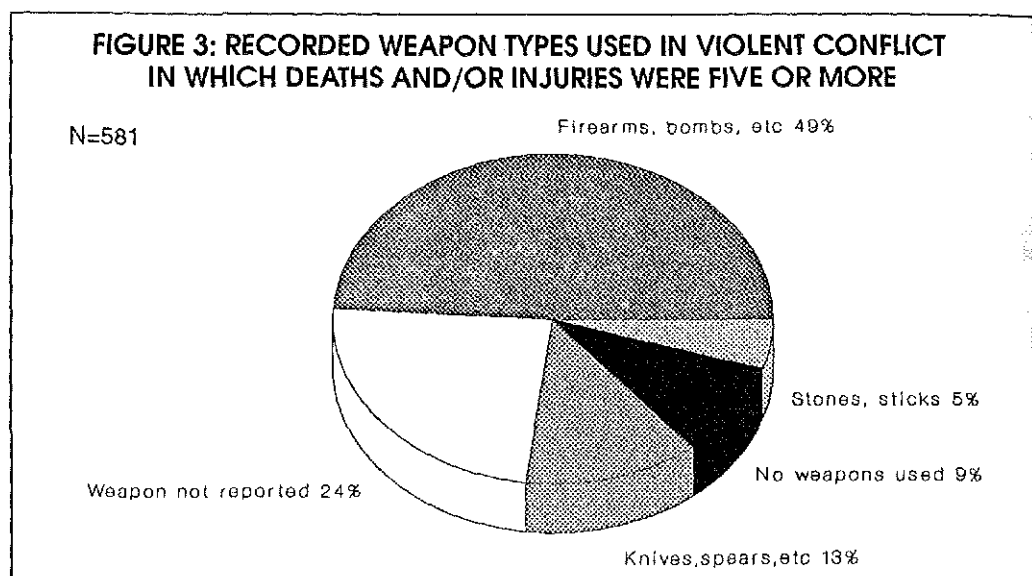
This study is a quantitative one, employing a methodology consistent with international projects which examine related dynamics. The unit of analysis is an event of political collective action. An event is understood as an activity occurring in public, initiated by two or more people, thus making it collective. In terms of duration, a single event can extend over a number of days, provided there are no gaps of more than 24 hours between the related incidents. An event can therefore have various stages, which may create the impression of an under-count when compared with official sources which treat each incident separately. Events are also classified broadly as either peaceful (see Figure 1) or violent (see Figure 2). This is significant as attention is not always paid to peaceful forms of protest in these violent times, and because this enables an examination of the relationship between the two types of events, where for instance a protest march turns violent.

Details about each event are captured by using 66 variables, which record, *inter alia*, the location, date, event and participant type, names of organisations involved, weapons used (Figure 3) and security force activity. By way of illustration, the study



provides important systematic data regarding security force action at each event where their presence was reported. The case study method is often used to illustrate security force action. This method precludes generalisation which this project facilitates.

These details are then interpreted using a coding manual for statistical analysis. Advanced statistical techniques can be used to identify and analyse less obvious trends, such as the extent to which certain types of events or actions lead to further activity, and correlations between socio-economic and conflict trends. Using a set methodology such as this to research a subject as dynamic and complex as political conflict can be problematic. Events are often hard to interpret within the bounds of the coding frame, as is accommodating the changing nature of the conflict. Also, given



the complexity of the phenomenon, the database does not always capture all relevant factors, and does not address the changing situational context of political collective action. Research findings should consequently be supplemented by case study material. Notwithstanding these problems, the database is extensive, with over 7 000 cases recorded using a consistent methodology which scans various sources over a long period in the whole Natal region.

SOURCES

The main data source is the press (Figure 4), which, given the extended period covered by the project, is the most regular source available. The *Natal Mercury*, *Natal Witness*, *Daily News* and *Sunday Tribune* were used consistently and supplemented by reports from *New African*, *Sunday Times* and other daily and weekly papers from across the country. These were made available by the Indicator Project's extensive newspaper clipping bank. A second data source comprises local monitoring agencies; bodies set up in response to the extreme levels of violence. These groups monitor the conflict and provide assistance to victims where possible. Most of their information consequently comes from grassroots networking and liaison with communities. Material from the Black Sash Repression Monitoring Group, the Democratic Party's Unrest Monitoring Action Group, the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and the Natal Monitor was used extensively. The Maurice Webb Race Relations Unit at CSDS and the Inkatha Institute also provided some information.

DISTRIBUTION OF SOURCES IN THE DATABASE

The press has been used throughout the research period, with the exception of the first four months of 1986, when this data was not readily available at the time of collection. Where necessary figures for 1986 have consequently been adjusted to

FIGURE 4: PROPORTION OF SOURCES USED

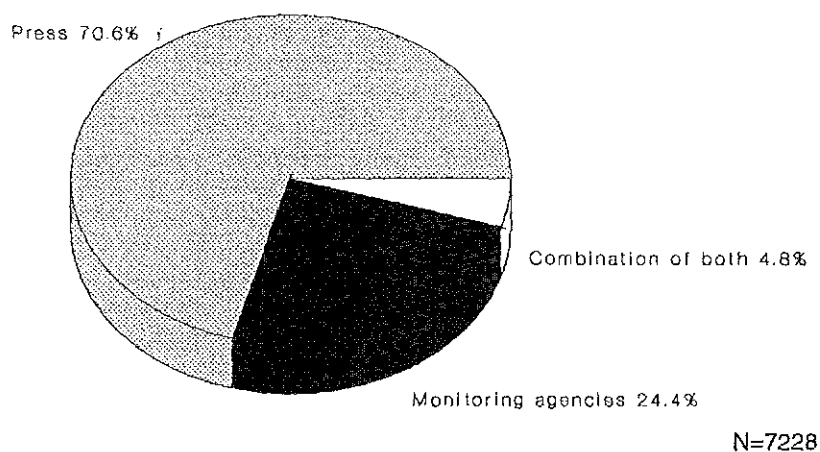
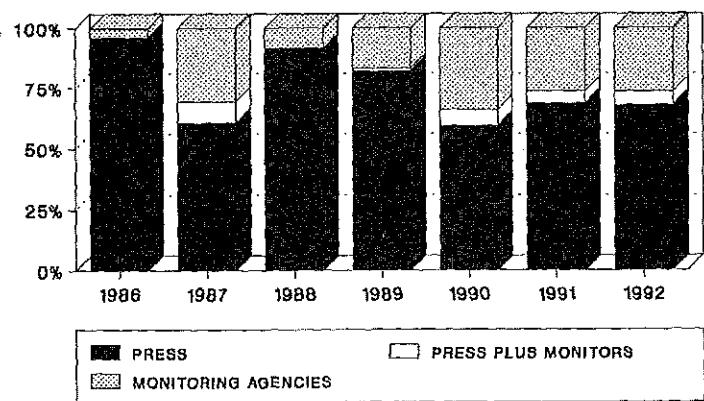


FIGURE 5: PROPORTION OF SOURCES USED IN EACH YEAR



N=7228

enable comparison with the other years. This also applies for the year 1992, when data collection was temporarily suspended at August 5. Monitoring agency material has not been used consistently, as Figure 5 shows, for the following reasons: agencies were established at different times over the six year period; acquiring their data is sometimes difficult; and time constraints on integrating this with press data have been limiting.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOURCES FOR THE DATABASE

The sources are important for the reliability and comprehensiveness of the database. Press coverage of the conflict was constrained by four years of Emergency regulations. Since these have been lifted, investigative research is rare and under-reporting is still a problem. Press reports are often reproductions of police unrest reports which supply little detail about events. The Goldstone Commission found that press coverage of violence in Mooiriver in 1991 was inaccurate and that rumours spread by opposing political groups were published. Some of these weaknesses are overcome by using monitoring agency material. The monitors cover areas which the press often do not, such as Zululand and the South Coast, and supply extensive new and additional details about events. Monitors are, however, sometimes perceived as biased, as they may be associated with particular political groups which affects their network of contacts in unrest areas. An additional problem which the methodology implies is the reliance on reported material. Many incidents and certain details about events are not covered by the press or monitors, for a variety of reasons. This limits the comprehensiveness of the database. Given the scope of the subject and the project, this is largely unavoidable, as with few exceptions, the sources used are the only ones available.

The absence of information from the security forces is a problem, particularly in terms of recording peaceful events and police presence in conflict situations; two types of information which are often not covered by the press and monitors. Although concerted efforts have been made, both formally and through contacts, to access police records, these have failed. Police Unrest Reports have only recently been made available to researchers and although useful, function more as confirmation that an event has occurred, than as a source of detailed facts.

With regard to the location of events, various maps were used to identify the sub-regions (Zululand, North-West Natal, Midlands, Durban and Southern Natal); the province and homeland boundaries; the magisterial districts; and the towns, informal settlements and rural areas. A particular difficulty which occurred relates to newspaper reports. These either identified only the closest town, or reported areas which could not be found on the maps used. In these cases, the closest town to the location of the reported event was recorded. This has accordingly led to an over-estimation of the number of events in the urban formal category.

Although there are problems with the sources, the database as a whole provides an extensive, useful tool rather than simply a chronology of events. The project furthermore provides the most comprehensive computerised database of its kind locally, which when integrated with the data of the HSRC study, will provide information on conflict throughout South Africa. Political collective action is public activity of an extraordinary nature which is considered newsworthy by the press and should consequently be reported. We are therefore reasonably confident that the database provides reliable macro-trends in political collective action in Natal/KwaZulu over the period from 1986 to 1992.

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