BLOODBATH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE HISTORICAL PERIODS (THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE AND ITS AFTERMATH, ANTI-APARTHEID RESISTANCE AND STATE RESPONSE, POST-1994: CONTEMPORARY VIOLENCE AND THE TRC'S SHORTCOMINGS) EXPLORING THE PERSISTENCE OF VIOLENCE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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By

NICHOLAS ARTHUR PANSEGROUW

Department of History

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Abstract

This thesis examines the persistence of violence in post-apartheid South Africa through three historical periods: the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, 1980s anti-apartheid resistance and state response, and post-1994 violence along with the shortcomings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Marked by interconnected socio-political dynamics, each of these periods has helped shape South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence'. The 1960 Sharpeville Massacre was a pivotal moment in South African history. Domestically, it intensified repression and entrenched a system of institutionalised violence that shaped the nation's socio-political framework. Internationally, it sparked widespread condemnation of apartheid. By the 1980s, anti-apartheid resistance, termed 'Total Onslaught' by the state, faced the government's 'Total Strategy', setting off a cycle of violence that left physical destruction and psychological distress on a mass scale. Post-1994, South Africa's democratic transition aimed at nation-building via healing and reconciliation, the TRC mandated with addressing apartheid-era trauma. However, the TRC's limited scope and lack of accountability left unresolved grievances, which in turn have fueled ongoing violence rooted in fractured social structures and omnipresent inequality. These analyses highlight the challenges modern-day South Africa faces, with past injustices and socio-political inconsistencies continuing to shape the country's violent present. By addressing systemically troublesome issues, fragile social frameworks, and omnipresent inequality, opportunities exist to reduce violence and bring about meaningful societal change within the country.

Keywords: Culture of Violence, Apartheid, Sharpeville Massacre, Anti-Apartheid Resistance, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Inequality, Post-Apartheid South Africa, Societal Change

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List of Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AMCU	Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union
ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
APO	African Political Organisation
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BLC	Black Local Council
CCB	Civil Cooperation Bureau
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEAR	Growth with Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GNU	Government of National Unity
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and other diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.
MK	Umkhonto We Sizwe
NP	National Party
PAC	Pan-African Congress
PAGAD	People Against Gangsterism And Drugs
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations

SACP	South African Communist Party
SAP/SAPS	South African Police / South African Police Service
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SVT	Structural Violence Theory
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

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For my Mother, Brother, Sister and late Father – we know, as we always have.

To my wife Rachel, son Link, and daughter Aeris – you are my world.

And a special nod to the CB Boys – twenty-two years of lifetimes later, may Fate remain kind to us.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Make apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable.[1]

- Oliver Tambo, 1984

A: Background

Overview of South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994

We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation-building, for the birth of a new world.

Let there be justice for all.

Let there be peace for all.

Let there be work, bread, water, and salt for all.

Let each know that for each, the body, the mind, and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves.

Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.

Let freedom reign.

The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!

God bless Africa!

Thank you.[2]

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[1] Address by Oliver Tambo to the Nation on Radio Freedom, 22 July 1985, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/address-oliver-tambo-nation-radio-freedom-22-july-1985 accessed on December 17, 2023; John Kane-Berman, *Political Violence in South Africa,* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993), 44.

[2] Statement of the President of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, at his Inauguration as President of the Democratic Republic of South Africa, Union Buildings, Pretoria, at https://www.gov.za/news/speeches/president-nelson-mandela-1994-presidential-inauguration-10-may-1994 accessed on December 26, 2023.

- Nelson Mandela, May 10, 1994

Nelson Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's first Black president at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on May 10, 1994, was, to borrow a cliched phrase, a 'watershed moment' in South African history. For the first time since foreign-catalysed upheaval had enacted the division and conquering of South Africa's indigenous people nearly three hundred and forty years prior, the country's political fate was now in the hands of one of the nation's most influential sons, a son who – whether described as a terrorist, freedom fighter, or other – rose through and broke the stranglehold of *apartheid* to lead the country's Black majority to a position of socio-political parity with the previously power-enfranchised White minority.

The euphoria accompanying South Africa's transformation from minority-run autocracy to majority-ruled democracy (celebrated annually as *Freedom Day* in South Africa every April 27) was a reaction to the defeat of *apartheid*, a political system born in 1948 built around institutionalised racial segregation that was designed to infiltrate and control every aspect of Black life.[3] To quote South African historian Leonard Thompson's take on this form of racial segregation in his book, *A History of South Africa*, "…apartheid became the most notorious form of racial domination that the postwar world has known."[4] Whether citing education, healthcare, employment, housing, or any other tenet characterising the *apartheid* era, South Africa's Black populace was subjected to violence-laden versions of what rights South African Whites enjoyed, the sum of which can be inferred from the systemic discrimination, forced removals, and limited political representation that Black South Africans were subjected to during this political era.[5]

Despite this, Nelson Mandela rose to the highest echelons of political power, carrying with him the hopes and dreams of countless South Africans who wished to live with dignity, peace, and relative material comfort. Furthermore, while noted and unnoted strides have been made toward offering South Africans this dream, it is the spectre of violence – via

[3] The word 'Black' is used to encapsulate the experiences of all racially marginalized groups that suffered under *apartheid* rule.

[4] Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*. 4th ed. Edited by Lynn Berat, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 189.

[5] Thompson, *A History*, 190-213.

multiple nefarious forms – that continues to dominate the country thirty years after it became a Black-led multiracial democracy.

This master's thesis examines the history and proliferation of violence in South Africa, its aim being to delineate how and why a debilitating 'culture of violence' still adversely affects the country despite its democratic political model – at least on paper – being better equipped to protect its citizens rather than subject them to iterations of the violence they believed had followed *apartheid* to its grave.

Persisting issue of violence in post-apartheid South Africa

With violence being a multifaceted, polymorphous concept that transcends time and space per its conception, application, reflection, and understanding, it is necessary to define what constitutes a 'culture of violence' in a South African context.

In "Political Mobilisation and Rise of the 'culture of violence' in South Africa – Exploring the Root Causes", Vimal Nayan Pandey states that "A systematic study of South Africa's current history reveals that the government's repressive policies during apartheid and the political rivalry among different political parties, notably the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) during transition, had provided a fertile ground for the emergence of a 'culture of violence'."[6] In Brandon Hamber's journal article "'Have no doubt it is fear in the land': an exploration of the continuing cycles of violence in South Africa", he explains that in the 1990s, the term 'culture of violence' was frequently used to describe the conflict that had enveloped South African society, the pervasive nature of which had seeped into all parts of public life, thus undermining the moral, interpersonal and social fabric of society.[7] Shula Marks and Neil Andersson add in "The Epidemiology and 'culture of violence'" that a 'culture of violence' exists at every level in South Africa, and overt political violence must be located in this broader social context as one of the many forms and varieties of endemic violence.[8] Maria Schuld writes in "The Prevalence of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies" that many South Africans speak of a 'culture of

[6] Vimal Nayan Pandey, "Political Mobilisation and Rise of the 'Culture of Violence' in South Africa - Exploring the Root Causes", *Insight on Africa*, 4,2, 2012, 137.

[7] Brandon Hamber, "'Have no doubt it is fear in the land': an exploration of the continuing cycles of violence in South Africa", *Southern African Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 12,1, 2000, 5.

[8] Shula Marks and Neil Andersson, "The Epidemiology and 'Culture of Violence'", in N. Chabani Manganyi and André du Toit (eds.), *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*, (London: Macmillan, 1990), 29.

violence' through which people are forced to navigate their daily lives, in that – even if they are not physically subjected to violent acts – the daily newspaper articles concerning car hijackings, farm killings, people being lynched by angry crowds or police officers being burned alive in their cars, along with alarming violent crime statistics, keep them firmly within a *'*culture of violence' loop.[9] Furthermore, Clive Glaser mentions in "Violent Crime in South Africa: Historical Perspectives*"* that a 'culture of violence', created and 'normalised' during *apartheid,* has lived on due to its utility in dealing with disputes long after *apartheid's* demise.[10]

Regarding the work of these and other authors concerning a 'culture of violence' that dominates post-apartheid South Africa, this thesis proposes a synthesised, working definition that offers a topical yet flexible definition through which South Africa's 'culture of violence' can be analysed in a modern and relevant manner:

> A 'culture of violence' typifies a society where violent behaviours, norms, or attitudes are widespread, ingrained, and utilised daily, usually on socio-economic or political grounds or via a combination of these, underpinned by contributions from both internal and external forces.

As this thesis will outline, South Africa is a society where "violent behaviours, norms, or attitudes are widespread, ingrained, and utilised daily, usually on socio-economic or political grounds or via a combination of these." It will also be shown that the causes of violence in South Africa are not only underpinned by 'internal forces' (effectively translating as a triangulated flow of violence between intra-elite state-affiliated actors, the country's citizens, and a combination of these elements) but that 'external forces' such as geopolitical actors and related forces also play critical roles in sustaining South Africa's 'culture of violence'. It is equally important to state that, conceptually, a 'culture of violence' is limited; violence is a multifaceted element of society that pervades all manner of social structures in countries throughout the world, often made manifest by existing structural, historical, and political contexts. And while other countries (including Brazil, Colombia, and Nigeria) share modern-day patterns of violence similar to that of South Africa,

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[9] Maria Schuld, "The Prevalence of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies: A Case Study of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa", *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development,* 8,1, 2013, 60.

[10] Clive Glaser, "Violent Crime in South Africa: Historical Perspectives", *South African Historical Journal,* 60,3, 2008, 341.

causative links stemming from *apartheid* and South Africa's relatively unique historical status as having been led by a racially-based minority government for forty-six years loan credence to describing South Africa's context as determined by a uniquely enduring 'culture of violence'.[11]

Considering this thesis's 'culture of violence' definition, it is logical to link South Africa's 'culture of violence' with historical factors such as *apartheid* and the resulting social inequality and high crime rates shadowing this. Moreover, while this thesis's 'culture of violence' definition can offer a general picture of modern South Africa's violent predicament, it cannot offer a fully comprehensive scope in that it is limited due to being an academic simplification: it can only describe the complex, raging and multifaceted phenomenon of violence so deeply embedded within South Africa's social, economic, political, and historical spheres. Accordingly, to gain more nuanced clarity per understanding the heady and ever-evolving nature of South Africa's 'culture of violence', it is necessary to examine the historical context from which the violence originated and proliferated.

Both practically and in terms of popular understanding, the primary element used to contextualise South Africa's 'culture of violence' historically is *apartheid,* the engineered system of racial segregation and discrimination that, from 1948 to 1994, dominated South Africa in an all-encompassing socio-political manner. Its purpose being to establish racial hierarchies controlled by Whites for White benefit, *apartheid* can be considered a major (if not *the* major) force behind South Africa's current social and economic disparities in that – historically speaking – it can be seen as the most influential prism through which South Africa's socio-political past and present has been formed.[12] Moreover, while many may have believed *apartheid's* 1994 dissolution would usher in a safer, more economically

[11] Elizabete Ribeiro Albernaz and Lenin Pires, "'Places you shouldn't go to":(Im)mobility, violence and democracy in Brazil and South Africa", *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 11,6, 2021, 1365-1391; Elrena Van Der Spuy and Clifford Shearing, "Curbing the Killing Fields: Making South Africa Safer", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 652, 2014, 187; Glaser, "Violent Crime", 335-337; Hamber, "'Have no doubt", 5.

[12] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 32-59. Marks and Andersson's explanation of *apartheid* as the root cause behind the development of a 'culture of violence' incorporates topics like psychosocial stress and the destruction of the family, uprooting and forced relocation, life in the mine compounds, safety in the mines, life in the hostels, overall patterns of psychiatric morbidity (in relation to the *apartheid* era), forms and varieties of violence, as well as crime and physical punishment.

equitable South Africa, reality has shown that decades of absolute domination by a single racial group cannot magically translate into goodwill and economic equity come the transfer of power, for whatever anger, resentment, and divisions that materialised during *apartheid* remain so inextricably wedded to South Africa's psyche that multiple generations will continue to suffer from the brutal physical and psychic wounds this system of racial segregation wrought over its lifetime.[13]

Regarding enduring wounds, a direct, devastating, and lasting one that *apartheid* imposed upon South African society is economic inequality. While the country did win its hard-earned democracy come 1994, this came at the price of a highly unequal economic system that saw most of the country's wealth and resources remain in the hands of a well-heeled White minority.[14] This reality is empirically illuminated via 2023 World Bank data ranking South Africa as the most unequal country globally, with its consumption per capita Gini coefficient being 63.[15] Shula Marks and Neil Andersson offer clarification regarding what violence is tied to South Africa's ongoing economic inequality issue:

> Apartheid has been crucial in ensuring that the benefits of economic growth have largely been accrued to the white section of the population, and that the main burden has been borne by the black. The psycho-social stresses of the labour market have been multiplied by a network of laws which has perpetuated migrant labour and excluded blacks, especially Africans, not only from the central decision-making bodies of the state, but also from effective control over their lives. They represent a structural characteristic of apartheid, and essential aspect of the "culture of violence".[16]

Essentially, uneven wealth distribution (built mainly on the back of legally prescribed, discriminatory non-white labour) has seen many Black South Africans suffer from debilitatingly high levels of poverty and unemployment that, despite post-1994 efforts of redress, persist today. Accordingly, it takes little cognitive effort to consider the role economic inequality plays in stoking violence from the inevitable frustration, social unrest, and general hopelessness that accompanies being on the receiving end of economic

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[13] Thompson, *A History*, 190-213.
[14] Lucien Van Der Walt, "Beyond 'White Monopoly Capital': Who Owns South Africa?", *South African Labour Bulletin*, 39,3, 2015, 1-9; Thompson, *A History*, 302-303, 330-331.
[15] 2023 Gini Index, at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI, https://wisevoter.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country/#countries-with-highest-gini-coefficient accessed on January 22, 2024.
[16] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 32-59.

injustice, the present model of which was sewn into discriminatory South African political architecture more than seventy-five years ago.[17]

Adding to South Africa's omnipresent economic inequality are demographic pressures. According to Statistics South Africa, the country's population has risen from 42 million in 1994 to more than 60 million in 2023.[18] Mixed in with high unemployment rates, lack of basic housing and services, and the inability to live peaceful, dignified lives with basic material needs met, this population increase continues to impose a detrimental strain on the county's resources and services systems, thus creating contexts predicated on resource inequality that can trigger violent episodes. Demographic pressures are made additionally volatile when one considers that much of South Africa's current population is skewed toward young people (including young men), who – out of poverty, desperation, boredom, or a combination of these – resort to violence as a survival tactic or as outlets of redress to compensate for the injustices they and their communities may have historically or recently experienced.[19]

When considering historical factors that have contributed to South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence', South Africa has for decades suffered from high crime rates, the statistical nature of which prompted Maria Schuld to echo Antony Altbeker in calling the country the 'world capital of crime' based on how regularly violent crimes like assault, carjackings, and murder occur.[20] This despairing state of affairs is further illuminated in Clive Glaser's 2008 paper "Violent Crime in South Africa: Historical Perspectives", where he states that South Africa consistently ranks within the top two or three recorded national murder rates in the world.[21] Moreover, while individual crimes in South Africa are too numerous to attribute to a prescribed set of causes, it is reasonable and accurate to assume that the legacy of *apartheid,* economic inequality, and demographic pressures – along with

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[17] Assis Malaquias, "Stress-Testing South Africa: The Tenuous Foundations of One of Africa's Stable States", *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 2011, 8. Scaffolded upon quantitative data, Malaquias's arguments centre around the economic and material plight many South Africans suffer daily.

[18] Media Release: Census 2022 Population Count Results 10 October 2023, at https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=16716 accessed on December 28, 2023.

[19] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 343-348. Glaser's *Youth Socialization* section is notably informative in how South Africa's young demographic, via historical elements, is especially primed to commit violent acts.

[20] Antony Altbeker, *A Country at War with Itself: South Africa's Crisis of Crime*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2010), 6; Schuld, "The Prevalence", 60.

[21] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 335.

limited education and employment opportunities – continue to play critical roles in exacerbating the country's current high crime rate and accordant 'culture of violence'.[22]

Regarding the 'normalisation' of violence in South Africa, the country's citizens – during both *apartheid* and in the present day – realise that crime and violence are not the sole preserve of criminals. Instead, a fractured and distrustful relationship with the police force – forged from consistent abuse of authority that has underpinned and even at times incited violence – endures, bringing with it conflicting ideas of who and what to trust. For decades within and beyond the *apartheid* era, the South African Police Service (SAPS) has consistently faced allegations of brutality and abuse of power, the sum of which has eroded public trust in what should be considered society's protectors. A 2013 example of this involves Graca Machel, former first lady of Mozambique and Nelson Mandela's wife, who – at the memorial service of Emidio Josias 'Mido' Macia, a Mozambican taxi driver who died in police custody from internal bleeding and head injuries after being handcuffed to a police van and dragged around the township of Daveyton – publicly decried the state of the SAPS upon remarking how "increasing institutionalisation of violence" had given rise to a police force that was "actively aggressive towards a defenceless public."[23] With Machel's example echoing the SAPS's ongoing institutional disarray, frustrated communities often turn to less regulated (and highly violent) forms of retributive justice when dealing with what they consider criminal elements.[24] Consequently, the actions and

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[22] Malaquias, "Stress-Testing", 3; Mike Morris and Doug Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence, Reform and Reconstruction", *Review of African Political Economy,* 53, 1992, 43–59. Morris and Hindson's article explores the violence leading to and accompanying the disintegration of *apartheid*. Their emphasis on rapid urbanization, changing social divisions, political reform, and competing power centres offers reasons behind why crime rates were so high in the 1980s and 1990s while simultaneously outlining a socio-political-economic framework that describes why violence has continued so vociferously in the post-apartheid era.

[23] Gary Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives: Violence, Policing and the South African State", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 42,1, 2016, 74; Gibson Ncube, "South Africa's Police versus South Africa's Civilians", *Africa Conflict Monthly Monitor*, 7, 2014, 53-56; Scott Johnson, "Those Who Love South Africa Ask If It's Existentially Violent", *IHT Rendevous*, March 11, 2013, at (https://archive.nytimes.com/rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/11/those-who-love-south-africa-ask-if-its-existentially-violent/ accessed on January 1, 2024. Kynoch's article mentions that "The Independent Police Investigative Directorate's annual report covering the period from April 2012 to March 2013 records 275 deaths in police custody, 431 deaths as a result of police action, 146 cases of rape by police officers, more than 4000 assaults, and 50 cases of torture."

[24] Bill Berkeley, "The 'New' South Africa: Violence Works", *World Policy Journal*, 13,4, 1996, 73–80; Keith Gottschalk, "Vigilantism v. the State: a case study of the rise and fall of PAGAD, 1996-2000", *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, 99, 2005, 14; Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 65-78. Berkeley and Kynoch's articles deal with general South African vigilantism, while Gottschalk's focuses on the rise and fall of PAGAD (People Against Drugs and Violence) in the late 1990s.

inactions of South Africa's policing authority have contributed to a less-than-stellar reputation, reducing its (and, by extension, the government's) pragmatic and moral authority to that of a criminally untrustworthy level, thus effectively creating justice-restoring vacuums that are violently exploited by angry communities and opportunistic interest groups.[25]

Adding to South Africans' disillusionment toward the country's policing authority is considerable ire directed toward the country's fundamentally weak law enforcement and judicial system. Clive Glaser's analysis concerning the country's criminal justice system is that, due to it being tainted by its historical implementation of *apartheid* laws, it lacks credibility and legitimacy amongst the Black majority, which in turn has led to criminal behaviour becoming an acceptable norm among many people.[26] Nataša Georgieva Hadji Krsteski adds to this by describing a widely-held perception that local law enforcement and the judicial system are endemically compromised by issues like corruption and inefficiency, both of which – in line with South Africa's 'culture of violence'– have left many South Africans desensitised to violence and may lead them to seek alternative methods to remedy what problems they have. This pervasive sentiment of distrust steers people and communities from the police and judicial system toward vigilantism as a preferred (and in their eyes, more reliable) justice-restoring methodology, which ironically promotes violence as a peace-aiming tool rather than it being seen in an injurious, murderous light.[27]

Any historical study entails power struggles, and, like other countries, South Africa has its share of these. The post-apartheid era has been marked by political struggles and corruption scandals within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party and competing political entities.[28] Assis Malaquias draws focus to this via a 2008 survey in which roughly 54 per cent of South Africans felt the country was headed in the wrong direction, with only thirty-

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[25] Johan Burger, "To Protect and Serve: Restoring Public Confidence in the SAPS", *SA Crime Quarterly,* 36, 2011, 13-22. Along with Burger explaining that an internal SAPS Policy Advisory Council found 'high levels of corruption, poor management supervision, lack of discipline, weak command and control' to be rife within the SAPS, he also mentions that in 2010, former National Commissioner of the SAPS, Jackie Selebi, was convicted on a corruption charge and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment due to him having close links with individuals tied to organized crime.
[26] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 339.
[27] Nataša Georgieva Hadji Krsteski, "Corruption in South Africa: Genesis and Outlook", *Journal of Process Management and New Technologies* 5,4, 2017, 49-54.
[28] Pandey, "Political Mobilisation", 137-152.

six per cent believing it was on track. The sum of this study, predicated on the idea that corruption, incompetence, and a lack of transparency and accountability on behalf of incumbent authority figures have left ordinary citizens feeling that elected officials do not care about everyday people's concerns, is telling.[29] Sixteen years on from that survey, ongoing reports of high living, questionable morals, and incompetent governance among political figures – along with a spate of political assassinations in recent years – continue to sew hopelessness and despair among many South Africans, the effect of which, at times, can catalyse social unrest and lead to violence.[30]

When analysing the full spectrum of South Africa's 'culture of violence', a vital element to consider is that of foreign-directed xenophobia. While xenophobic violence was a documented phenomenon in South Africa pre-1994 (mostly against Mozambican and Congolese immigrants escaping hostilities in their countries), a 2004 study published by the Southern African Migration Project claims it has grown worse since the country became a multiracial democracy:

> The ANC government – in its attempts to overcome the divides of the past and build new forms of social cohesion… embarked on an aggressive and inclusive nation-building project. One unanticipated by-product of this project has been a growth in intolerance toward outsiders… Violence against foreign citizens and African refugees has become increasingly common and communities are divided by hostility and suspicion.[31]

The reality that South Africa has been southern Africa's socio-economic hegemon for decades means it naturally draws outsiders suffering from political instability, wishing to live a better life, or a combination of these.[32] The May 2008 riots – which started in the

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[29] Malaquias, "Stress-Testing", 6.; South Africa https://www.afrobarometer.org/countries/south-africa/. A more modern survey based on 2023 data (conducted by Afrobarometer, partnering with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation [http://www.ijr.org.za/]) concluded that seventy percent of respondents were dissatisfied with how democracy works in South Africa, eight-two percent perceived that corruption increased "somewhat" or "a lot" during the previous year (2022), and while sixty-five percent still supported elections as the best leadership selection method, overall satisfaction remained low.

[30] *Ibid*, 5; Daniel N. Mlambo, Mandla A. Mubecua and Victor H. Mlambo, "Post-Colonial Independence and Africa's Corruption Conundrum: A Succinct South African Critique Post-democratisation", *Insight on Africa* 15,2, 2023, 184-202; Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 70-71.

[31] Jonathan Crush and Wade Pendleton, "Regionalizing Xenophobia? Citizen Attitudes to Immigration and Refugee Policy in Southern Africa," *South African Migration Project*, 2004, 4.

[32] Jean Pierre Misago, "Politics by Other Means? The Political Economy of Xenophobic Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *The Black Scholar*, 47,2, 2017, 40-42; M.O. Dassah, "Naming and Exploring the Causes of Collective Violence against African Migrants in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Whither

Johannesburg township of Alexandra and spread nationwide within weeks – saw sixty-two people killed in xenophobic violence, this a by-product of what happens when influxes of foreigners squeeze job prospects and a tight resource pool that locals already find difficult to access.[33] Christine Tamir and Abby Budiman of the Pew Research Centre add to this by reporting that between 2010 and 2017, the illegal immigrant community in South Africa doubled from two to four million people, which, in line with Malthusian Theory, presents innumerable triggers to incite violence.[34] The April and October 2015 xenophobic attacks that happened in Durban and Grahamstown (characterised by looting, displacement, and, in Durban's case, five deaths)[35] offer a reflection on what can happen when locals feel increasingly marginalised by outsiders. Xenophobic fears persist in South Africa today to the point that a new political party, 'Operation Dudula', runs on a violence-backed, anti-foreigner mandate that has led South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to condemn them as a 'vigilante-like force' dividing Africans.[36]

A key point responsible for violent flare-ups between all members of South African society is limited resources and a lack of access to essential services. Despite South Africa being thirty years removed from *apartheid* autocracy, great swathes of the population still lack access to clean water, electricity, heating, and housing. This situation has led to 'service delivery' demonstrations and violence that Gary Kynoch states "typically stem from grievances over perceived failures in the provisions of adequate sanitation and affordable housing in poorer communities, along with accusations of local government corruption and

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Ubuntu?", *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 11,4, 2015, 130-139; Saul Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 279.

[33] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 71. Kynoch mentions that "Populist xenophobic onslaughts are triggered by a variety of events and elements, including foreigners' purported involvement in criminal activities, but the most consistent and strident complaints are economic in nature: foreign nationals steal jobs and undercut South African hawkers and small-scale shopkeepers."

[34] Christine Tamir and Arief Budiman, "In South Africa, Racial Divisions and Pessimism about Democracy Loom over Elections", *Pew Research Centre*, 2019, 1-10; Nico Strydom and Jean Struweg, "Malthus Revisited: Long-Term Trends in South African Population Growth and Agricultural Output," *Agrekon*, 55, 1-2, 2016, 35-36. Malthusian theory in a South African context refers to how the continued influx of undocumented immigrants into the country stokes competition for scarce resources, which leads to xenophobic violence and social unrest borne from continuing inequality and limited state capacity.

[35] South Africa: Events of 2015, at https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/south-africa accessed on November 5, 2024.

[36] Nkateko Mabasa, "South Africa's Operation Dudula vigilantes usher in new wave of xenophobia", *Al Jazeera*, September 26, 2023, at https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/9/26/south-africas-operation-dudula-vigilantes-usher-in-new-wave-of-xenophobia accessed on January 22, 2024.

ineffective policing." [37] A worrying trend stemming from these 'service delivery' demonstrations is their perceived passage toward political ascendancy on their leaders' behalf. As Kynoch explains:

> Many of the people who take to the streets are ANC members, and much of the impetus for service delivery protest appears to come from local political factions that have been unable to attain municipal office or have been displaced from office and excluded from the benefits associated with patronage. The protest 'brokers' would not get traction if people were not dissatisfied with local conditions, so although political infighting characterises many of these campaigns, popular grievances enable mobilisation.[38]

This description is worrying in that it makes one consider how much infrastructure and service delivery failings are the result of purposeful neglect, sabotage, or both, the effect of which causes angry mobs (directed by politically or financially ambitious characters) to perpetuate cyclical violence that "is understood as a language, a message, a way of calling out to higher authorities about the state of things in their town."[39]

Backdropping all the indignities South Africans continually face as part of a violence-laced culture is what catalysed the country's historical legacies of struggle. Due to South Africa's geographic location, geopolitical value, economic potential, and frontieresque history that has seen violence affect the lives of countless South Africans, a hardwired culture of resistance appears ingrained in the nation's psyche that may have moulded a society that endorses and accepts violence as a viable and legitimate way to resolve problems, protect personal or communal interests, and achieve goals. [40] With *apartheid* having so comprehensively marginalised both the actions and voices of the country's majority for six decades, existential compromises had to be made. Whether citing the 1952 Defiance Campaign, the passbook demonstrations leading to the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, the ANC (under Nelson Mandela's command) forming its armed wing Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK, translated as 'The Spear of the Nation') to engage in armed struggle, the 1976 Soweto

[37] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 68.
[38] *Ibid*, 68.
[39] Karl Von Holdt, Malose Langa, Sepetla Molapo, Nomfundo Mogapi, Kindiza Ngubeni, Jacob Dlamini and Adele Kirsten, *The Smoke That Calls: Insurgent Citizenship, Collective Violence and the Struggle for a Place in the New South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), 27.
[40] Hamber, "'Have no doubt", 5; Van Der Spuy and Shearing, "Curbing the Killing Fields", 196.

Uprising (which effectively set off the beginning of the end of *apartheid*), the 1983 formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) or any other descriptions of resistance against the state (and vice versa), it is difficult to argue against the point that the single most influential factor upon which post-apartheid South Africa was formed is a historically-moulded 'culture of violence'.[41]

Drawing broad strokes per analysing the issue of violence in post-apartheid South Africa, it is clear that the country's complex history and challenges concerning economic inequality, political instability, and social tensions all contribute toward sustaining a violence-addled culture and society.[42] Furthermore, while it appears that the challenges posed by this violence may be too numerous, too deep, and too ingrained to make healing headway, it would be morally contemptuous and irresponsible not to try to improve things. Accordingly, addressing South Africa's 'culture of violence' with a mind to lessening its pervasive effects requires thinking beyond standard law enforcement and judicial changes; instead, carefully considered social and economic reforms aimed at righting South Africa's devastating inequality, improving access to essential services for all South Africans, and promoting social cohesion in authentic, state-building ways are needed.

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[41] M.P. Naicker, The Defiance Campaign, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/defiance-campaign-m-p-naicker accessed on November 5, 2024; Sharpeville Massacre, 21 March 1960, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/sharpeville-massacre-21-march-1960 accessed on November 5, 2024; The June 16 Soweto Youth Uprising, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/june-16-soweto-youth-uprising accessed on November 5, 2024; Thompson, *A History*, 221-289; United Democratic Front (UDF), at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/united-democratic-front-udf, accessed on November 5, 2024. While neither the Defiance Campaign nor the UDF started out with violent intentions, the reality that they existed to oppose violence-wielding structures caused them to become implicated within violent contexts. It for this reason that they – inadvertently and unwillingly – contributed to the propagation and development of modern South Africa's 'culture of violence'.

[42] Karl Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition to Violent Democracy", *Review of African Political Economy*, 40,138, 2013, 589-604. Von Holdt's paper offers an interesting description of South Africa's political status, calling the country's social system a 'violent democracy'. He also offers insight into the concepts of collective violence and intra-elite conflict, from which South Africa's 'culture of violence' draws much of its intrinsic violent leanings.

B: Research Problem

Despite democratic governance, why does a 'culture of violence' endure in South Africa?

Following decades of oppression imposed upon South Africa's Black majority via racial and ethnic segregation (and their associated socio-economic impacts) during the *apartheid* era, 1994 saw the country reborn as a multiracial democracy that, under the leadership of previously-imprisoned Nelson Mandela, could dare to dream of a fairer, more equitable future. This moment in history was celebrated the world over as one where justice and reconciliation might, for once, chart a nation's path toward a sustainably brighter future.

Thirty years have passed since. And while it cannot be denied that South Africa has made significant progress in developing its democracy, socio-economic policies, and capacities for political inclusion since 1994, it is equally valid that undergirding this progressive veneer exists a dark, malevolent underbelly whose currents are dictated mainly by the daily violence that rages throughout the country.

This master's thesis aims to delineate what factors have permitted a 'culture of violence' to endure in post-apartheid South Africa, despite the nation having undergone a political transformation from oppressive autocracy to multiracial democracy thirty years ago. While South Africa *not* having descended into declared civil war during the political transition period won noted international plaudits and admiration, this did not serve as a panacea that instantly erased the country's deeply embedded 'culture of violence', which over preceding decades has formed as an amalgam of destructive energy seeking to either support or overthrow a brutal political status quo.[43]

To comprehend the persistence of violence in post-apartheid South Africa, it is necessary to examine the historical, socio-economic, and political contexts that have fueled its ongoing existence. Commencing per this logic, this thesis will analyse key themes to illuminate how and why a 'culture of violence' continues to dominate modern-day democratic South Africa.

[43] Thompson, *A History*, 268-271.

First, it is vital to outline the historical roots of South African violence. As described earlier in this thesis, exhaustively surveying South Africa's historical context – the extent of which includes colonial legacies, the *apartheid* era, the anti-apartheid struggle, and other instances of conflict – should provide substantive scaffolding toward establishing why a 'culture of violence' dominates post-apartheid South Africa.

A thorough analysis of South Africa's historical context should also offer clear reasons why the country's continuing socio-economic disparities have, in adversely violent ways, kept the nation at the head of the world's most unequal countries' list.[44] To delve deeply into what pervasive socio-economic inequalities dictate modern South Africans' lives (and, by extension, what tensions and violence exist within negatively-affected communities) is integral to knowing how and why a 'culture of violence' still holds such pervasive sway in a thirty-year-old multiracial democracy.

Following historical context and persisting economic disparities, it is necessary to understand how these factors affect South Africa's modern political landscape. Accordingly, academic attention should consider the country's complex political dynamics, which essentially translates into what it means to govern an incredibly diverse set of people under the banner of a single state that, quite possibly, might not comfortably operate as one.[45] Scrutinising the socio-political and economic ebbs and flows that exist between the state and its citizens can provide empirical insight into why violence operates so freely in South Africa, particularly when such insight illuminates the roles that politicians (incumbent or aspiring) may play in trying to eradicate or perpetrate violence throughout the country for personal or factional gain.[46]

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[44] Altbeker, *A Country at War*, 6. By situating crime within a functionalist context, Altbeker argues that South African violence goes beyond individual moral failings or isolated incidents. Instead, he suggests that the country's history (and the myriad negative effects of *apartheid*) has been the primary factor behind high crime rates and social instability.

[45] Hermann Giliomee, "Democratization in South Africa", *Political Science Quarterly*, 110,1, 1995, 83-104. Giliomee uses comparative analysis to contextualize South Africa's transition to democratization against countries possessing similar historical variables such as Northern Ireland, Greater Israel (an expanded territory of Israel beyond its internationally recognized borders, often based on ancient biblical descriptions of the Land of Israel), Ghana, and Zimbabwe.

[46] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 67-71; Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence,", 51-52.

Backdropping the country's historical context, social disparities, and political dynamics are its people. In a country as diverse as South Africa, it is integral to consider how identity, ethnicity, and cultural divisions have materialised and sustained violence. Whether citing the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck and the Dutch in 1652, the slave culture that followed in the Cape Colony, [47] the Voortrekkers moving through the interior of the country and fighting battles against indigenous groups, inter-Boer and British wars, as well as segregation laws and the horrors of social engineering that *apartheid* later imposed upon all South Africans, it is within the domain of the South African people that the true and lasting effects of South Africa's persisting 'culture of violence' can be most accurately understood.[48]

British-Pakistani author Nadeem Aslam opened his novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* with the quote, "History is the third parent".[49] To understand South Africa's present, an objective evaluation of history can offer insight into what underpins South Africa's modern dynamics. Accordingly, it is essential to consider what attempts at restorative justice and reconciliation have occurred and whether these may have gained efficacious traction in attempting to stop the violence dominating South Africa. Examining mechanisms like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and other justice-restoring agencies established to address past injustices (and to what extent these mechanisms and agencies may have worked) can provide additional clarification toward understanding why a 'culture of violence' rules modern-day South Africa's socio-political roost.[50]

By utilising a multidisciplinary approach synthesising historical, sociological, and political perspectives, this thesis aims to illuminate the myriad factors that have sustained (and perhaps even proliferated) South Africa's omnipresent 'culture of violence'. It is also hoped that by critically analysing violence-propagating factors, ideas and solutions can emerge to

[47] An interchangeable historical name would be *Cape of Good Hope.*
[48] Debra Kaminer and Gillian Eagle, *Traumatic Stress in South Africa,* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2010), 8-27. Kaminer and Eagle's book covers a broad scope of how, when, and where South Africa's violent acts are perpetrated and the traumatic effects that result.
[49] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2004).
[50] Hamber, "'Have no doubt", 13-16; Thompson, *A History*, 268-271.

help those who suffer at the hands of this violence, which could help set the country on a less violent path.

C: Research Questions

What are the historical roots of violence in South Africa that saw expression in the 1960s, 1980s, and post-1994?

This thesis aims to understand South Africa's continued 'culture of violence'. To achieve this, it is imperative to explore the complex historical roots of South African violence.

This study will analyse three integral periods in South Africa's modern history: the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath (1960s), anti-apartheid resistance and state response (1980s), and post-1994: contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings. It is believed that analysing these three distinct yet interrelated periods will yield critical clues and themes behind why South Africa's 'culture of violence' endures as it does. By coming to know the origins and evolution of South Africa's 'culture of violence' over these pivotal periods, the capacity to comprehend South Africa's modern-day violence issue (and how to deal with it) will also become more apparent.

Following the 1952 Defiance Campaign and what progress anti-apartheid groups like the ANC and Pan-African Congress (PAC) made during that decade, 1960 got off to the worst possible start with the March 21 killing of sixty-nine people in the Black township of Sharpeville. At the tail-end of what observers claimed to be a generally peaceful anti-passbook protest that had brought protesters to Sharpeville's police station, the police opened fire, and a defining moment in South African history occurred. However, rather than the National Party government apologising for their role in the massacre, they doubled down on their efforts to divide and further oppress the Black majority by banning the ANC, PAC, and other anti-apartheid groups.

The Sharpeville Massacre – which brought *apartheid* and its brutal dealings to world attention – led the ANC (under Nelson Mandela's stewardship) to enter an armed struggle through a newly-created military wing known as Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK).[51] The

[51] Paul Landau, "The ANC, MK and 'The Turn to Violence': Remaking Liberation Historiography", South African Historical Journal 64,3, 2012, 585–602; Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and Its Consequences*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). While Sharpeville's events ushered in new ways of thinking regarding how to counter state-condoned violence, Lodge describes the armed struggle as having been initiated by a relatively small group of elites within the ANC and PAC leadership, while Landau notes that some leaders and rank-and-file members expressed doubts about the armed struggle's

ensuing physical and psychological battles played out between state and resistance forces over the remainder of the 1960s warrant noted academic attention in that Sharpeville – as a historical incident of enduring symbolic value – stands as a societal inflexion point that forces one to consider the dynamics underpinning the *apartheid* system: what it stood for, and what lengths would be taken to sustain and stoke oppressiveness (underscored by violence) to maintain White rule for White benefit.[52]

Twenty years after the Sharpeville Massacre, 1980s South Africa can be historically characterised as one of the most violent periods in the country's history. Following the political renewal of the until-then-banned ANC and other resistance movements (all thrust into revolutionary action off the violent back of the 1976 Soweto Uprising), the 1980s saw mass mobilisation and protests, doubled-down state-driven repression, and increased international pressure that essentially plunged *apartheid* into its death throes. In this uncertain period of transition (and with power and economic vacuums appearing as a new political order beckoned), an intensification of violence occurred that included state-inflicted brutality, intra-Black conflict, and a general malaise of either engineered or random death and destruction enacted between all manner of South African communities.[53]

Understanding the socio-political cadenza of violent interplay characterising this period is a mammoth but integral task, for if one element is needed to create a sustain and a 'culture of violence', it is violence, and 1980s South Africa – a country essentially on a socio-political knife-edge – was as violent a place as any during the latter 20th century history period. Thus, examining South Africa's 1980s violence will go a long way toward understanding why a 'culture of violence' dominates South Africa today.

The post-1994 era dared South Africans of all colours, races, and creeds to dream of a fairer, more equitable future. With *apartheid* as a daily tool of encroachment fast-fading and

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efficacy, morality, and timing, the sum of which indicates that a turn to violence was not a wholly-supported endeavour.

[52] Thompson, *A History*, 221-289.

[53] Jan-Ad Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse: The Supreme Strategies of the National Party Government and the African National Congress, 1980-1989: An Historical Perspective", *Journal for Contemporary History*, 36,1, 2011, 98-113. Per its title, Stemmet's article offers a chronological explication of 1980s South African violence. The mentioned 'Anticipation of Apocalypse' intimates how 1980s South Africa set up the framework for South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence'.

South Africa – led by arguably the world's most famous statesman, Nelson Mandela – appearing to have staved off what seemed an inevitable civil war, hopes were high that the violent nightmares of *apartheid* would be acknowledged, addressed, and compensated for, along with measures put in place to help avert a rerun of what South Africans had endured as an autocratic-leaning political philosophy for the past forty-six years.

However, despite assurances of reconciliation and healing (including those made public via the TRC's official report in 1998), violence did not disappear in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, it transformed into different iterations of the same political, criminal, and inter-communal conflicts that had characterised *apartheid* rule, albeit violence was now being blamed on different actors, reasons, and motivations.[54] Considering this, an examination of the complexities of post-1994 violence – including an analysis of what role the TRC played in deterring, neutralising, or promoting violence – along with analysing how and why violence proliferated beyond the hope and hype of the post-apartheid era, is essential to understanding why a 'culture of violence' dominates South Africa thirty years after it gained multiracial democracy status.

By examining these three distinct yet interrelated periods (the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, anti-apartheid resistance and state response, and post-1994: contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings) in South Africa's history, a comprehensive understanding of the historical roots of violence, how they evolved, and their lasting impact on the nation's socio-political landscape can be drawn. Conducting such an analysis is essential for establishing solid academic conclusions, which in turn can assist policymakers, activists, and others invested in dealing with South Africa's enduring 'culture of violence' problem.

How do these historical instances of violence interconnect to explain the enduring 'culture of violence'?

[54] Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 591. Von Holdt argues that "South Africa is torn between the persistence of an exclusionary socio-economic structure marked by deep poverty and extreme inequality on the one hand, and on the other the symbolic and institutional rupture presented by the transition to democracy. This relationship produces a highly unstable social order in which intra-elite conflict and violence are growing, characterized by new forms of violence and the reproduction of older patterns of violence, a social order that can be characterized as a 'violent democracy'.

This thesis's second research question explores the complicated dynamics and effects that South African historical violence continues to play in the present day. It also seeks to understand what underlying factors and processes have contributed to the persistence of the country's 'culture of violence', emphasising crucial historical events in the 1960s, 1980s, and post-1994.

In addressing this research question, it is pivotal to explore vital historical elements that, with critical analysis, can provide the requisite direction needed to provide substantive, impartial research findings.

First, historical continuity – particularly how 1960s, 1980s, and post-1994 violence are connected – should be established. If research into these periods can yield repeated social and behavioural patterns, consistent or conflicting ideologies, and point out associated actors of violence involved across these time frames, a solid foundation will have been formed to further grapple with this research question's extended temporal scope.

Along with exploring historical continuity, socio-political factors have played an enormous role in catalysing and exacerbating violence to the point that an actual 'culture of violence' dominates South African society. Examining the historicity of how these factors have impacted South African society in the form of *apartheid* policies, racial tensions, and socio-economic disparities can offer light toward establishing how and why the country remains so violent thirty years into democracy.

Another pivotal historical element to consider is that of transitional periods. By researching and understanding the impact of transition periods (for example, how the post-Sharpeville bannings of the ANC and PAC catalysed the armed struggle era, the transitional violence that characterised the 1980s through to the 1994 general election, and what actors, elements, and circumstances have played violent roles in post-1994 power vacuums), it is possible to collate relevant information relating to the dynamics of South Africa's 'culture of violence'. It is also through answering whether transition periods like that of post-1994 affected genuine reconciliation or instead stoked violent flames born under institutionalised repression that conclusions can arise regarding how South Africa could possibly chart a more peaceful course.

A further element to understanding South Africa's violent history comes via historical narratives, the role of which can determine how and why the country's 'culture of violence' has continued to proliferate. In considering how narratives, memory, bias, and historical accounts have shaped the perception and perpetuation of violence over time is to enter the proverbial belly of South Africa's violent story, as it is within the domain of South Africa's people that the actual cost of violence can become known. Other than reaching academic awareness of how South Africa's 'culture of violence' impacts the country's people, researching historical narratives can also shed light on how differing perspectives possess the power to resist or reinforce a 'culture of violence', knowledge of which can prove helpful to research in this field.

When examining violence, it is also essential to consider how and from which sources violence is generated. As such, research should factor in cultural and societal norms like masculinity, social power structures, and intergenerational transmission of trauma, all of which have played roles in generating and sustaining violence. By analysing these bedrock factors and applying them toward ascertaining how and why a 'culture of violence' endures so prevalently in South Africa, additional research legitimacy and accuracy can provide more precise conclusions.

Another critical point contributing to an accurate analysis of South African violence revolves around what internal and external factors play significant roles in South African life. Regarding external factors, international influences (the roles of foreign actors and international events on South Africa's history of violence, both during and beyond the *apartheid* era) warrant keen attention insofar that geopolitics, during *apartheid* and now, have played significant roles in establishing and sustaining South Africa's 'culture of violence'.[55] Thus, knowing how and why international influences have acted (and still act) as they do will loan this study a relevant geopolitical dimension that offers a more nuanced understanding of how these influences (together with domestic forces) affect violence within South Africa.

[55] Thompson, *A History*, 230-235.

Wrapping up an analysis of South Africa's history of violence concerns reconciliation and healing initiatives, the most significant of which came via the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work. Testimonies offered to the TRC by people affected by violence can serve as an invaluable resource toward establishing a developed understanding of how and why a ‘culture of violence’ endures in South Africa. Simultaneously, an analysis of this subject matter can offer perspective to those who may not have suffered so severely as to what could happen should South African violence not be reined in, which in turn can draw emphasis toward generating intelligent and empathic policy and initiatives that may help turn South Africa's violent tide.

It is believed that by examining the recently-mentioned historical factors, it is possible to gain a more thorough and nuanced understanding of how historical instances of violence in South Africa are interconnected and what roles they have played in creating and sustaining the country's ‘culture of violence’. Moreover, it is hoped this thesis's research can distil the complexity of South Africa's relationship with violence into workable elements that, while reflecting what devastation has been wrought, can also offer academic food for thought as to how South Africa could possibly remedy its violence-related ills.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

> *In the city it is like this: all the time you are fighting. Fighting. Fighting! When you are asleep and when you are awake. And you look only after yourself. If you do not you are finished. If you are soft everyone will spit in your face. They will rob you and cheat you and betray you. So to live here you must be hard, hard as a stone. And money is your best friend. With money you can bribe a policeman. With money you can buy someone to go to jail for you. That is how it is, Xuma.*[1]
>
> - Peter Abrahams, 1946

With this thesis's Introduction having outlined the scope and sequence of post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence', the next step – via the Literature Review – is to gain insight into why violence has persisted so vociferously in post-apartheid South Africa. Doing this will require a detailed overview of historically significant events that span several time periods.

A: Historical Overview of South African Violence

Pre-1960s violence and the early *apartheid* era

With 20th-century South African history arguably holding court in most people's minds due to its temporal vicinity and at-hand effects that still dominate the country's socio-political identity, it is crucial to frame that century's significant events according to what variables caused them. Leonard Thompson wrote a seminal text describing South African history (and accompanying violence) titled *A History of South Africa.* His appraisal of South Africa's 'culture of violence' is traced back to the original Dutch settlers and their colonial mentality, after which he details a violence-laden journey toward modern-day post-apartheid South Africa. Offering insight into the origins of modern South Africa (and its accompanying violence), Thompson writes:

> The precolonial history of Southern Africa is significant in its own right, providing examples of the constraints and possibilities, achievements and setbacks of preindustrial and preliterate communities as they established their niches in a variety of environments. It is also significant as providing essential links in explaining what has followed. Indigenous South Africans

[1] Peter Abrahams, *Mine Boy*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1946), 75-76.

> were not a tabula rasa for white invaders or capitalists to civilise or victimise. Over many centuries, they had been developing social forms and cultural traditions that colonialism, capitalism and apartheid have assaulted, abused, and modified but never eradicated. One cannot understand how Africans have endured the fragmentation of their family life by migrant labour unless one had knowledge of their customary social values and networks. No one can fathom the vigour of black resistance to the apartheid state without knowledge of precolonial African ideas about the social and economic obligations of rulers and rights of subjects, and the basis of political legitimacy.[2]

Chapter 1 *(The Africans)* of Thompson's book elaborates on vital elements of Southern African history that helped mould and foster South Africa's 'culture of violence'. Thompson details these elements chronologically, beginning with Southern Africa's resource-rich physical environment to various socio-economic iterations that include hunter-gatherer societies, the introduction of pastoralists, and the influence of mixed farming, both in terms of what technological advances they made and what violence occurred between conflicting groups.[3] Chapter 2 *(The White Invaders)* details the arrival, influence, and effects that Europeans imposed upon indigenous South Africans, from Jan Van Riebeek's 1652 arrival to the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, which led to the birth of Johannesburg.[4] Chapter 3 *(African Wars and White Invaders)* runs parallel to this period, offering information regarding the Mfecane wars (1817-1828), the Afrikaner Great Trek (1836-1854), the British colony of Natal (1843-1870), and how *commandos* affected local African Highveld populations, all of which pivoted around explicit or implicit violent acts.[5]

Covering the period between 1870 and 1910, Thompson's Chapter 4 *(Diamonds, Gold, and British Imperialism)* describes how Whites incorporated Black South Africans into a capitalist, white-dominated economy by exploiting cleavages between different African groups while simultaneously promoting as a status quo a racist ideology that, according to Thompson, had become 'pervasive among Europeans and North Americans' at the time.[6]

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[2] Thompson, *A History*, 1-2.
[3] *Ibid,* 1-30.
[4] *Ibid,* 31-69.
[5] *Ibid,* 70-109.
[6] *Ibid,* 111. Between 1880 and 1910, racism in Europe and settler states was reinforced by Social Darwinism, which ranked races hierarchically and justified white supremacy. Imperialism and capitalist expansion used race to legitimize exploitation, divide colonized peoples, and stratify labor markets,

Violence, however, was not limited to Black South Africans, because while economic growth obtained from exploiting prolific diamond and gold deposits found in South Africa's interior elevated the country's global standing, ethnic divisions between the British and Afrikaners led these groups to warfare that sowed seeds not only for South Africa's 1910 Union, but also played a critical role in the Herenigde National Party's (Reunited National Party) ascension to power in 1948.[7]

Thompson's Chapter 5 *(The Segregation Era)* details the period between 1910 and 1948, offering its reader detailed insights into what role segregationist policy played in moulding early 20th century South African society through to the Herenigde National Party's 1948 election victory off the back of their newly adopted slogan *'apartheid'.* Thompson makes notable references to White politics here, the core of which, at least shortly after 1910's Union, revolved around ethnic differences between Afrikaners and English-speaking White South Africans. To wage this ethnic struggle free of the 'Native Question (sic.)',[8] discriminatory laws were passed to bolster segregation between Whites and Africans, the most pivotal being the *1913 Natives Land Act,* which declared that Africans could only buy land in demarcated reserves, thus reducing them to mere sojourners in urban areas**.** Labour-wise, the *1911 Mines and Works Act* (and its 1926 successor) saw mine labour split on a hierarchical, racial basis that reserved specific jobs in mining and the railways for White workers. With the *1923 Native (Urban Areas) Act* segregating urban residential space and introducing 'influx controls' to reduce access to cities by Black South Africans, these and other associated pieces of legislation reinforced a long-running trend of discrimination that, per its effect on the Black population, can with hindsight be considered engineered systemic violence.[9]

South Africa's history is characterised by cultural and economic resistance to discriminatory legislation, and the early 20th century saw the formation of three separate

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especially in South Africa and the U.S. Racist ideologies also shaped national identities, casting non-white groups as inferior and justifying policies of exclusion, land dispossession, and economic marginalization.

[7] *Ibid,* 110-153.

[8] *Ibid,* 163-170. Predicated by differing historical perspectives, a distillation of Thompson's Chapter 5 (*The Segregation Era*) characterizes the 'Native Question' as an evolving, procedural amalgam that required maintaining racial dominance whilst exploiting indigenous labor.

[9] *Ibid,* 154-186.

national organisations working to improve the lives of subordinated peoples. The African Political Organization (APO - 1902), a Colored organisation; the South African Indian Congress (SAIC - 1923), an Indian organisation; and the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, which later became the African National Congress, or ANC, in 1912) – along with white liberals like Edgar Brookes and the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR, which collected and published information detailing the adverse effects of segregation and discrimination)[10] – sought to represent and advocate for those on the receiving end of discriminatory legislation. The effect of these groups – along with the influence of the South African Communist Party, formed in 1921 – would, over decades, form the foundations of South Africa's hard-fought realisation of democracy in 1994, a path charted along differing engagement strategies that brought notable violence to South Africa's socio-political landscape.[11]

The outbreak of World War 2 in 1939 caused a split in the ruling United Party, pitting Prime Minister JB Hertzog and his deputy Jan Smuts and their supporters along different lines of sympathy for whom to support. From this division, Cape politician and ex-church minister DF Malan – who in 1933 had created the Herenigde National Party, an ultra-conservative Afrikaner political collective advocating racial segregation and Christian-Nationalist ideals[12] – absorbed influential United Party defectors, thus considerably bolstering Malan's electoral standing. Identifying and exploiting concerns among Afrikaners like *oorstrooming* (swamping/flooding of urban centres) and the *swaart gevaar* (the Black peril/danger), the Herenigde National Party – whose political narrative operated upon the enigmatically-titled election slogan *'apartheid'* – caused a major upset by winning

[10] An interview with Edgar Harry Brookes, 1976, at https://www.gedmartin.net/martinalia-mainmenu-3/406-edgar-brookes-1976 accessed on July 6, 2024; Thompson, *A History*, 175-176. With Brookes as one of its founding members, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) was established in 1929 to promote peace, goodwill, and practical cooperation among South Africa's diverse racial groups. Brookes served as the SAIRR's president in 1932 and again in 1946.
[11] *Ibid*, 174.
[12] David Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 1-28. Welsh's Chapter 1 (*Afrikaner Nationalism and the Coming of Apartheid*) describes how Christianity informed general Afrikaner worldview, which in turn informed *apartheid* and its policies.

the 1948 general election, which brought Afrikaner nationalists to power for the first time in South Africa's history.[13]

Malan and his party's victory – considered by Afrikaners (who comprised around 55% of the White electorate) as a Christian-Nationalist 'ordained destiny' – would swiftly enact *apartheid* through systemically violent segregationist and discriminatory legislation, the sum of which, through its support base growing in subsequent elections, appeared to resonate with the party's electorate. As history would later show, *apartheid* grew in both influence and stature, eventually becoming the omnipresent tool of violence dictating South African life through the latter half of the 20th century.[14]

With Thompson's *A History of South Africa* continuing to outline the creation and effects of *apartheid*, a complementary analysis comes via Saul Dubow's 2014 book, *Apartheid: 1948-1994.* Detailing the period from the National Party's ascension to power to the legislative dismantling of *apartheid* and Nelson Mandela's election as South Africa's first Black president, *Apartheid: 1948-1994's* primary contribution to this study lies in its second chapter (*The Consolidation of Apartheid).* Here, Dubow focuses on the development of *apartheid* policy via Hendrik Verwoerd (and, to a lesser extent, Werner Eiselen) through their work in the *apartheid* government's Native Affairs Department from 1950 onward. Through a combination of intellect, will, and an authoritative demeanour, Verwoerd transformed this Department into a highly centralised bureaucracy built upon scientific management and technical planning, and, in doing so, he consolidated his reputation as a practical, no-nonsense leader.[15] Considering the extent to which Verwoerd's personality imposed itself on future policy formation and dissemination (and keeping in mind how devastating *apartheid* was for those who suffered through it), former Native Affairs secretary Douglas Smith's assessment of Verwoerd as "a Napoleon in Native Affairs who was trying to set up a great Black empire under his supreme dictatorship"[16] appears telling, particularly per what discriminatory and segregationist-leaning legislation

[13] *Ibid*, 177-186.
[14] *Ibid*, 184-188.
[15] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 59-60.
[16] *Ibid*, 60.

Verwoerd advocated and how this legislation violently affected South Africans both then and in the future.

With Verwoerd heading up the Native Affairs Department, he and his associates passed a raft of legislative acts that, as fundamental government policy, came to dictate the lives of everyone living under *apartheid.* Starting with 1949's *Prohibition of Marriages Act* that created legal boundaries between races by making marriages across colour lines illegal, in 1950, no less than four inherently discriminatory, segregationist, and undeniably violent acts were passed. The first of these – described by David Welsh as "the linchpin of apartheid"[17] – was the *Population Registration Act,* which categorised South Africans into four racial categories: Whites ("Europeans"), Bantu, Indians, and Coloreds, the last two groups of which comprised less than 2% each of the total population. These racial classifications determined where people could live and work, where they could receive education or medical care, where and how they could be entertained, and even which blood donors they could use, all based on the idea that separating races would reduce friction between them. Also in 1950, the *Immorality Act* criminalised interracial relationships and sexual relations between different racial groups, and the insidiously violent *Group Areas Act* came into effect. Affecting mostly Indians and Coloreds, the *Group Areas Act* forcibly removed thousands of South African citizens from long-occupied residential areas to substandard reservations for resettlement. Next was 1950's fourth pivotal piece of legislation: the *Suppression of Communism Act*. A blatant human rights affront, this act purposefully defined communism in vague terms and gave the Minister of Justice summary powers over anyone he believed was furthering communist aims. Violence flowed in that the Justice Minister could 'ban' a person at will, meaning any 'banned' person could not join specified organisations, communicate with other 'banned' people, publish anything, and was at the mercy of being placed under house arrest. The Minister of Justice did not have to explain why a person was banned, and the 'banned' person possessed no legal avenues to challenge their 'banned' status.[18]

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[17] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 54.

[18] Bannings and Banishment, *TRC Final Report: Volume 2*, 165-169, at https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/ accessed April 11, 2024; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 37-40; Thompson, *A History,* 198-199; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 54-57.

While Verwoerd was not exclusively responsible for weaponising *apartheid*, he was indispensable to building the system's political innards and policies. This reality is increasingly evident via additional 1950s discriminatory blueprints he promoted, such as the *Bantu Authorities Act* (1951), which set the parameters for creating 'tribal authorities' in rural African reserves and effectively served as the legislative framework for the self-ruling 'Bantustans' that later dominated *apartheid* socio-economic policy.[19] Regarding the psychologically violent effects these 'Bantustans' would come to play on the residents compelled to occupy them, Mamphela Ramphele stated:

> (the Bantustans)… are designed to cheat the black man into participating in his own oppression because of built-in safeguards that make it impossible for any person using them to liberate himself.[20]

In 1952, the *Native Laws Amendment Act* offered state officials extensive powers of arrest where Africans were deemed to be idle or disorderly, and the *Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act* passed the year before forced Africans over the age of sixteen to carry around 'reference books' (known colloquially as *dompas,* meaning 'dumb pass'), which curtailed freedom of movement for Africans throughout South Africa.[21] It is these very 'reference books' that form the locus of this thesis's first case study – the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath – an analysis of which will show how a 'culture of violence' – born from violence – was formed and still dominates post-apartheid South Africa today.

Resistance rose to counter the slew of discriminatory legislation being passed, culminating in 1952's Defiance Campaign. A joint operation between the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Defiance Campaign attempted to peacefully draw attention to the social restructuring the National Party was trying to institute through *apartheid* policy. Although history shows that the Defiance Campaign fizzled out within a year and failed to overturn the *apartheid* laws it opposed, the campaign did succeed in drawing the United Nations's attention to the discriminatory nature of South Africa's racial policy and illustrated how *apartheid* was evolving into an international issue. Also, due to more than

[19] Thompson, *A History,* 191-194.
[20] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 147-148.
[21] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 61-65.

eight thousand people being jailed for defying *apartheid* laws (and the ANC's membership simultaneously rising by tens of thousands), the Defiance Campaign – born on ideas of peace – can be considered instrumental in inadvertently yet influentially acting as a stepping stone toward changing resistance groups' struggle strategies from peaceful to armed. By virtue of the Defiance Campaign's peaceful demonstrations being usurped by state-driven violence, it assisted in laying resistance-based ideological foundations for later violence that – analysed through a critical lens – can be considered catalytic in forming and sustaining post-apartheid's 'culture of violence'.[22]

The government's response to the Defiance Campaign came in different violent guises, an insidiously slow-burn element of which was the *Bantu Education Act* passed under Verwoerd's watch in 1953. This legislation brought all educational responsibility under state control, thus ending the independent church and mission school system that, for a century, had schooled an elite group of African graduates who later became political leaders.[23] Moreover, while the *Bantu Education Act* – promoted by the nationalist government as educating previously uneducated people nationwide – may indeed have introduced many to a classroom for the first time, the price paid was that this schooling system was designed to quash independent thought, curb the aspirations of its student body, and create a socio-economically compliant labour force that 'knew' its place in society, the last point being essential in sustaining the 'legitimacy' of *apartheid* policy.[24] Verwoerd drew noted attention to this when addressing the South African Senate in 1954:

> The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze.[25]

[22] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 40-45; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 110-112.
[23] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 55-56.
[24] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 48. Welsh discusses how, despite the ANC wanting to organize a boycott of Bantu Education, little happened because "…the huge majority of African parents preferred their children to receive some education, however bad, rather than none at all."
[25] *Ibid,* 64-65.

Per informing Africans of their 'place', the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* (passed in 1953) mandated the segregation of public facilities such as schools, hospitals, and public transportation based on racial categories. Along with preceding discriminatory laws designed to systemise violence while further consolidating *apartheid* and championing the cause of Whites, the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act* – yet another nail in the human rights coffin for Black South Africans – would be one of many reasons why the resistance (collectively known as the Congress of the People, consisting of the ANC and its partners, the Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Organization, and the Congress of Democrats) gathered in Kliptown, Johannesburg, in 1955 to conceive of and draw up the Freedom Charter, an iconic text aimed at outlining how a multiracial South Africa – morally and pragmatically – could form and prosper for those it represented.[26]

Defined by European-led colonialism, ethnic warfare, and systemised oppression through *apartheid* policy, pre-1960s South Africa was a foundationally violent period of South Africa's history that, through mass subjugation on multiple levels, set in motion the creation of a 'culture of violence', the tone, content, and application of which has endured in post-apartheid South Africa. Knowing how and why violence occurred in pre-1960s South Africa is essential to understanding why subsequent events and instances of violence have occurred, the aggregation of which can provide the basis for what comparative analysis must occur to answer this thesis's research questions conclusively.

1960s – The Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath

South Africa experienced much upheaval in the 1960s, most of which benefited the country's White population in economically unprecedented ways. At the centre of this upheaval lies an event that, considered equal parts harrowing and pivotal, still dominates the South African psyche in a pseudo-mythical manner: the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre. Cognised by laypeople and scholars alike as a 'turning point' in South African history, the

[26] Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/congress-people-and-freedom-charter accessed on December 10, 2024; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 68-70; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 113-117.

Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath have played a critical role in shaping South African politics and how violence came to either encourage or combat *apartheid* rule.

Of Sharpeville-related texts, one considered highly authoritative in portraying how, why, and to what effect the Sharpeville Massacre had in influencing 1960s South Africa is historian Tom Lodge's *Sharpeville*: *An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences*. At the time of its writing, Lodge wrote that his book "…joins a small body of writing that addresses the causes, the consequences, and the 'meaning' of the Sharpeville massacre on March 21, 1960."[27] With Lodge's text framed this way, it appears his detailing of the massacre and its subsequent effects can portray how Sharpeville may have partly fomented the 'culture of violence' that continues in South Africa sixty-four years after the massacre occurred. This detailing, in turn, can help form conclusions about how best Sharpeville-type scenarios can be avoided in the future.

To perhaps memorialise the domestic and international chaos and uncertainty that accompanied the Sharpeville Massacre, Lodge employs an intriguing narrative structure that, beginning with Chapter 1 *(Voices from a Massacre),* offers witness testimonies to illuminate what happened on the South African *highveld* come that hot, 1960 March Monday.[28] Lodge's interviewees provide insight into general Sharpeville life at the time, ranging from the daily minutiae of factory workers to police constables and ordinary folk, men and women, young and old, all of whom suffered – directly or indirectly – from that day's events. The interviewees' testimonies mention violent elements preceding that afternoon's massacre, including Pan-African Congress (PAC) 'Task Forces' who, through coercive means and strong rhetoric, drummed up an atmosphere of revolutionary fervour that helped bring almost twenty thousand people to Sharpeville's police station. However, despite the 'Task Forces' coercive efforts, Lodge's interviewees mostly agree that the assembled crowd was not out for police blood; instead, their revolutionary energy was a mix of apprehension, curiosity, and even delight (vocalised by mass singing), all of which

[27] Lodge, *Sharpeville.*
[28] *Highveld* refers to grazing land set at an altitude between 1200-1800m.

came to an end when the police – armed with STEN submachine guns and armoured Saracen vehicles – started shooting into the crowd.[29]

Withdrawing somewhat from Sharpeville's on-the-ground events, Lodge's Chapter 2 (*Pan-Africanist Preparations)* outlines how the PAC – buoyed by a militantly flavoured Africanism and the latent possibility of employing violence to win back *Izwe Lethu* ('Our Land') from the *apartheid* forces – wished to address and weaponise Sharpeville residents' passbook-and-other grievances leading up to the massacre. Having formed off the back of rejecting what they considered the ANC's liberal-leaning, regime-kowtowing passive politics, the PAC – under Robert Sobukwe's leadership – had, according to Lodge's analysis, not adequately prepared for their anti-passbook campaign, which had been expedited and only communicated to Sharpeville residents three days before the massacre as to gain political leverage over ANC's anti-passbook campaign planned for March 31. What this chapter does per offering a PAC biographical overview is, other than chronologically presenting factual information, provide its reader the capacity to infer the psychological states of the oppressed and how and why people like Robert Sobukwe, Potlako Leballo, and Philip Kgosana were willing to consider breaking from the ANC's passive resistance model to form an Africanist political entity that, should it be forced to, could adopt violence to gain socio-political parity for its members.[30]

Chapter 5 *(Aftermath: Effects and Consequences)* is where Lodge's book's most significant contribution to this thesis lies. By outlining the history of the Sharpeville Massacre vis-à-vis what domestic and international effects it caused, Lodge intimates the idea that Sharpeville – for all parties and actors involved – was a lose-lose event predicated on the reality that many people died and were injured, political and economic repression subsequently increased, and, while individual and collective resentment on behalf of the oppressed eventually led to successful mobilisation that ushered in a democratic South Africa, the human cost in catalysing this – along with how Sharpeville stimulated a 'culture of violence' that still dominates post-apartheid South Africa today – cannot, *prima facie*,

[29] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 1-27.
[30] *Ibid*, 28-73.

be considered a victory for any South African sincerely wishing to live in a less-violent society.[31]

At this chronological point, Saul Dubow's *Apartheid: 1948-1994* returns to offer a detailed overview of 1960s South Africa, a decade he refers to as 'high apartheid', which – off the back of the 1960 State of Emergency and banning of political parties that followed the Sharpeville Massacre – registered as a period of rapid economic expansion and rising employment that allowed most Whites to experience massive material growth.[32] It appears academically intriguing to reconcile how, with Sharpeville having put the *apartheid* government under pronounced global scrutiny, the state strengthened during this period, both in terms of entrenching political control and how it grew the South African economy. Dubow's research indicates that this happened through tightening and inventing new violence-etched structures to consolidate White rule for White benefit further. [33] Furthermore, while it seems reasonable that the flawed logic behind the 1964 Rivonia Trial (which put almost the entire resistance leadership structure in jail) could perhaps derail the National Party's momentum, history shows this did not happen. In fact, not even Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd's death-by-stabbing in Parliament at the hands of Dimitri Tsafendas could halt *apartheid's* charge; instead, Verwoerd's Defense Minister BJ Vorster stepped into power, and although Vorster was considered less authoritarian and domineering in his management routines than his predecessor, this did not translate into him granting notable socio-political concessions to those who had already suffered so dearly under Verwoerd's rule.[34]

Casting an eye over 1960s South Africa, that decade – so hauntingly defined by the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath – was considerably influential in shaping the patterns of violence and resistance in South Africa; Thompson, Dubow, and Lodge's historical works offer unified testimony backing this point. Together with other texts cited

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[31] *Ibid*, 163-233.
[32] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 99. Dubow's 'high apartheid' designation refers to the period during the 1960s and early 1970s when South Africa's *apartheid* system was at its most rigid and oppressive.
[33] *Ibid*, 99-130. The 'violence-etched structures' used to 'further consolidate White rule for White benefit' included the expansion of pass laws, the development of the homelands (Bantustan) policy, enacting Bantu Education, and increased political repression.
[34] *Ibid*, 99-155.

throughout this thesis, it will be shown that – via a nuanced understanding of this period's violence and its far-reaching consequences – the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath can, analogously, be seen as the drawing back of a violent arrow that, when fired in the late 1970s, brought about increased levels of violence and suffering for South Africa and its citizens.

1980s – Anti-apartheid resistance and state response

Off the back of 1976's Soweto Uprising (which energised youth-led defiance and altered global impressions of *apartheid*), the 1980s proved a critical decade in modern South African history. Characterised by intensified anti-apartheid resistance (partly inspired by liberation movements like the exiled ANC and PAC and mobilised domestically by the broad-based coalition UDF, which, in government parlance, was collectively dubbed 'Total Onslaught'), the state's response (again per government parlance, 'Total Strategy') was inherently violent in nature.[35] This decade played a pivotal role as both an incubator and propagator of violence, an exploration of which can help illuminate why violence persists so vociferously in post-apartheid South Africa. Accordingly, this Literature Review covers historical and contemporary writings exploring the 1980s anti-apartheid resistance and the multifaceted forms of violence that characterised the state's response.

Complementing Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa* and Saul Dubow's *Apartheid: 1948-1994* (both of which offer well-researched analyses covering crucial elements that made 1980s South Africa historically notable), David Welsh's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* offers detailed insight into what evolving strategies characterized the 1980's anti-apartheid resistance and how the state's multifaceted counter-insurgency

[35] *Apartheid* - A Crime Against Humanity: The Unfolding of Total Strategy 1948-1989, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/*apartheid*-crime-against-humanity-unfolding-total-strategy-1948-1989, accessed on November 3, 2024; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 200-203; South Africa – Total Strategy, at https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv02424/04lv02730/05lv02918/06lv02972.htm, accessed on November 3, 2024. 'Total Onslaught' referred to the government's narrative of a comprehensive threat against South Africa, encompassing internal resistance movements like the African National Congress (ANC) and perceived external communist influences. This narrative was used to justify extensive militarization and repressive measures. 'Total Strategy' was the government's countermeasure to the perceived 'Total Onslaught'. Developed under PW Botha's administration, it combined military actions with socio-political reforms aimed at preserving the *apartheid* system while attempting to address certain socio-political grievances. This strategy included limited political reforms and intensified military operations, both domestically and in neighboring countries.

efforts unfolded. Divided into three main periods based on *apartheid* timeframes, Welsh's third period (1966 to 1994) is notably relevant to this thesis in that it explores the measures created to support the National Party government, how the gradual (some might say, inevitable) erosion of *apartheid* happened on a unified wave of African nationalism, and how the agonizingly violent process of forming a negotiated settlement to catalyze the transfer of power to South Africa's majority occurred, all of which – despite what public goodwill may have shadowed the shift from an authoritarian to a democratic regime – has not empirically remedied South Africa's omnipresent 'culture of violence'.

While this Literature Review section is primarily concerned with 1980s South Africa, no reading of modern South African history would be complete without mentioning the 1976 Soweto Uprising, which – triggered by the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974 – forced all Black schools to use Afrikaans and English in equal terms as languages of instruction.[36] Welsh contextualises how and why this historical event occurred in Chapter 5 (*The Soweto Uprising and its Consequences*) of his book, which, amidst describing what factors helped form a revolt against an unequivocally discriminatory language policy, also illuminates the role the Black Consciousness Movement (via the iconic figure of Steve Biko) played per channelling Black resistance. Chapter 5 also offers an account of Biko's hubristic National Party hardliner counterweight, Andries Treurnicht, who, in his role of Deputy Minister of Native Affairs, casually ignored warnings of potential social unrest when it appeared that Black resentment against this much-hated educational provision could turn violent.[37]

Welsh offers well-researched details regarding the Soweto Uprising, balancing the overriding socio-political variables of the time and what Soweto ("… a gigantic slum") presented as a potentially violent tinderbox in 1976. Considering what social precariousness accompanied limited educational opportunities for increasing numbers of students in Soweto in 1976, Ken Hartshorne adds to Welsh's ideas in his book *Crisis and Challenge:*

> Pupils found themselves in large classes often in temporary accommodations at a distance from the main school building, under teachers who were dealing with secondary school work for the first time,

[36] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 153.
[37] *Ibid*, 154-156.

> and at the same time trying to cope with a strict application of the dual medium rule. Conditions were ripe for revolt, and the language issue added to the numbers explosion was to prove a powerful mix.[38]

With the Soweto Uprising forming part of this thesis's Chapter Four Case Study material, a shift to hard numbers offering empirical weight behind the development of a South African 'culture of violence' comes via the Cillie Commission and its Report vis-à-vis the June 16 confrontations. While the Report stated that fifteen people died that day (including Hector Pietersen as one of two schoolchildren), the period between June 16, 1976, and February 28, 1977, saw a further five hundred and sixty people die, a figure Welsh mentions is considered by many a township dweller to be a deliberate undercount.[39] This number would continue to rise through 1977, with one particularly notable political violence victim being Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) figurehead, Steve Biko.

Describing Biko as "…a handsome, articulate young man with a magnetic personality who was able to hold his audiences spellbound",[40] Welsh adds to the late-1970s government-directed ire by touching on the Black Consciousness Movement leader's September 1977 police-assisted murder, and what negativity and anger this provoked among the disaffected young urban Africans Biko had momentarily inspired. Biko's value as a BCM figurehead and resistance icon can be inferred from his Fanon-like orations, the gravitas of which mixes the hopelessness of Black South African life with the realisation that only through mobilised Black collective action could improvement occur.[41] In Biko's words:

> All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity… The first step therefore is to make the black man come back to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth.[42]

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[38] Ken Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990,* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992), 76.
[39] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 160-164.
[40] *Ibid*, 144.
[41] David Macey, *Frantz Fanon: A Life,* (London, Granta Books, 2000). Macey's book details Frantz Fanon's life as a Francophone psychiatrist, philosopher, and intellectual.
[42] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 146.

The violence that underscored Biko's death as a result of police torture (claimed by the state to have resulted from Biko violently hitting his head against a wall during an interrogation and, in the process, resulting in the twenty-first death-in-police-custody that year) triggered nationwide riots and protests.[43] Subsequently, the *apartheid* government – over and above banning eighteen BCM-orientated organizations a month later – responded with the trial and conviction of two-thousand-four-hundred-thirty people by September's end and exacted widespread violence that included declaring a State of Emergency in various regions, granting security forces increased powers to quell protests, and arresting activists, particularly those associated with the Black Consciousness Movement of which Biko had been a figurehead.[44]

As the 1970s ended, arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, torture, and other human rights abuses became more common as the state sought to silence opposition. The government's response was characterized by a willingness to use violence and repression against those perceived as threats to the *apartheid* system, thus leaving no person of colour safe from potential harm. Per Welsh's commentary on that period, "Torture, solitary confinement, detention without trial, and deaths in detention became commonplace,"[45] all of which seems to indicate that the government – perhaps self-conscious of its growing fallibility and general moral repugnance – could only delude itself into continuing with *apartheid* through violent means as its credibility – politically, ideologically, and soon economically – was collapsing.

The events of the late 1970s also led to South Africa's increased international isolation, prompting a great deal of anxiety amongst educated Afrikaners who had become aware of how these globally mediated, highly visual events had contributed to the "permanently-changed mood of blacks."[46] This psychological sea change is loaned credence by Njabulo Nkonyane's testimony, who, as a fourteen-year-old in 1976, said:

> Like any 14-year-old, we were naïve but the situation forced us to mature much faster than we would have, facing bullets every day of your life,

[43] Thompson, *A History,* 212-213.
[44] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 161-162.
[45] *Ibid,* 73.
[46] Giliomee, "Democratization", 88; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 162.

> teargas just about all of the time. I remember we used to joke that if we have not smelled or seen teargas for a week, something was wrong – breathing clean air for two days. Things like that made one mature very quickly. We started reading books, we got politicized almost overnight… We decided then that we would never go back to school, we would boycott Bantu Education henceforth.[47]

Despite this fundamental pivot in the Black collective consciousness, the ANC and other resistance groups remained no match for the state entering the 1980s, primarily due to most African leaders being in exile, in prison, or banned. However, despite the state's pronounced economic and military-oriented leverage, PW Botha – South Africa's Prime Minister following BJ Vorster's resignation post-1978's Information Scandal[48] – asserted the strategic need for political reform, as the fate of the South African Whites (and in particular, Afrikaners) was becoming increasingly fraught in the face of slow economic growth, capital flight, continued Black urbanization (and hence, mobilization), as well as cross-border military operations that were further eroding South Africa's international standing.[49]

A landmark 1980s event happened off the back of Botha's Tricameral Parliament reforms falling flat in 1983: the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF).[50] Considered a front for the still-banned ANC, the UDF rose to represent the growing dissent directed against the National Party government and its oppressive racial policies. From its origins

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[47] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 162.

[48] Johan Obermeyer, "Apartheid South Africa's propaganda effort, c.1960-1980: The hearts and minds campaign of the National Party", *Master's Thesis, Stellenbosch University*, 2016. Obermeyer's thesis provides an informative resource regarding the Information Scandal.

[49] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 208-213.

[50] Jeremy Seekings, "'Trailing behind the masses': the United Democratic Front and township politics in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal region, 1983–84", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18,1, 1992, 93-114; Raymond Suttner, "Legacies and Meanings of the United Democratic Front (UDF) Period for Contemporary South Africa", Legacies and Meanings of the United Democratic Front (UDF) Period for Contemporary South Africa", *From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa*, 2005, 59-81. As an integral socio-political element of 1980s South Africa, the United Democratic Front's (UDF) creation, mobilization, and legacy – with particular regard to its relationship with the ANC – warrants noted academic attention. Suttner offers a brief albeit accurate description of this relationship upon writing, "The UDF always asserted that it was not itself a liberation movement and that the ANC performed this role. It nevertheless formed part of, and articulated its role as an element of, the broad liberation forced headed by the ANC. This also meant acceptance of what one might describe as a specific 'national liberation model', whereby the national liberation movement is seen as the embodiment of the nation. This may also be one of the reasons why the UDF saw its dissolution as inevitable with the arrival of the liberation movement."

as a local and national organisation undergirded by a diverse array of civil society bodies,[51] the UDF grew in socio-political clout, leading to acknowledgement in the mid-1980s among National Party and ANC leaders that a deadlock had been reached and neither side of the political spectrum could win. In Welsh's words:

> The rise of black resistance in the 1980s reflected the growth of black leverage on several fronts. It was insufficient to topple the state, but it was able to create a deadlock: the state could not eliminate resistance, even if the security forces remained firmly in control, but the black opposition grew sufficiently strong and resolute to thwart the effective implementation of a coherent policy (if one existed).[52]

With the National Party and its *apartheid* policies in the crosshairs of an intensifying nationwide power struggle, three issues formed the basis of the oppressed's clarion call for socio-political justice: the continuation of the crisis in Black education, the political debacle that was the Tricameral Parliament, and the imposition of substantial rent increases by discredited community councils that were widely considered to be corrupt.[53] This amalgam of discontent would usher South Africa toward a phase of political violence that prior decades could not have imagined, underscored primarily by conflicts that brought the state, the ANC (operating underground), the UDF, Inkatha, and other resistance groups into violent contact with each other.

John Kane-Berman's *Political Violence in South Africa* offers relevant insight into this period, including the effects of consumer and rent boycotts, work and school stay-aways, campaigns against black local authorities, campaigns against policemen, and what was termed the 'People's War,' all of which instilled an omnipresent capacity to use violence for strategic means throughout the 1980s.[54] The vicious cycle of attack and counter-attack characterising Kane-Berman's text segues with the adage 'violence begets violence,' one of the most visually striking symbols of which was the killing technique known as 'necklacing,' a gruesome tactic that saw an aggressor placing a gasoline-drenched tyre over

[51] *Ibid*, 278.
[52] *Ibid*, 278.
[53] *Ibid*, 278. The headline rent boycott event Welsh refers to happened in and around the Sebokeng area (located in the Vaal Triangle) on September 3, 1984.
[54] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 33-41.

a victim's body and set it alight.[55] Underscoring the use of 'necklacing' (and offering blunt insight into what South Africa represented as a battleground between the haves and have-nots in the 1980s), Winnie Madikizela-Mandela (Nelson Mandela's wife) mentioned in a 1986 speech:

> We have no guns – we have only stones, boxes of matches and petrol. Together, hand-in-hand, with our boxes of matches and our necklaces we shall liberate this country.[56]

While 'necklacing' was never official ANC policy, Madikizela-Mandela's stance on 'necklacing' was not unique; also, in 1986, the Sunday Times of London reported that then-secretary general of the ANC, Alfred Nzo, expanded on his earlier point that 'collaborators with the enemy' should be eliminated by adding, "Whatever the people decide to use to eliminate those enemy elements is their decision. If they decide to use necklacing, we support it."[57]

Of critical importance to the 1980s and its long-ranging effects on South Africa's 'culture of violence' was the declining role of education. Off the back of the Soweto Uprising (predicated on grievances Black students held against making Afrikaans compulsory in the classroom), the dying embers of Bantu Education engulfed South Africa in bitterness and spite, the collective resentment of which was mobilised by resistance players employing the mantra 'Liberation Now, Education Later.' Along with the rise of the *comtsotsi*[58] and 'young lions' culture (which evolved in step with inclinations toward violence, promiscuity, and anti-intellectual viewpoints), the abandonment of formal education plays a significant role in how a 'culture of violence' has managed to dominate present-day South Africa.[59]

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[55] *Ibid*, 43; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 287-288, 311; Welsh states that between September 1984 and December 1989, nearly four-hundred people died from 'necklacing'.
[56] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 288.
[57] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 43. While the ANC did not explicitly endorse necklacing, their leadership also failed to denounce it categorically. This makes sense in that as a practice and strategic tool, necklacing, both visually and symbolically, could serve as an effective form of 'people's justice' that could advance the liberation movement's causes where and when used.
[58] Comtsotsi definition, *Dictionary of South African English*, at https://dsae.co.za/entry/comtsotsi/e01775 accessed on November 17, 2024. The blend word *comtsoti* is formed from the words 'comrade' and 'tsotsi', the latter word translating as "a criminal operating under the cloak of left-wing political activism in a black township."
[59] Umrabulo, at https://www.anc1912.org.za/umrabulo-2/ accessed on June 20, 2025. As to not essentialize the era's youth activism as entirely troublesome, it is important to note that while some youth activists lacked formal education, others were well-read (think Marx, Engels, Kenyatta and others), politically

According to David Welsh, this collective pivot away from learning fomented a 'struggle masculinity' that stoked chauvinistic attitudes and behaviour toward women, bestowed upon the 'young lions' social authority and respect within a community, and subsequently offered this disenchanted youth element the capacity to act with impunity, which in turn stoked additional violence.[60] Nomavenda Mathiane offers context when describing Soweto in 1986:

> The situation in Soweto is such that people live in fear. There is a strongly believed myth that the students are a faceless and leaderless mob and nobody dares question their actions. The leader who survives these days is the one who endorses whatever the youth says, be it right or wrong. People have opted for popularity with the students because opposing them is to invite being 'necklaced'.[61]

As the decade unfolded, violence followed and increased in step. Kane-Berman meticulously describes the harrowing details of what was, in effect, a *de facto* civil war happening between the ANC and Inkatha in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. He investigates the veracity of claims that a supposed 'Third Force' (effectively a polymorphous aggregation of state and non-state actors working in conjunction with Inkatha to destabilise insurgent efforts to topple the state)[62] played a significant role in the tremendous violence of the time. An incisive lens into this period and context comes via a 1986 Radio Freedom broadcast:

> It is clear that the puppet Gatsha [Inkathta Leader Buthelezi] is being groomed by the West and the racist regime to become a [Jonas] Savimbi in a future free South Africa. The onus is on the people of South Africa to neutralize the Gatsha snake, which is poisoning the people of South Africa. It needs to be hit on the head.[63]

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engaged, and attended political education sessions known as *umrabulo*, which refers to "a space for political discussion and debate, originally inspired by discussions held on Robben Island".

[60] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 286-288.

[61] Nomavenda Mathiane, *Beyond the Headlines: Truths of Soweto Life*, (Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers, 1990), 4.

[62] Thompson, *A History*, 249. Alluding to the so-called 'Third Force', Thompson states that the 1998 TRC Report described "a network of security and ex-security force operatives… fomented, initiated, facilitated and engaged in violence, which resulted in gross violations of human rights, including random and targeted killings."

[63] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 55; Radio Freedom: A History of South African Underground Radio by Chris A. Smith, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/radio-freedom-history-south-african-underground-

Kane-Berman's investigations also segue into the murky underbellies of violence committed by *apartheid* death squads like Vlakplaas (domestic) and Koevoet (South-West Africa/Namibia). It is here where Pumla Godobo-Madikizela's book, *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy Of Apartheid* (2003), sheds substantial light. From the 1980s onward, the role of violent actors who, mainly through the 1990s Truth and Reconciliation Commission's efforts, became household names, played an enormous role in both stoking violence and setting in motion sufficient grief and trauma to both propagate and sustain South Africa's evolving 'culture of violence'. While the central subject of Godobo-Madikizela's book is Eugene De Kock (aka 'Prime Evil'), the roles of police officers Dirk Coetzee and Joe Mamasela, along with Colonel Jan Breytenbach of the South African Defense Force (SADF), offer much in the way of formulating how their actions (together with that of their colleagues) may have directly contributed to the 'culture of violence' that presently dominates post-apartheid South Africa.[64]

When FW de Klerk replaced PW Botha as South Africa's State President in 1989, he believed that the state's position per power-sharing negotiations would quickly deteriorate over time, and thus, reform efforts had to start as soon as possible. De Klerk began this process in February 1990 when, in a speech to Parliament, he unbanned the ANC and other political parties and signalled his intent to release Nelson Mandela from prison. As it became increasingly clear that the only way to end the violence-fueled political stalemate would be through a negotiated settlement, additional lawlessness and violence greeted South Africa. In a chaotic attempt to gain socio-political traction amidst nationwide confusion, anger, and political ambition, the ANC, Inkatha, independent warlords, and the National Party government all indulged in both explicit and covert acts of violence, all of which, according to Welsh, could be traced to *apartheid* being "...the primary cancer underlying the violence."[65]

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radio-chris-smith accessed on October 24, 2024. Radio Freedom was the South African radio arm of the ANC and its fighting wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

[64] Pumla Godobo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid,* (New York, 2003), 13-103.

[65] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 313.

Casting an eye over 1980s South Africa, many of the historical sources regarding that decade detail the omnipresent violence that, in hindsight, could be considered the country's democratic birthing pains. Starting with the 1976 student protests that catalyzed heightened resistance efforts, the rise of mass mobilization, and a state response characterized by increasing brutality and repressive measures, the 1980s was an inflexion point in the fight against *apartheid*, and this is why the 1980s should be extensively analyzed should definitive conclusions regarding South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence' be sought.

Post-1994 – Contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings

The years leading up to South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 were the most violent on record. Kane-Berman's *Political Violence in South Africa* deals with this quantitatively and qualitatively, offering reasons and consequences behind the numbers that show how and why South Africa's 'culture of violence' operated so viciously at the time. A notably chilling statistic he mentions is:

> By the end of May 1993, the total number of fatalities in political violence since its outbreak in September 1984 was 15843, nearly two-thirds of them since the beginning of 1990.[66]

Distilling the violence from 1990 up to and beyond 1994's general election as a conveniently cogent whole is nigh-on impossible considering what South Africa as a multiracial, multicultural entity was and remains. In sum, this period was characterised by overlapping crises: state repression continued, deep-seated political rivalries jostled for influence, and communities – fragmented along ideological and ethnic lines – caused violence to flare up in ways that mirrored both local and national grievances and anxieties regarding South Africa's post-apartheid future. Accordingly, it is fair to assert that this period's violence – essentially resulting from socio-political schisms that accompanied a looming power transfer that nobody could determine the consequences of – warrants continued research in coming to understand the myriad complexities undergirding South Africa's post-apartheid violence.

[66] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 13.

Following de Klerk's unbanning of the ANC, PAC, and other political and resistance organisations in 1990, it became clear that violence, as a strategic tool, would largely influence how a negotiated settlement would be drafted. Subsequent violence – both explicitly and covertly – henceforth occurred on a scale approaching that of a civil war.[67]

Alongside Kane-Berman's book, Thompson's *A History of South Africa,* Dubow's *Apartheid; 1948-1994,* and Welsh's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* all offer insightful forays into how and why violence so doggedly characterized the period leading up to the election, which, as history shows, the ANC won under Nelson Mandela's leadership.

In the popular imagination, Mandela is commonly described as a paragon of virtue, particularly in terms of how he showed such steady leadership amid the confusion and violence accompanying *apartheid's* dissolution and the end of forty-six years of National Party rule. With democratic South Africa being welcomed back into a new globalised world order that had seen off the ideological threat of Communism characterising the Cold War years, Mandela was in an advantageous position to reintroduce South Africa to the world as a tolerant, human-rights-oriented nation that could set a moralistic example for states currently embroiled in domestic socio-political unrest to follow.[68]

Part of Mandela's initiative to put South Africa on a path to healing and making amends for crimes committed during the *apartheid* years was to set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC would be responsible for hearing the testimonies of affected parties, addressing their grievances in the company of violent aggressors, and offering what logistical support it could to help mitigate the emotional and economic trauma that had been inflicted. Set up in 1995 and with Archbishop Desmond Tutu hand-picked by Mandela to chair the commission, the TRC came to hear approximately twenty-one-thousand testimonies (two thousand of which occurred at public hearings) and considered seven

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[67] Stephen Ellis, "The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 24,2, 1998, 261-299. Covering a smorgasbord of 'Third Force' developments and applications, Ellis's article details the 'Third Force's' deployment to combat resistance efforts and destabilize political motionings toward a democratic South Africa, all of which contributed toward the country's *de facto* civil war primarily understood through 1980-90s ANC-Inkatha violence.

[68] Thompson, *A History,* 262-268. Thompson offers insight into Mandela and the South Africa he took governance of, marking out challenges such as crime, property and land issues, and education in the new South Africa.

thousand one hundred twelve amnesty application cases before delivering its final report to Mandela in October 1998.[69]

Mandated to hear cases of 'gross human rights violations' between the years of 1960 and 1994, the TRC learned of widespread abductions, killings, and torture that happened during the *apartheid* years. The violent involvement of the state and resistance groups like the ANC, Inkatha, the UDF, the PAC, and others was revealed. Controversially, the TRC was given authority to grant amnesty to perpetrators who confessed their crimes truthfully and in full.[70]

While the TRC's work may have been considered an essential act of nation-building following *apartheid* rule, South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence' refutes any idea that the commission's work served as a heal-all-wounds panacea. Instead, the TRC's work produced an array of consequences that either offered the violently affected a degree of closure or opened old wounds and caused additional distress. Like any act of catharsis (let alone one covering thirty-four years of unrelenting violence), the TRC's work was expected to produce controversial results, and this is most likely why Mandela hand-picked Archbishop Tutu – a man of impeccable moral stature and a South African icon of peace – to steer the TRC's course through whatever emotional hellscape may unfold.[71]

Many texts deal with the TRC's work, and offering notable relevance to this thesis is Pumla Godobo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*. A clinical psychologist who served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and conducted numerous interviews with Eugene 'Prime Evil' De Kok (the man credited with heading up the state's covert death squads from Vlakplaas farm outside Pretoria), Godobo-Madikizela's book details the violence everyday South Africans experience the same way the TRC heard its testimonies: bluntly, tearfully, and

[69] Truth Commission, *United States Institute of Peace*, at https://www.usip.org/publications/1995/12/truth-commission-south-africa accessed on April 11, 2024.
[70] Paul Van Zyl, "Dilemmas of Transitional Justice: The Case of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission", Journal of International Affairs 52,2, 1999, 647–667. Having worked with the TRC, Van Zyl offers incisive articulation per how the Commission's amnesty process left victims dissatisfied and further complicated the pursuit of justice.
[71] Godobo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died*, 79-80.

with keen vigour to understand why anyone – let alone an entire political regime – would visit such pronounced misery on people based purely on skin colour.

Godobo-Madikizela's book delves into De Kok's apartheid-era modus operandi. By portraying De Kok as possibly being coerced into siding with the violence of the regime he was working under, Godobo-Madikizela resurrects political theorist and philosopher Hannah Arendt's idea of the 'banality of evil'[72] regarding warring contexts where existential threats – real or manufactured – are continually pressed home.[73] For De Kok and his generation, it was the existential threat of Communism, a convenient bogeyman designed to keep the *apartheid* regime relevant as a protector of 'Western democracy' at the foot of Africa, that fueled his and his colleagues' violent undertakings. Mentally equipped with Cold War anti-communist thinking and backed by the African continent's best-equipped military (not to mention late apartheid-era Christian Nationalism playing its part in how SADF bibles were edited to support state-sanctioned killing), South Africans – both Black and White – embarked on murderous sprees both domestically and via cross-border raids to eliminate actual or suspected communist-linked actors and agencies.[74] The extent to which this occurred is tidily summarised by Antjie Krog, who, in her book *Country of My Skull*, wrote:

> During the eighties, South African forces invaded three capitals and three countries in five years. In the same period, South Africa tried to assassinate two prime ministers, backed dissident groups that brought chaos to Angola and Mozambique, disrupted oil supplies to six countries, and attacked the railway routes to seven. More than 100,000 people died as a direct or indirect result of these actions, most of them from famine. More than a million people were displaced. The damage done in the region during this period amounted to nearly $62.5 billion.[75]

Balancing De Kok's case as emblematic of a greater ideological scourge that coerced people into believing peace could only be bought with war, Godobo-Madikizela also details the cases of victims who, in cruel and sudden ways, had their lives destroyed through

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[72] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil,* (New York: Viking Press, 1963). Hannah Arendt coined the phrase 'banality of evil' via her impressions of Adolph Eichmann's 1961 trial, where, in an Israeli court, Eichmann was charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes against the Jewish people, and membership in hostile organizations.
[73] Godobo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died,* 30, 58.
[74] *Ibid*, 52-53, 77.
[75] Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull,* (New York: Times Books, 1999), 136-137.

violent acts committed by government-aligned security forces. One case indicative of the period's wanton violence involves a certain Mrs Plaatjie, whose eleven-year-old son – having eaten a sandwich before running out to play – was shot to death by police in the street for no discernible reason other than his skin colour possibly registering as symbolically repugnant to what his shooter believed was best for their country.[76]

In the case of Mrs Plaatjie and her son, this general *laissez-faire* approach to employing violence appears time and again in Godobo-Madikizela's book. One chilling excerpt on how violence was condoned, excused, and used from the highest echelons of power to those who committed the crimes reads as follows:

> Asked by the TRC whether they had authorized the crimes that were committed by apartheid's foot soldiers, the master architects of apartheid responded time and again that there was no official policy that supported illegal acts of violence. Yet when those who spoke out against apartheid were assassinated, died in police custody, or simply disappeared, when families in neighboring states who were thought to be harboring ANC members in exile were killed, when cars and buildings associated with the liberation movement exploded or burned down, no politicians called for an investigation into these "mysterious" occurrences… the language of state violence – together with the intention – was clear. It painted operatives like de Kock toward destruction of "the state's enemies." And the state's enemies were those who fought to end apartheid and their supporters."[77]

Desmond Tutu's book *No Future Without Forgiveness* is a complimentary text to Godobo-Madikizela's recounting the work (and ultimate limitations) of the TRC. With its esteemed author being the TRC's chairperson and arguably South Africa's most trusted moral icon, Tutu's text is as detailed and uncompromising a foray as one could imagine when analyzing the TRC's historical role.[78]

Critical insight into what the TRC was (quite ambitiously) trying to achieve comes in Chapter 4 *(What About Justice?)*. Here, Tutu details what precepts and premises the Commission's members had to agree on to ensure that the processes, testimonies, and controversies the TRC would encounter would not detract from its ultimate goals of uncovering truth and, idealistically, fostering genuine reconciliation. One integral point is

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[76] Godobo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died,* 87-90.
[77] *Ibid*, 61.
[78] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness,* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

Tutu describing how, when discussing TRC core strategies, the idea of 'justice' should be approached. It was decided that the Commission could not follow the course of the Nazi Nuremberg Trials that saw the accused tried as criminals; Commission members argued this course would provide no incentive for perpetrators of violence during the *apartheid* years to actively come forward and admit their crimes, thus leaving victims sans truth and without impetus for reconciliation. A Nuremberg-type template would also prove a logistical nightmare in that guilt-proving evidence – much of which was destroyed, hidden, or would be outright denied by perpetrators – would cost the government an inordinate amount of money, time, and resources that could better be used to build more equitable infrastructure for all South Africans.[79]

The TRC believed that to fulfil its mandate of nation-building by uncovering truth and fostering reconciliation, it had to offer the carrot of amnesty for the perpetrators of violent crime. This decision naturally generated much controversy: put simply, how could people who subjected others to such brutal, inhumane violence – along with exacting haunting physical and psychological effects on surviving family members and friends – be granted freedom by simply stating what they had done?[80]

Tutu and his team grappled with this point intensely, realising the parameters of their decision could negatively ripple into and affect future generations. In the end (with an eye to averting societal breakdowns like those that had happened in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, both of which had suffered significant ethnic strife in how reconciliation efforts were dealt with), 'reconciliation' would precede 'reparations,' with an eye to the latter being paid out by the state on a predetermined basis.[81]

Published in 1999 when South Africa was on a relative 'upswing' (catalyzed by what goodwill the country had bought domestically and internationally with its relatively

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[79] Krog, *Country of My Skull,* 31-32; Tutu, *No Future,* 19-45.
[80] Tutu, *No Future,* 49-65. Tutu's Chapter 5 (*What about Justice?*) analyses how to balance morality with pragmatism per offering 'justice' to victims of apartheid-era crimes.
[81] Claudia Hofmann, "'A Grain of Truth' – An Appraisal of the TRC's Contribution to the Process of National Reconciliation in South Africa", *BSIS Journal of International Studies*, 1, 2004, 7; Tutu, *No Future,* 49-62. Considering reconciliation-based examples like the Soviet Union (fragmented and varied by country) and Yugoslavia (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia [ICTY], established in 1993, which operated during ongoing conflict), Tutu and his TRC team were concerned that a 'reparations-first' approach could exacerbate economic and racial divides, thus risking further social unrest.

peaceful transition to democratic governance), Tutu's book mentions that those responsible for the TRC's procedural and administrative dealings were the same people who drafted South Africa's first democratic constitution that came into effect in 1996. Tutu also states that Thabo Mbeki's election as state president in 1999 affirmed that, despite the TRC allowing perpetrators to receive amnesty while victims continued to suffer, most South Africans still supported the ANC's ruling mandate.[82]

With South Africa's democracy thirty years old as of 2024, one wonders how Tutu – were he alive today – would comment on his remark about voting Mbeki into power in 1999 being equivalent to the country supporting the ruling party's mandate and whether said vote included genuine support for the TRC's 'reconciliation before reparations' rationale. Considering the country's ongoing crime situation, continuing lack of service delivery, and the Rand's marked devaluation from thirty years ago,[83] it appears that any possible retention of power by the incumbent party through popular vote could – to some degree – be achieved on flawed grounds that might include (but is not limited to) lack of education, misinformation, violent coercion, corruption, or even fraud, all of which were present in South African society before 1994, thus indicating a perpetuation of a 'culture of violence' that has not been effectively or responsibly dealt with over the past thirty years. [84]

The remainder of *No Future Without Forgiveness* describes Tutu's encounters with ordinary South Africans, primarily through the perpetrator-victim paradigm. An aura of self-consciousness shadows these meetings, Tutu acutely aware that controversy – from the TRC's launch to the present day – will long cloud the precepts under which the Commission was founded and operated, the most pivotal being that victims gave away noted economic and legal rights to join a national platform that could offer them 'truth and reconciliation' rather than justice for their perished or affected loved ones.

Moreover, while it may have felt euphoric at the time to be swept up in the dream of a better, more equitable South Africa built on the truth of what had happened in order to not

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[82] Tutu, *No Future*, 56-57.
[83] USD/ZAR historical rate tables, at https://www.xe.com/currencytables/?from=ZAR&date=2024-11-07#table-section accessed on November 7, 2024. From the earliest possible date available (November 16, 1995), the USD/ZAR rate was 1 USD - 3.64 ZAR. The exchange rate on November 7, 2024, was 1 USD - 17.62 ZAR.
[84] Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 592-601.

repeat apartheid-era mistakes, the reality of South Africa's continuing post-apartheid 'culture of violence' intimates the desire for and belief in 'reconciliation' may have been a false dawn. 'Reconciliation' does not help the afflicted pay for water, lights, electricity, and food; that is if these service infrastructures have not already been retarded to detrimental levels or collapsed altogether.

Defined in the popular imagination by the transition from autocratic apartheid rule to a multiracial democracy, the post-1994 period in South Africa represented a hopeful era for all South Africans, predicated upon the Government of National Unity (GNU) making the bold decision to embark on a path of reconciliation and healing that, while offering relief to the perpetrators and victims of *apartheid's* violence and criminality, could serve as a blueprint for feasible nation-building.[85] However, despite the best efforts of those involved with the TRC, civil and social failures occurred that, in hindsight, could be considered unavoidable due to South Africa's violent history and its resulting complexities. This thesis argues that these failures have played an influential part in sustaining South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence', in that the TRC's publicised dealings not only opened old wounds but also broadened the scope of what violence happened during the *apartheid* era. Also, the possibility that victims' material realities may not have improved post-TRC could well have elicited additional resentment against individual and collective perpetrators of violence, which in turn – both ideologically and materially – sustains a furtive breeding ground for violence to continue holding court in post-apartheid South Africa.

[85] Thompson, *A History*, 268. Soon after Nelson's Mandela's 1994 presidential inauguration, he established the Government of National Unity (GNU) in terms of the interim constitution.

B: Theoretical Framework

Structural violence and inequalities

This thesis has outlined how violence has become ubiquitous in South African society. This has been detailed through the Literature Review, beginning before Jan Van Riebeek's 1652 Cape Town landing to the point that present-day South Africa, via historical processes, is currently tethered to a debilitating 'culture of violence'.

Apartheid has featured heavily due to it being commonly recognised as a defining violence-oriented historical era and how it instilled wholesale structural violence and inequality in South Africa. Accordingly, a group of core apartheid-oriented texts – along with violence-related journal articles and other relevant sources – forms the backbone of this thesis's research, all of which contribute to understanding why violence rages so vociferously in post-apartheid South Africa.

Regarding these texts, structural violence and inequality-oriented elements must be assessed to produce a convincing, relevant, and accurate theoretical framework that produces accurate conclusions. On this point, Structural Violence Theory (hereafter referred to as SVT) can serve as one of multiple lenses to analyse South Africa's violent context. Developed by Johan Galtung and referring to violence embedded within social, economic, and political structures rather than focusing on direct, physical acts of violence, SVT is concerned with subtle, almost 'invisible' acts of violence that, by being systemic and hidden from daily view, can cause long-term harm that often supersedes direct acts of physical violence.[86]

Utilising SVT as a theoretical lens, a pertinent component relating to structural violence and inequality is that of historical legacies. With Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa* forming an informative base text, it has been established that South African history is characterised by systemic violence and inequality. From Van Riebeek's 1652 arrival (which caused widespread subjugation of Cape peoples) to the marginalisation of vast swathes of South Africa's modern-day population on socio-economic grounds via race-

[86] Johan Galtung and structural violence, at https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/questioning-crime-social-harms-and-global-issues/content-section-2.2 accessed on December 22, 2024.

related legislation, all manner of historical horrors have shadowed the violence-laced narratives wrought upon the country's peoples through periods of colonialism, *apartheid*, and systemic racial discrimination.

With historical legacies serving as a springboard, discriminatory policies (including but not limited to land dispossession, economic marginalisation, education inequalities, and healthcare disparities) form another critical structural violence and inequality-oriented element contributing to South Africa's ongoing 'culture of violence'. David Welsh's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* and Saul Dubow's *Apartheid: 1948-1994* offer considerable information concerning land dispossession through forced removals, economic marginalization through engineered racial and class stratification, educational disparities instilled through the 1950s Bantu Education policies (sustained through violence), and the fact that healthcare facility disparities (unequally distributed and ill-equipped in impoverished areas, thus resulting in poorer health-related outcomes for affected individuals and families) have definitively contributed to South Africa's post-apartheid violence-laced landscape.[87] Accordingly, it appears reasonable to assert that South Africa's post-apartheid society has been indelibly influenced by the country's historical injustices, all of which – due to their deeply ingrained nature – play significant roles in perpetuating inequality and accordant resentment in communities nationwide.

Counterbalancing violence is the notion of justice, the extent of which is generally informed and regulated by a country's criminal justice system. Both historically and in a contemporary setting, South Africa's justice-serving apparatus has been criticised for exhibiting disparities in how different racial and socio-economic groups are treated, thus exacerbating structural violence. Whether citing over-policing in impoverished communities, harsher sentences exacted due to a perpetrator's skin colour, or violence-laced conditions greeting inmates at prisons throughout South Africa, marked cynicism and distrust shadow people's perceptions of the nation's criminal justice system, which in turn

[87] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 37-41. An able accompaniment to Thompson, Dubow, and Welsh's core texts, Marks and Andersson highlight key discriminatory points (land dispossession, economic marginalization, education inequalities, healthcare disparities, and others) that formed *apartheid's* undergirding and how these continue to foment and sustain post-apartheid era violence.

can foment vigilantism and other forms of communally served justice that exacerbates rather than tempers violence.[88]

Adding to the cynicism South Africans feel regarding their criminal justice system's efficacy is another structural element requiring academic consideration: political disenfranchisement. While 1994 ushered in democratic elections and political change, the empirical persistence of violence reflects marginalised communities' ongoing political disenfranchisement. Marked issues such as political corruption, ineffective governance, and limited (or collapsed) service delivery avenues have engendered a sense of hopelessness among ordinary South Africans. Nevertheless, as Gary Kynoch states, when people are pushed to action:

> [The people's] demonstrations sometimes include attacks against local politicians and others deemed as undesirables (often foreign nationals), burning buildings belonging to local officials or the municipality, blockading roads, and confrontations with police… Many of the people who take to the streets are ANC members, and much of the impetus for service delivery protests appears to come from local political factions that have been unable to attain municipal office or have been displaced from office and excluded from the benefits associated with patronage. These 'protest brokers' would not get traction if people were not dissatisfied with local conditions, so although political infighting characterizes many of the campaigns, popular grievances enable mobilization.[89]

Moreover, as the prices of daily necessities rise and scarcity increases, impoverished people often turn to violence as an outlet for their anger, to obtain daily necessities, or to achieve both. Gary Kynoch again:

> In these protests, 'violence is understood as a language, a message, a way of calling out to higher authorities about the state of things in their town.[90]

Due to the reality that structural inequalities and injustices not only fuel violence but also erode a country's social fabric (hence catalysing violent causation that leaves the country

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[88] Hamber, "'Have no doubt", 9-10; Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 39-40; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 55-59; Van Der Spuy and Shearing, "Curbing the Killing Fields", 195. Offering multiple analyses and case studies, these texts paint a despairing picture of South Africa's criminal justice system during and post-apartheid. They unanimously conclude that due to a lack of resources, corruption, and political kowtowing, the resultant vacuum formed and filled by adverse political and criminal activity will take generations to remedy.
[89] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 67-71.
[90] *Ibid,* 69.

poorer in indeterminable ways), it is essential to understand structural violence and inequality elements when attempting to cognise why violence remains so ubiquitous in post-apartheid South Africa. Employing SVT as an analytical lens, this theoretical framework serves as a foundation for the comparative analysis of three historical periods, and it is imperative to remain aware of these structural elements when analysing the roots and consequences of post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence.'

Identity politics and social divisions

Research requires that South Africa's post-apartheid identity politics and social divisions be meticulously analysed to compare this thesis's three historical periods. Due to identity politics and the persistence of social divisions playing such integral roles in shaping the social, political, and economic dynamics of post-apartheid South Africa, this section will, with these factors in mind, examine the complex nature of the country's ongoing 'culture of violence.'

Perhaps more fundamentally than any other factor, ethnic and racial identity is intertwined with South Africa's violent history, most notably via the country's ethnic and racially engineered legislation of the 20th century. Along with SVT, Social Identity Theory (hereafter referred to as SIT) can assist in analysing these factors' influence over the evolving temporal scope that this thesis covers.[91]

Developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner and centring around three key processes (social categorisation, social identification and social comparison), Social Identity Theory (SIT) describes how people mould part of their self-concept from subscribing to social groups. When considered through an SIT theoretical lens (and among the veritable smorgasbord of discriminatory laws passed against Black South Africans), the implications of – to mention but one example – the *Group Areas Act* (the categorization of individuals into racial groups) continue to influence social interactions, access to resources, and political affiliations along ethnic and racial lines, all due to the deeply engrained psychological and material divisions

[91] Social Identity Theory in Psychology, at https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html accessed on December 20, 2024. With so much of South Africa's history tied to identity politics and resulting social divisions, SIT registers as a relevant theoretical lens to use in this thesis.

this legislation affected.[92] The resulting 'matrix of division' the *Group Areas Act* and other discriminatory legislation formed continues to instigate much of the tension, social inequality, and violence that characterise modern South Africa's socio-political landscape.[93]

Alongside racial divisions, tribal and cultural identities hold significant sway in post-apartheid South Africa. Two historical examples of violence concerning tribal and cultural identities that can be analysed through an SIT lens include the latter-1980s violence in KwaZulu-Natal (predicated mainly on ANC and Inkatha ethnic divisions) and the migrant mine worker-related violence unleashed in miners' hostels in and around Johannesburg.[94] While it is true that tribal and cultural identities can serve as historical sources of pride and catalyse collaboratively productive communities, these identities can simultaneously be axes around which social divisions, competition for resources, and political standing are formed. Accordingly, should contestation prevail over collaboration per access to material resources and political clout, violence based on tribal and cultural identity can be mobilised to gain advantages over differing groups.

Moving toward the political arena, political identity forms an integral component of South Africa's post-apartheid political landscape, which, thirty years into democratic rule, has been heavily dominated by the ANC. While reasons can be postulated regarding how and why the ruling party has held power so conclusively since 1994, it is reasonable to state that political affiliation (influential elements of which run along tribal, cultural, and even racial lines) plays an influential role in South Africa's social fabric.[95] As such, when

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[92] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 37-40; Thompson, *A History,* 198-199; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 54-57. While these texts offer analyses of the nature and effects of discriminatory laws passed against Black people during *apartheid,* they cannot possibly encapsulate how negative a trajectory these laws set South Africa along, a trajectory that still accounts for much discontent driving South Africa's 'culture of violence.'

[93] This thesis's author has used "matrix of division" to describe the complex and ever-evolving state in which South Africa's race relations are conducted.

[94] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 217-221; Erik Melander, "The Limits of Manipulation Theory: The Apartheid Third Force and the ANC-Inkatha Conflict in South Africa", *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy,* 8,4, 2002, 1-45; Giliomee, "Democratization", 85; Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 15-31; Marks and Neil Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 41-47; Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence", 47-55. These texts describe the ANC-Inkatha feud that gave rise to the 'Third Force' theory and the violent conditions under which migrant mine workers hailing from different ethnicities competed for jobs, resources, and other necessities in 1980s Johannesburg.

[95] Sithembile Mbete, "The Economic Freedom Fighters-South Africa's turn towards populism?", *Journal of African Elections* 14,1, 2015, 35-59. Regarding the role of modern-day South African racial-aligned

competition for power exists – especially with political dynamics at play – polarization, conflict, and violence are generally close at hand. Insight into this context comes via Natasha Georgieva Haji Krstetski, who, in describing President Jacob Zuma's *Nkandla* household upgrades (dubbed *Nkandlagate* by the media), intimates how structured political violence (corruption) predicated on political identity can stoke disbelief, resentment, and ultimately violence, all centring around the point that political affiliation (and political standing) often trumps the material needs of the impoverished. In her words:

> Little symbolizes the nature of our public sector corruption challenge better than the scandal of R215 million public money being diverted away from the public good to upgrade President Jacob Zuma's private homestead.[96]

Another pervasive issue in South Africa is gender-based violence, which can be expanded to include discrimination and violence against people based on sexual orientation. While high-profile cases like that of Uyinene Mrwetyana (a nineteen-year-old University of Cape Town student who was raped, killed, and hidden in a Post Office safe by Post Office worker Luyanda Botha before he burnt her body elsewhere)[97] occasionally raise communal resistance to gender-based crimes (in Mrwetyana's case, the *#AmINext* hashtag became a rallying cry of the anti-gender-based violence movement), everyday structural gender-based violence – charted along gender, race, and class dynamics – creates and perpetuates a 'culture of violence', all of which can analysed through an SIT lens. Like an omnipresent, violence-laced background hum, the aggregation of this aggression has normalised gender-based violence in South Africa, which can also spill over into violent acts perpetrated against non-heterosexual people. LGBTQI+ individuals in South Africa are often victimized due to their sexuality, with examples of the violence they endure including corrective rape (the raping of lesbians or transgender individuals to 'correct' their sexual orientation or gender identity), hate crimes based on LGBTQI+ intolerance, family

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politics, Mbete's article offers insight into the role of the Economic Freedom Fighetrs (EFF), whose 'ethno-populism' form of politics has been a controversial addition to the South African political spectrum since the party began in 2013.

[96] Georgieva Haji Krstetski, "Corruption in South Africa", 52.

[97] South Africa post office murderer given life for killing Uyinene Mrwetyana, at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50431903 accessed on April 15, 2024.

ostracization, as well as school, workplace, and general societal harassment and discrimination.[98]

When addressing South Africa's 'culture of violence', a vital element to consider is that of generational divides. With different generations moulded by differing circumstances and details, the post-apartheid generation's people (referred to as 'Born Frees,' those born into the democratic dispensation) unquestionably hold different perspectives on South Africa's past due to them having experienced South African history differently. One example includes the 1976 Soweto Uprising's participants. Fighting against the institution of Afrikaans as a mandated language of instruction, that era's student activists cognize history in a markedly different manner to that of their children, the latter having grown up in a country with twelve official languages and numerous options as to where and which language they could be educated in, all against the backdrop of the ANC having transformed from an underground resistance group in 1976 to South Africa's incumbent government over the past thirty years. Moving to the present day, certain older community members may view the younger generation's resort to violent protest and crime as morally bankrupt, yet younger activists may argue (much like the older community members may have done so during *apartheid*), that the state's failure to deliver meaningful change necessitates more confrontational forms of action. Accordingly, it is fair to say that generational tensions exist between those who view the ANC as a liberation movement and those who see it as emblematic of state corruption, failed promises, and self-serving governance. Bearing this in mind, it is fair to assert that divisions between different generations (analysed through an SIT lens) can influence factors like political engagement and attitudes toward violence and reconciliation, both of which can lead to conflicting views about how to define and address violence.[99]

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[98] Combating Violence against LGBTI People in South Africa, at https://humanrightsfirst.org/library/combating-violence-against-lgbti-people-in-south-africa/ accessed on April 28, 2024; Spate of attacks on LGBTQI+ community in SA, at https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/spate-attacks-lgbtqi-community-sa accessed on April 28, 2024.

[99] ANC at a crossroads as South Africa goes to the polls, at https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/26/anc-at-a-crossroads-as-south-africa-goes-to-polls-election accessed on May 27, 2024; Robert Mattes, "The 'Born Frees': The prospects for generational change in post-apartheid South Africa", *Australian Journal of Political Science* 47,1 2012, 133-153; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 142-171. While Welsh's text does not directly compare different generation's political affiliations and understandings, his 1976 Soweto Riots analysis offers sufficient information to infer how that era's

Backdropping identity-based strife is economic disparities. With an unemployment rate of 32% (the highest in the world) and more than sixteen million South Africans relying on monthly social welfare grants to survive, economics plays a pivotal role in shaping social divisions that can stoke violence.[100] Charles Nqakula, South Africa's Minister of Safety and Security between 2002 and 2008, put this situation into perspective by stating:

> The social conditions people live under have an impact on the incidence of crime in South Africa. Poorer communities experience more violent crime than wealthier ones.[101]

The empirical reality that is South Africa's stark divide between the wealthy and the impoverished – mostly along racial lines, which in turn influences class demographics – is a ubiquitous factor that incites social tensions, catalyses resentment, and serves as an at-hand tinderbox for violence to occur. Assis Malaquias elucidates further:

> The majority of citizens still struggle to gain access to employment, housing, transportation, clean drinking water, electricity, and quality education. The delivery of basic services is essential in alleviating poverty and inequality. The failure to do so has created the perception that the post-apartheid state lacks the will to deliver. A sense of marginalization and exclusion from the political system has compelled some citizens to take action outside of these structures, fueling unrest and violence – from protests over service delivery to xenophobic attacks.[102]

Further exacerbating South Africa's social and economic disparities is the divide between urban and rural areas. According to UN-Habitat, approximately 52% of South Africa's population lived in urban areas in 1994. By 2018, this figure had reached 66.4%, and it is projected to reach around 80% by 2050.[103] Detailing the implications of South Africa's continued urbanisation, Mike Morris and Doug Hindson assert:

> Rapid urbanization has led to a reallocation toward the cities and massively increased pressure on urban social resources. It has sparked off a struggle for space, land and residential resources, leading to the mobilization of

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people would have rallied around resistance efforts like the ANC, whereas their children's situation – with the ANC having been in power in thirty years as of 2024 – is empirically different.

[100] South Africa marks 30 years since apartheid amid growing discontent, at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/27/south-africa-marks-30-years-since-apartheid-amid-growing-discontent accessed on April 21, 2024.

[101] Suren Pillay, "Crime, Community and the Governance of Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *Politikon*, 35,2, 2008, 142.

[102] Malaquias, "Stress-Testing", 7.

[103] South Africa, at https://unhabitat.org/south-africa accessed on April 28, 2024.

> communities along new lines based on emerging social divisions – race, class, age, language and ethnic origin. These provide the basis for mobilization and cross-cutting lines of fracture.[104]

With urbanisation and migration forming a pivotal part of modern South African history, the desire for access to resources continues along an upward trajectory. With so many people migrating to South Africa's urban centres daily, the load on urban infrastructures increases, which – with South Africa's complex history and socio-economic factors at play – aggravates social tensions that can quickly turn violent.[105]

Mirroring South Africa's diverse population and complex history, identity politics and social divisions are deeply ingrained, multifaceted elements of South African society. Due to their structural presence and the effects they can cause, divisions naturally arise, which impact the persistence of violence and inhibit the ability to foster genuine reconciliation and social cohesion. Accordingly, it is essential to consider how identity politics and social divisions combine with structural violence, historical legacies, and other factors throughout this thesis's comparative analysis of three historical periods, the sum of which can be immeasurably aided by employing Structural Violence and Social Identity Theory frameworks to assist in analysing relevant data.

Transitional justice and reconciliation

Transitional justice and reconciliation are vital elements in analysing post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence', and they form key components of this thesis's theoretical framework. Recognizing the scope of transitional justice and reconciliation is essential when exploring South Africa's attempts to address historical atrocities, promote healing, and build a more just and peaceful society. This section on transitional justice and reconciliation will delve into how these social factors continue to influence South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence', the sum of which can be analysed through transitional justice and reconciliation theories that include Cycle of Violence Theory, Human Needs Theory, and Conflict Transformation.[106]

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[104] Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence", 46.
[105] *Ibid*, 46-49.
[106] James Gilligan, "Shame, guilt, and violence", *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 70,4, 2003, 1149-1180; John Burton, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (New York: Springer, 1990); John Lederach, *Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear Articulation of the Guiding Principles by a Pioneer in the Field*

The most public affirmation of needing to address historical atrocities came with 1995's establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). With Desmond Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness, Pumla Godobo-Madikizela's A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid,* Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull,* and the voluminous research trove offered by the official TRC Report offering empirical accounts of TRC experiences regarding past human rights violations and reconciliation and reparation processes, an analysis of the TRC's effectiveness – its limitations and the socio-emotional impact it had on victims, perpetrators, and general South African society – plays a critical role in explaining post-apartheid South Africa's ongoing 'culture of violence'.

A hotly debated aspect of the TRC's multifaceted structural conflict concerned justice vs. forgiveness. The significantly divisive 'reconciliation before reparations' methodology that sought justice for victims while simultaneously promoting forgiveness and reconciliation is a controversy that has shadowed the TRC and its processes to the present day. Considering South Africa's continuing post-apartheid 'culture of violence', analysing the efficacy of the 'reconciliation before reparations' model remains a complex challenge, particularly regarding how justice – following the TRC's example – is perceived, pursued, and exacted in modern-day South Africa.[107]

An essential element of the TRC's work was the provision of reparations to victims of apartheid-era violence, and analysing the effectiveness of this process is vital to comprehensively realising the mandate of transitional justice. By extracting data per what reparations may have been delivered to victims, whether these reparations were delayed or insufficient, whether these reparations had symbolic or material value, whether the

(New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015). James Gilligan's *Cycle of Violence Theory* considers violence as a response to shame, humiliation, or social exclusion, all of which are prevalent in South Africa due to historical inequalities and systemic injustices. John Burton's *Human Needs Theory* asserts that unmet basic human needs (security, material, identity, and recognition) fuel conflict. With unmet basic needs still affecting such a large proportion of South Africa's populace, violence arises as a natural consequence. Considering transformation, John Paul Lederach's *Conflict Transfomation* emphasizes addressing root causes and fostering relationships to rebuild societal structures. With the TRC having attempted to foster transformation with limited success, it is imperative to continue considering what can be done to lessen South Africa's omnipresent violent scourge.

[107] Reconciliation through Restorative Justice: Analyzing South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Process, at https://beyondintractability.org/library/reconciliation-through-restorative-justice-analyzing-south-africas-truth-and-reconciliation accessed on April 28, 2024.

reparations addressed long-term needs, and whether possible disparities in compensation arose can all assist in forming valid conclusions regarding what role reparations (or lack thereof) may have played in fueling post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'.[108]

Transitional justice and reconciliation entail conceptual fluidity, and the process of national healing and memory must be considered when exploring the prevalence of violence thirty years into South Africa's democratic life. By commemorating *apartheid* victims and acknowledging the pain and suffering they endured, sincerity and empathy can occur, which in turn can facilitate meaningful and enduring reconciliation. Some examples of national healing and memory in the post-apartheid era include Soweto's Apartheid Museum, which offers insight into the apartheid era through detailed exhibits, and Cape Town's Robben Island Museum, which commemorates the pain and suffering shared by Nelson Mandela and other resistance figures during their prolonged imprisonment at the island's correctional facility.[109] In addition, South Africa has public holidays like Human Rights Day (March 21, commemorating the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre) and Freedom Day (April 27, celebrating South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994). While these commemorative spaces and occasions do offer acknowledgement and accountability per *apartheid* crimes committed, they cannot render violence null and void, for violence still possesses the ability to draw attention to past events and provides existential and economic compensation for the lingering grief that continues to afflict the lives of victims and their loved ones.

While national healing and memory are critical in addressing past injustices and promoting reconciliation, the processes facilitating these should occur communally if consistency and relevance are to be maintained. Community reconciliation entails examining community initiatives, dialogues, and grassroots efforts aimed at reconciliation and social healing. In modern-day South Africa, community-led efforts to convey South Africa's discriminatory past include the national educational system having incorporated *apartheid* history, which stands as a crucial step in fostering a shared national identity while promoting

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[108] Ibid; Truth Commission, *United States Institute of Peace*, at https://www.usip.org/publications/1995/12/truth-commission-south-africa accessed on April 11, 2024.
[109] Apartheid Museum, at https://www.apartheidmuseum.org/ accessed on April 29, 2024; Robben Island Museum, at https://www.robben-island.org.za/ accessed on April 29th, 2024.

reconciliation. Also, community and artistic endeavours via plays, movies, and books that explore themes of *apartheid*, survival, and reconciliation happen regularly, the sum of which can channel latent grievances into constructive efforts seeking to address and heal collective trauma in community-driven ways.[110]

Adding to national and community-based reconciliation efforts, political reconciliation emphasises how and why reconciliation can foster a more equitable society. South Africa's post-apartheid era was partly constructed around Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) meetings meant to stimulate conciliatory dialogue between political adversaries, the core of which informed constitutional statutes that later formed post-apartheid South Africa's constitutional undergirding. As CODESA (which paved the way for South Africa's post-apartheid Government of National Unity[GNU]) showed, political reconciliation is logistically and optically influential in shaping the country's political landscape, particularly in portraying how inclusivity – rather than violence – can operate at the heart of a modern democratic state's decision-making processes.[111]

From a global perspective, comparing South Africa's transitional justice and reconciliation experience with that of other post-conflict or post-authoritarian societies (post-*Troubles* Northern Ireland, post-*Khmer Rouge* Cambodia, post-*Yugoslav Wars* Bosnia-Herzegovina, post-*1994 genocide* Rwanda) can offer reflective capacity that helps elicit valuable insights regarding South Africa's unique challenges and successes. Through international comparisons with historical or contemporary international cases, South Africa's reconciliation efforts can be contextualised, from which researchers can glean qualitative and quantitative information to help improve necessary processes that curb violence and provide the nation with more equitable and peaceful options for the future.[112]

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[110] Kate Lefko-Everett, Rajen Govender and Don Foster, "Measuring Social Change in South Africa", *Rethinking Reconciliation: Evidence from South Africa*, 2017, 3-22; Michael Humphrey, "Reconciliation and the Therapeutic State", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 26,3, 2005, 203-220. Individually and collectively, these texts provide researchers with qualitative and quantitative data per South Africa's community-led reconciliation efforts between 1994 and 2017.

[111] Mahmood Mamdani, "Beyond Nuremberg: The Historical Significance of the Post-Apartheid Transition in South Africa", *Politics & Society*, 43,1, 2015, 61-88.

[112] Kieran McEvoy and Louise Mallinder, "Amnesties in Transition: Punishment, Restoration, and the Governance of Mercy", *Journal of Law and Society*, 39,3, 2012, 410-440. Regarding post-conflict societies, Northern Ireland emphasized negotiated settlements and community healing without a formal Truth and Reconciliation Commission, thus leaving grievances unsettled. Post-1994 genocide, Rwanda employed both

Despite the idiosyncratic nature of transitional justice and reconciliation, these factors remain inextricably linked to South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence'; hence, this thesis acknowledges that an amalgam of theoretical frameworks should be employed to synthesise relevant information accurately. By acknowledging past mistakes, pursuing justice, and genuinely seeking lasting reconciliation, positive implications may arise to assist South Africa in creating a social climate less defined by violence. As this thesis's comparative analysis of three historical periods unfolds, the roles of transitional justice and reconciliation vis-à-vis the country's ongoing 'culture of violence' will be explored, the hope being to garner relevant insights that can contribute toward making South Africa a less violent place.

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the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and traditional, community-based *gacaca* courts as justice-restoring mechanisms. Bosnia-Herzegovina focused on criminal justice through the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which prioritized individual accountability. In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (ECCC) faced criticism for delays and the fact that it only convicted a few influential leaders.

C: Existing Research on Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Factors contributing to violence

While South Africa achieved what appeared to be a democratic miracle in 1994 with Nelson Mandela's ascension to the state presidency, any accompanying glossy sheen has long since diminished as the country – thirty years on – still grapples with a 'culture of violence' that affects people in ways they thought had followed *apartheid* to the grave. With South Africa's geopolitical standing and history an issue of noted global relevance, the violence dominating the country has commanded the attention of academics, policymakers, activists, and everyday South Africans, the sum of which clamour for less ambiguity about why South Africa – led by a government-mandated to materialize the hopes and dreams of the country's majority – has not been able to quash a 'culture of violence' that appears more characteristic of the *apartheid* era. Consequently, a comprehensive canon of scholarly work has emerged to investigate and understand the roots of South Africa's ongoing violence, as well as how to best understand the multiple dimensions of the violence that characterised post-apartheid South Africa.

This chapter will review and synthesise existing research on South Africa's violence-addled nature, offering an overview of significant findings, discussions, and potential literature gaps. Also, by comparing this thesis's three distinct historical periods, it is hoped that any conclusions reached can add to the discussion surrounding the persistence of violence in post-apartheid South Africa and possibly assist in making the country less violent.

To comprehensively analyse why violence is so widespread in modern-day South Africa, a range of interconnected factors contributing to the multifaceted nature of the country's violence should be considered. Deeply embedded in South Africa's historical and socio-political fabric, these factors form a crucial element of this thesis's theoretical framework; investigating them can help offer a more nuanced understanding of what drives the post-apartheid era's violence.

South Africa's modern-day history cannot be accurately comprehended without discussing the historical legacy of *apartheid.* The formal institutionalisation of racial discrimination

and segregation by the National Party has played an unfathomably detrimental role in dictating South Africa's collective memory and socio-political landscape. To analyse *apartheid's* myriad effects, researchers should consider the array of historical injustices, trauma, and resentments that *apartheid* visited upon South Africa's people. With an extensive body of literature devoted to *apartheid* and its details (with notable mention made of Thompson, Dubow, and Welsh's already-cited texts), meticulous research that consistently remains aware of the widespread suffering that occurred can enable researchers to fully cognize how, what, and why apartheid-era factors still influence and sustain modern South Africa's 'culture of violence'.

One enduring tenet of segregationist and apartheid policy is the economic inequality it spawned. Tied closely to the racial divisions that so forcefully impacted much of South Africa's history, economic disparities remain a cornerstone factor that, in South Africa as elsewhere, continues to fuel modern-day violence. Whether citing access to economic opportunities, employment, or resources, the reality that only certain people have consistent access to necessities undoubtedly exacerbates social tensions, which in turn provides fertile ground for violence to occur along criminal and social lines. With a substantial body of information relating to South Africa's economic inequality currently available via books, academic articles, media reports, and other sources, accurate research will rely on distilling elements relevant to this thesis's research questions while considering how conclusions reached can assist in reducing the violent effects that economic inequality causes.

Shadowing economic disparity comes social inequalities, which, in the form of education, healthcare, housing, and access to essential services, play a significant role in perpetuating violence. Long stoked and sustained along racial, class, and 'tribal'/cultural lines, social inequalities – depending on their severity – can catalyse social exclusion, poverty, and a sense of marginalisation, all of which possess the capacity to stimulate, propagate, and sustain violence. Chatterjee, Czajka, and Gethin's study *Wealth Inequality in South Africa, 1993–2017* elucidates as follows:

> South Africa displays unparalleled levels of wealth concentration. The top 10 percent of South African wealth holders own more than 85 percent of

> household wealth, while the top 1 percent wealth share reaches 55 per cent. The top 0.01 percent (about 3,500 adults) own a higher share of wealth than the bottom 90 percent as a whole (about 32 million individuals). The average wealth of the bottom 50 percent is negative: the market value of their assets is lower than their liabilities. Such levels of wealth inequality are higher than in any other country for which comparable, high-quality estimates of the wealth distribution are available (namely France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, China, and India).[113]

Overseeing the economic and social inequalities afflicting post-apartheid South Africa are political factors. Thirty years into democracy, South Africa's political landscape is characterised by the dominance of the ANC, which, as the sole preserve of political authority in the country for the better part of four decades, has sown party-affiliated dynamics that can catalyse violence. These dynamics include political competition predicated on violence (consider intra-elite assassinations in and around Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal), 'tenderpreneur-style' corruption that offers politically connected individuals and groups access to state funds, and other controversial governance issues that help foment a violent climate which, whether exacted randomly or strategically, is geared toward achieving political goals.[114] Among a litany of academic peers commenting on this topic, Karl von Holdt states:

> The focus for the accumulation of wealth and productive assets has been on the process of bidding for tenders for state contracts which are critical to the future of many emerging black-owned businesses. Competition is fierce, and collusion between state officials and contenders for contracts in order to rig the tender process and inflate contracts has become widespread. A variety of methods are used to circumvent formal procedures and regulations. These arrangements create opportunities for transactions between political status and wealth accumulation, and since they entail breaking the law, the result is intense struggle for control of the state institutions responsible for the rule of law, the police and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in particular.[115]

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[113] Aroop Chatterjee, Léo Czajka, and Amory Gethin, "Wealth Inequality in South Africa, 1993–2017", *The World Bank Economic Review*, 36,1, 2022, 19.

[114] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 217-221; Giliomee, "Democratisation", 85; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 41-47; Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence", 47-55; Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 597. Von Holdt states "Assassinations of ANC office bearers and representatives have become increasingly visible over the past few years. Initially Mpumulanga appeared to be the epicenter of internal ANC assassinations. In one research site in Mpumulanga both the first mayor elected and the man chosen to replace him were assassinated, and two subsequent mayors claim to have been victims of assassination attempts."

[115] Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 594-596.

On the point of political loyalty, Assis Malaquias describes the inherent violence that paves the path to patronage at the expense of competence, the effect of which erodes both the capacity to deliver services and public trust, leading to more violence:

> The ANC's practice of cadre deployment has also created a fertile breeding ground for patronage politics in that it rewards party loyalty with appointments in the state and parastatal sectors… This practice is enabled by South Africa's proportional electoral list system in which citizens vote for a party rather than individual candidates. Parties are then able to appoint members of parliament from pre-established slates of candidates in proportion to the percentage of votes received… However, since party and personal loyalty – not fitness for the position – are the key determining factors for appointments, this has also resulted in dramatic reductions in the effectiveness of state institutions at all levels of government.[116]

One thing South Africans and visitors often mention is the country's richness, variety of people, and cultural landscape. While South Africa's diversity and multiculturalism are some of its greatest assets, it is equally valid that cultural and identity factors can be a source of tension and conflict. Citing ethnicity, language, and cultural identity as three key factors, violence – particularly at local levels – can quickly arise from complications and divisions relating to these factors, especially when socio-political-economic elements are involved. While researching the vast body of available literature covering this subject, academic attention should also consider xenophobic fears and violence, the totality of which forms a significant part of South Africa's 'culture of violence' vis-à-vis how the country's relative economic clout attracts migrants from southern African states and beyond.[117]

Like all countries, South Africa occasionally becomes fixated on domestic affairs. However, reality dictates that the country does not exist in isolation; like other nation-states forming part of a globalised world, South Africa is subject to international factors like economic markets, forces, and trends. This globalised context translates into South Africa having to tolerate and effectively manage economic fluctuations, migration patterns, and even

[116] Malaquias, "Stress Testing", 12.
[117] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 217-221; Hamber, "'Have no doubt", 9-10; Giliomee, "Democratisation", 85; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 41-47; Melander, "The Limits of Manipulation Theory", 1-45; Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence", 47-55.

international crime networks, all of which possess the capacity to drive violence – physical, financial, and cyber-oriented – within the country for unspecified periods.[118]

Understanding what factors contribute to post-apartheid South African violence is crucial to understanding the nature and intentions of the country's 'culture of violence'. Accordingly, this thesis delineates how these factors have coexisted over three distinct historical periods to form intricate relationships that illuminate the country's historical legacies, structural inequalities, and contemporary dynamics of violence thirty years into democracy.

Attempts at peacebuilding and reconciliation

Accompanying violence (particularly the systemic type engendered by *apartheid*) is the idea of peacebuilding and reconciliation, which, since South Africa's shift to democracy, has remained a central, albeit controversial, theme. This thesis's theoretical framework includes an analysis of attempts at peacebuilding and reconciliation in South Africa, for it is through these efforts that researchers can further understand the dynamics of the country's ongoing 'culture of violence'.

Arguably, South Africa's most iconic and internationally recognised attempt at peacebuilding and reconciliation came with the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Accordingly, a healthy body of literature covers the TRC period, from books (Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness, Godobo-Madikizela's A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid,* and Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull)* to numerous academic articles all pivoting around the voluminous government-produced TRC Report.

Organized and operating as three central committees (the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee, and the Amnesty Committee), the TRC publicly addressed crimes and human rights abuses committed during the

[118] Mark Shaw and Tuesday Reitano, "The Evolution of Organized Crime in Africa: Towards a New Response", *Institute for Security Studies*, 2013, 1-28. Shaw and Reitano's article provides insight into the proliferation of organized crime in Africa regarding the influence of international and domestic actors.

apartheid era.[119] The TRC's processes of truth-telling, amnesty, and public hearings occurred to foster understanding, healing, and reconciliation on individual accounts, hoping this could contribute to national healing and nation-building. As such, investigating the TRC's outcomes and limitations is critical to comprehend what role reconciliation efforts may have played in propagating and sustaining post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'.[120]

Considering nation-building and social cohesion, South Africa's post-apartheid government embarked on initiatives to bridge divisions and promote unity. As mentioned, educational reforms such as including apartheid-related content in school curricula, cultural celebrations like public holidays commemorating the lives of those who suffered for South Africa's democracy, and other programs designed to foster a sense of shared national identity all happened or currently exist. Added to these are national sporting triumphs like the South African rugby teams' multiple Rugby World Cup triumphs (1995, 2007, 2019, 2023), the national soccer team's 1996 African Cup of Nations victory, and numerous Olympic medal successes since South Africa's readmission to international sport. Should researchers assess the efficacy of nation-building, social cohesion initiatives, and sporting triumphs per their capacity to reduce violence and promote reconciliation, they will be in a better position to understand what can be done to possibly lessen South Africa's enduring 'culture of violence'.[121]

The political negotiations and power-sharing agreements that catalysed *apartheid's* demise and subsequent transition to democracy represented a globally lauded effort at reconciliation and peacebuilding. Investigating the details of the negotiation process – from initial discussions concerning *apartheid* policy reformation to the implementation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) – can shed light on relevant power-sharing agreements and post-apartheid political leadership structures, the sum of which can provide

[119] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-trc-0 accessed on May 2, 2024.
[120] The TRC's creation, organization, processes, and history are extensively described and analyzed in Tutu, Godobo-Madikizela, and Krog's already-cited books.
[121] Humphrey, "Reconciliation and the Therapeutic State", 203-220; Lefko-Everett, Govender and Foster, "Measuring Social Change", 3-22.

conclusions per what effect these factors may have had in quelling or stoking violence within South Africa.[122]

Returning to the South African grassroots level, numerous community-level initiatives operating through community-based organisations and projects have sought to remedy the social, economic, and psychological ills *apartheid* visited upon the country. Ranging from community development projects that focus on housing, accessing clean water and sanitation, establishing local healthcare facilities, and education initiatives like ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) that seek to improve adult literacy for those denied foundational education in their youth, these initiatives possess the capacity to transform conflict into constructive efforts, forge social bonds, and possibly address the root causes of violence in communities countrywide. As such, these initiatives should be investigated to determine what qualitative or quantitative information they can offer to possibly temper elements of South Africa's ongoing 'culture of violence'.[123]

Counterbalancing South Africa's reconciliation and peacebuilding successes are inevitable challenges and shortcomings. While the nature of the country's reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts are – considering South Africa's inherent diversity – amorphous and challenging to apply in a wholesale manner per analysing the country, it remains possible to determine how political obstacles, societal divisions, or unmet expectations caused initiatives to fall short of realising their intended purposes. Furthermore, by investigating these challenges and shortcomings, valuable insight can arise as to how and why post-apartheid South Africa remains dominated by violence.

In scrutinising the impact of reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts' successes and failures, this thesis – through analysing three distinct historical periods – has outlined the relationship between reconciliation processes and shows why, despite good intentions, South Africa remains wedded to such high levels of violence. Moreover, it is also hoped that this study's research findings can offer insights that help inform future efforts to alleviate the enduring effects of South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence'.

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[122] Mamdani, "Beyond Nuremberg", 61-88.
[123] Adult Basic Education and Training, at https://abet.co.za/ accessed May 2, 2024.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A: Research Approach

Comparative historical analysis

This thesis's content and findings are grounded in comparative historical analysis. It is believed that by comparing three seminal periods in South Africa's history – all predicated on violence – accurate and substantive findings have resulted that can inform efforts aimed at lessening the bedrock violence currently sustaining South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence'.

The initial part of employing comparative analysis as this thesis's primary research method was selecting relevant historical periods. The three periods forming this thesis's content are the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath [1960s], anti-apartheid resistance and state response [1980s], and post-1994: contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings [1994], all of which are characterized by different socio-political factors, unique policy circumstances and, empirically as well as in the public imagination, are remembered as catalytically violent periods that helped oust autocratic rule in favour of constitutional, multiracial democracy. Accordingly, it is believed that the selection of this thesis's three historical periods accurately outlines the evolution of South African violence on its way to forming the country's modern-day 'culture of violence'.

Comparative historical analysis as a research method requires identifying critical variables, factors, or themes about selected research questions. This thesis's relevant variables, factors, and themes centre around South Africa's structural inequalities, political transitions, peacebuilding efforts, economic developments, and cultural dynamics, and it is crucial to know how and why these points evolved over the three historical periods' combined timespan. Accordingly, the identification of these factors in this thesis offers an accurate reflection of the history of the three chosen periods, and resultant research findings offer practical ideas regarding how and why a 'culture of violence' endures in South Africa and what can be done to lessen the effects of this violence.

Regarding the methodology undergirding comparative historical analysis, data collection and analysis are necessary to produce accurate findings. Gathering and analysing data

entails a comprehensive collection of qualitative and, when applicable, quantitative data relating to selected historical periods. Primary sources like historical documents, government reports, archival records, media coverage, and secondary sources like scholarly articles and books are indispensable. Furthermore, credible analysis involves meticulously examining the collected data, and the consistent use of responsible historical research methods in this thesis has assisted in identifying patterns, trends, and causal relationships that explain how and why post-apartheid South Africa remains entangled within a 'culture of violence'.

For valid conclusions to result from the data collection and analysis, three things must occur. First, relevant findings should be contextualised. By placing the data within the broader historical, social, and political context of each chosen period, contextualization will empower research to develop historically reliable and accurate paths that champion veracity and impartiality, both vital lenses through which to analyse racially based strife. Second, cross-period comparisons should occur. Examining this thesis's three chosen periods' similarities and differences has revealed recurring patterns, causal mechanisms, and contingent factors, the sum of which has illuminated prevailing factors sustaining modern-day South Africa's 'culture of violence'. Third, theoretical integration should occur. By synthesising what findings have resulted from the analysed data and placing them within the theoretical framework established earlier in this thesis, cohesive data integration has helped refine and deepen the theoretical understanding of which factors continue to influence South Africa's ongoing 'culture of violence'.

This thesis's research is predicated upon comparative historical analysis for the sake of learning what historical elements have contributed toward forming and sustaining post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'. It is believed this methodological approach has allowed for a nuanced exploration of historical factors and how and why the interplay between these has added to rather than nullified the use of violence. Accordingly, this thesis has contributed conclusions and insights that can stoke academic and practical discussion that could assist in lessening the violent scourge that is South Africa's 'culture of violence'.

B: Data Collection

Primary sources

Historical research regularly entails collecting and analysing primary source documents such as letters, reports, notes, photographs, and films, all of which offer insights into the periods they are documenting. Accordingly, primary source research has been employed in this thesis, most of which has been accessed through digital archives.

Analogously speaking, primary source material can be considered the leather that goes into making leather shoes. Moreover, for this thesis to work comprehensively, sufficient primary material has been necessary to construct an academic vehicle that can move in step – veracity and scope-wise – with the subject material being analysed.

Regarding how and where primary source material has been employed in this thesis, official government records – particularly those sourced through digital government portals – have formed the majority. Whether citing local or national-level governance records, the capacity to find and utilise online government records is an invaluable modern-day research tool, and researching this way has provided accurate and detailed information toward answering this study's research questions.

One instance where government records have proved beneficial concerns the official Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report. While texts like Tutu's *No Truth Without Forgiveness,* Godobo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died That Night (A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid)*, and Krog's *Country of My Skull* offer excellent summaries of what the TRC entailed, official government records offer unparalleled insight into the Commission's dealings and details, particularly in terms of hearings, amnesty, and reparations. It is firmly believed that the official TRC Report contains sufficient information to reliably uncover what factors – both empirical and narrative-based – have helped foment and sustain South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence'.[1]

[1] The official Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (consisting of seven volumes and accessible at https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/) is a significant resource with which to analyze South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence'. Based on extensive testimonies, historical documentation, and investigative processes aimed at uncovering the truth about past abuses, the Report – drawing on both narrative and empirical data – includes victim, perpetrator, and witness testimonies, which in turn forms a detailed and accurate reflective composite of what South Africa faced upon leaving *apartheid* behind before moving into the post-apartheid era.

To this point in the thesis, newspaper-related information, broadcast transcripts, and other media archive material have been included to establish historical context and illustrate how events may have been perceived, all of which is crucial to establishing why violence persists so vociferously in South Africa. By knowing how primary source documentation reflected and projected South Africa's security situation through the thesis's three historical periods, a contextual understanding of what violence occurred has resulted, thus contributing relevant information to further this study's research aims.

Moving to the local level, the testimonies of South Africans embroiled in violence – both past and present – have lent veracity and authenticity to this thesis's findings.[2] By reading, acknowledging, and including individual and communal oral histories, the spectre that is South Africa's 'culture of violence' has been more authentically detailed, resulting in relevant clues that can assist in remedying the myriad ills that violence visits South Africans living in the post-apartheid era.

Undergirding all primary source material is the acknowledgement that relevant content must undergo meticulous analysis, for without credibility and reliability, information will remain speculative and cannot lead to sound and valid conclusions. Treating relevant information with sufficient nuance and confidentiality is equally important should it become apparent that it could adversely implicate those it originated from. While this scenario is unlikely as virtually all of this thesis's primary source information has been accessed through digital archives, treating publishable information with due respect, ethical consideration, and methodological rigour remains a significant priority.

As noted, primary source information is invaluable to constructing accurate, reflective historical research, particularly when offering this thesis necessary credibility and reliability. What elements of primary source information have been utilised in this study have been subjected to methodological rigour, the sum of which has contributed toward forming a more solid academic backbone to help answer this thesis's research questions.

Secondary sources

The bulk of this thesis's research relies on reading and analysing multiple secondary

[2] Regarding oral interviews, the role and challenges of using these should be addressed carefully and critically. Krog's *Country of My Skull,* Lodge's *Sharpeville,* and the official *TRC Report* contain oral interview content transcripts and critical analysis, the sum of which bodes positively for researchers looking to collate topical information.

sources, particularly relevant books and academic articles, that cover multiple factors contributing to the reinvention of South Africa's violent past as an ongoing, modern-day 'culture of violence'.

The most beneficial aspect of employing peer-reviewed secondary source material is – per reliability, credibility, and veracity – the information contained within these sources is built upon sound historical principles, thus lending research integrity and impartiality toward uncovering truths that can provide researchers with accurate findings.

The initial go-to secondary sources are books offering broad yet sufficiently detailed information that frame the context of South Africa's violent past while illuminating factors that contribute to its alarmingly violent present. Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa,* Tom Lodge's *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences,* David Welsh's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid,* Saul Dubow's *Apartheid: 1948-1994,* John-Kane Berman's *Political Violence in South Africa,* Desmond Tutu's *No Truth Without Forgiveness,* Pumla Godobo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died That Night (A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid),* and Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* offer effective textual platforms to understand South Africa's complicated past, in that both individually and collectively they present similar yet different takes on South Africa's history while offering factual information that reflects what it means to live within South Africa's violent context.

Complementing the above-mentioned books, many academic articles cover a broad spectrum of violence-related topics. Whether citing South Africa's epidemiology of violence (Shula Marks and Neil Andersson), the country's transition to violent democracy (Karl von Holt), efforts to make South Africa safer (Elrena Van Der Spuy and Clifford Shearing), the historical significance of the country's 'Third Force' (Stephen Ellis), or how violence works in the 'New' South Africa (Bill Berkeley), a multitude of academic articles analyse relevant themes, patterns, and other essential bits of violence-related information that, when coalesced, form a sufficiently researched and detailed account of why South Africa's 'culture of violence' endures thirty years into democracy.[3]

[3] Berkeley, "The 'New' South Africa", 73-80; Ellis, "The Historical Significance", 261-299; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 29-69; Van Der Spuy and Shearing, "Curbing the Killing Fields", 186-205; Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 589-604.

Secondary source information is, in no uncertain terms, invaluable to this thesis's research. By delving into the work of respected scholars who are viewing South Africa's violence-ridden context from multiple perspectives, this study's findings have stemmed from accurate sources which have added immeasurably toward answering this thesis's research questions, the sum of which has contributed to academic discussion regarding what can be done to possibly lessen the effects of South Africa's enduring 'culture of violence'.

Interviews with key informants

Due to the combined volume of primary and secondary source information and literature covering the three historical periods being analysed in this thesis, the author has chosen to analyse interview information currently available within the public domain rather than conduct in-person interviews. This research method is advantageous because – as in the case of the TRC Report published by the South African government – this information has already been scrutinised for credibility and reliability, thus offering potential researchers a solid platform to establish historical context. Accordingly, with the resulting information being relevant, contextual, and on the established historical record, all findings gleaned from researching said material have contributed toward answering this thesis's research questions.

While interviewing people could have been beneficial through humanizing narratives and adding specific details and experiences that would bring theoretical contemplations to light, the necessary time spent on identifying essential information, organizing and conducting in-depth interviews, strategizing around ethical considerations, and triangulating findings with data obtained from primary and secondary sources to enhance the validity and reliability of the study would have, in this author's opinion, detracted from rather than added to this study and its writing schedule, particularly with so much reliable and credible information already within the public domain. Accordingly, this thesis commenced with its research schedule and methodology sans interviewing key informants.

C: Selection of Case Studies

1960s – The Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath

The 1960s represent a pivotal time in South Africa's history, with the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath being the subject of much literature and debate. Accordingly, this historical event has been selected as this thesis's first case study to provide a solid contextual base to chart South Africa's increasing descent toward a 'culture of violence'. The massacre (which occurred on March 21, 1960, when police fired upon anti-passbook protesters) is an apt initial lens through which the exposition of this study's comparative historical study can occur due to its violent nature, what caused the violence, and how it set off a sequence of events that profoundly affected South Africa's trajectory toward forming a post-apartheid 'culture of violence'.

Symbolically speaking, the Sharpeville Massacre can be construed as the international 'optical resistance genesis'[4] against the *apartheid* regime. Thousands of protesters gathered outside Sharpeville police station on that hot 1960 Monday to oppose discriminatory pass laws that severely curtailed the lives of the township's residents. Following a series of conflicting events (depending on which narrative is analysed), police opened fire and killed sixty-nine people, along with injuring one hundred and eighty others. The immediate aftermath saw the swift banning of the ANC and PAC in line with a declared State of Emergency, which in turn catalysed international condemnation that helped illuminate the gross human rights affront that was the *apartheid* regime. With such integral South African history pivoting around this event, the Sharpeville Massacre appears to represent an empirical and symbolic inflexion point in the struggle for socio-racial parity in South Africa.

Regarding struggle, the repression that occurred post-Sharpeville massacre by no means quelled resistance; instead, it galvanised it. Despite government attempts to counter escalations in protests, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience, the nature of the main resistance groups (the ANC and PAC) became more militant. With the creation of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe*,* and the PAC's equivalent, Poqo*,* a proverbial line in the sand had been drawn; no longer would the oppressed tolerate the policies of the

[4] Created by this thesis's author, the term 'optical resistance genesis' refers to the international exposure the Sharpeville Massacre received and how this catalyzed a global response to the *apartheid* regime.

oppressor. This ideological and practical transition to armed resistance added to the state's ever-evolving template of violence, which continued to adapt to events through the 1960s and beyond.

Despite occurring sixty-four years ago, the extent to which the Sharpeville Massacre echoes through South African history is seen in its commemoration every March 21 as Human Rights Day, this public holiday emphasising the massacre's symbolic value toward national memory. With such explicit yearly projection of the event to the South African public, the value of selecting the Sharpeville Massacre as the first of this thesis's three case studies to undergo comparative historical comparison appears a solid one, for whatever findings result from researching it should appeal to a broad base of people who can resonate and hopefully work together not to repeat Sharpeville's mistakes.

1980s – Anti-apartheid resistance and state response

Preceded by the tumult of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, 1980s South Africa was characterised by anti-apartheid resistance that included mass protests, civil disobedience, a virulent rise in activism against socio-racial injustice, and gratuitous violence. With this decade proving to be one of the deadliest in South Africa's recent history, the 1980s serves as the second case study in this thesis's comparative historical analysis of violence. By analysing the events, actors, and circumstances characterising 1980s South Africa through the perspectives of the oppressor and oppressed, valuable information regarding the complex interplay between the state and its resistors emerges, which can explain what contributions this period made toward the development of post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'.

South Africa in the 1980s was a proverbial tinderbox constantly on the verge of igniting. Following the 1976 Soweto Uprising, which galvanised mass opposition against the *apartheid* government, the decade saw a substantial escalation in anti-apartheid activism, the baton of which was taken up by a diverse coalition of civil society organisations, trade unions, and youth movements. To effectively counter the state's 'Total Strategy' policy (meant to repel the advances of Communism into South Africa), resistance movements – and in particular, the United Democratic Front (UDF) – were able to sustain sufficient mobilization among the masses through non-violent protests, strikes, and campaigns, all of

which made the state's *apartheid* policies and brutal repression increasingly untenable, particularly as domestic audiences (now able to witness news events following television's 1976 arrival in South Africa) and international equivalents were becoming increasingly aware of South Africa's complex security situation.[5]

Regarding the state's many responses to the intensifying anti-apartheid resistance, 1985's State of Emergency proved to be a significant turning point. With the state's security forces being granted the power to arrest and detain individuals without trial, South Africa found itself enmeshed in a perpetual cycle of violence. One notably violent aspect of this period was the declaration by resistance movements (most notably, the ANC) of a 'People's War' doctrine on the incumbent government, which – framed as a mass-based insurrection – condoned violence (and violent rhetoric) as tools of liberation. As an extension of the 'armed struggle' and operationally blurring the lines between political and civilian targets, the 'People's War' added to the prevailing climate of fear and violence, and via its adoption and execution, violence as an operational tool of liberation became additionally 'normalised', the blueprints of which, tactically and strategically, could prove useful in the post-apartheid era.[6]

Emblematic of 1980s South African violence was the practice of 'necklacing', an overtly visual and brutal practice that saw individuals accused of collaborating with the *apartheid* government being killed by having a tyre filled with petrol placed around their neck and set alight. While this practice undoubtedly reflected the grimness of South Africa's political situation at the time, the fact that violence was meted out so visually, fearfully, and often based on little to no evidence engendered yet more communal agreement that 'necklacing' was an effective tool, which in turn suggests that the violent nature of this 'condoned' practice could somehow be linked to how contemporary xenophobic or vigilante-style violence plays out in post-apartheid South Africa.

Alongside growing international solidarity and sanctions that further undermined the South African state, violence – along economic and ethnic lines – was running riot through the

[5] Obermeyer, "Apartheid South Africa's propaganda effort", 73-95. Obermeyer's Chapter 4 (*Propaganda and the South African Broadcasting Commission*) offers insight into the controversial history of South Africa's relationship with television.

[6] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 30; Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse", 107; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 273.

country. Whether citing 1984 rent boycotts in the Vaal Triangle townships of Sebokeng and Boipatong, the violence plaguing miners' hostels and its ethnically diverse worker bodies in and around Johannesburg, or the *de facto* civil war happening in Kwazulu-Natal between the ANC and Inkatha (believed to be state aided and abetted via proxy forces collectively known as the 'Third Force'), the reality was that South Africa – locked in the dying throes of an autocratic government moving toward a new, destabilizing political future – was tied to violence, both as a political tool as well as an ingrained way of life.

Of the many complex periods in modern South Africa's history, the 1980s provide multiple lenses to understand how and why the post-apartheid state operates as it does. While resistance to *apartheid* did overcome myriad blood-soaked challenges, internal fractures were also exposed, and the use of violence became a justifiable tool to achieve personal or collective goals. Shadowing the reality that South Africa – on the back of employing violent strategies and tactics – moved from racially oppressive autocratic rule to a more inclusive democratic dispensation, it is fair to assert that elements of this mentality have continued into the post-apartheid era, and for this reason the 1980s forms the second case study of this thesis's comparative historical analysis concerning why a 'culture of violence' endures in post-apartheid South Africa.

Post-1994 – Contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings

South Africa's post-1994 era began with the transition from a state autocracy to a multiracial democracy, along with a hope that the violence that brought the country to its new democratic dawn would, like the ousted *apartheid* regime, be relegated to history. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was one of the first and most influential steps in righting the wrongs of the past. While no one could realistically have believed the TRC would act as a heal-all panacea, it did bring national and worldwide attention to the extent of the crimes committed between 1960 and 1994, which, as a mass admission of guilt on multiple fronts, was indicative of the tone the incoming government believed could chart South Africa's new democratic life. It is for this reason – that of the TRC analyzing South Africa's burgeoning 'culture of violence' that grew in stature before the democratic transition – that the post-1994 period serves as this thesis's third case study, for by critically analyzing and aggregating official violence-related data leading up to 1994, researchers can gain invaluable insight into what patterns and trends dictated the past and

how these may be causally linked to those undergirding the post-apartheid era's 'culture of violence'.

Established in December 1995, the TRC was mandated to address past injustices and catalyse meaningful nation-building through healing, reconciliation, and accountability. With Archbishop Desmond Tutu chairing the Commission, the TRC conducted hearings at which victims and perpetrators shared their stories, thus creating a national narrative that, through truth-telling and reconciliation, could offer victims a voice and possibly closure. In contrast, perpetrators could be offered amnesty provided their testimonies met certain conditions.

Despite the TRC's successes in offering its participants a voice, closure, and amnesty, its operating mechanisms remain the subject of criticism to the present day. Reasons for this are varied, one of which includes an incomplete amnesty process. While the TRC granted amnesty to specific perpetrators who truthfully and completely confessed their crimes, many high-profile political and security forces figures linked to the *apartheid* regime did not fully disclose their actions and what violence and trauma resulted, thus leaving damning gaps in the historical record. The reality that perpetrators of violence escaped both public admissions of misdeeds and criminal prosecution is an unfortunate one, and those who suffered due to the apparent impunity these people enjoyed may likely have channelled their frustrations – material and psychological – in violent ways come the post-TRC period.[7]

Shadowing the incomplete amnesty process and selective prosecution of violent perpetrators, the TRC, while acknowledging apartheid-era socio-economic injustices, could not meaningfully address the broader structural frameworks that had catalysed South Africa's systemic inequality issues. While the TRC cannot justifiably be held accountable for failing to right South Africa's structural wrongs due to how deeply entrenched these became over multiple decades of *apartheid* policy, the fact that things did not radically

[7] Thompson, *A History*, 276-278; Tutu, *No Future*, 123-159. Complementing Thompson's writings, Tutu's Chapter 7 (*We Do Want to Forgive, But We Don't Know Whom to Forgive*) offers insight into how *apartheid* South Africa agents of violence (including but not limited to political and security actors like PW Botha, FW De Klerk, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Magnus Malan, Adriaan Vlok, and Civil Cooperation Bureau [CCB] members) may have received relative leniency for what roles they played in violent acts perpetrated between 1960 and 1994.

change may have symbolised that, despite shifting to a democratic dispensation, socio-economic inequality as an omnipresent issue was not going away. This grim reality – that of being unable to address malevolent systemic issues – has continued to foment social tensions and violence, particularly among South Africans who, unable to escape poverty, adopt violence to address what material lack and psychological torment they are forced to endure.

Additional issues the TRC could not solve were land disputes and the legacy of trauma and unhealed wounds. The former remains an enormous social issue in that land dispossession – which occurred both before and during *apartheid* – has, to the present day, not been adequately dealt with, resulting in a cohort of anger-ridden South Africans who cannot understand how the failure to provide equitable land restitution (and thus, address historical injustices) has happened despite government assurances that the situation would be resolved.[8] Adding to this is the legacy of trauma and unhealed wounds. While the TRC facilitated catharsis and acknowledgement of individual pain, it could not logistically extend this to collective trauma experienced by communities during the *apartheid* era. This stratum of pain – along with the ongoing land issue – is not due to the TRC lacking the will to right past wrongs; however, in the eyes of the marginalized who may have believed more could have been done, the reality that unresolved issues exist further erodes their trust in governmental systems, which in turn catalyzes anger, resentment, and ultimately violence stemming from an inability to obtain basic material necessities or as an outlet for what daily desperation these people may feel.

Fuelled by a joyous collective sentiment that *apartheid* was gone and a new democratic dawn had arrived, the post-apartheid era began with the establishment of the TRC, which was mandated to hear individual testimonies of victims and perpetrators in the name of championing truth and forging reconciliation toward catalysing meaningful nation-building. Due to South Africa's socio-economic context at the time, the TRC – despite its successes – could not serve as an all-healing panacea for the masses who had been affected

[8] Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 315; Theunis Roux, "Land Restitution and Reconciliation in South Africa", in F. Du Bois and A. du Bois-Pedain (eds.), *Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 154-171. Roux's text delves into the minutiae of property rights theory and how this applies to South Africa's post-apartheid context.

by apartheid-era violence. Bearing this in mind, it is crucial to include an analysis of the TRC in this thesis to understand how and why contemporary violence – built upon apartheid-catalyzed violence – exists so vociferously to the point that a 'culture of violence' still dominates modern-day South Africa. Accordingly, the TRC and its dealings form this thesis's third case study, for by comparing it to the events and contexts that surrounded the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, as well as anti-apartheid resistance and state response in the 1980s, a comprehensive picture of South African violence can emerge to explain (and hopefully help lessen) the effects of South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence'.

D: Data Analysis

This thesis's data analysis utilizes an integrated approach that incorporates qualitative content analysis, thematic coding, and comparative analysis to synchronize the three case studies forming this study's content, which include the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath (1960s), anti-apartheid resistance and state response (1980s), and contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings (post-1994).

Qualitative content analysis: The Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath (1960s)

The first of this thesis's case studies – the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath – has been examined using qualitative content analysis.[9] By exploring language, themes, and concepts found within Sharpeville-related qualitative data (and applied to a diverse range of sources that include Tom Lodge's *Sharpeville*: *An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences*, 1960s media reports, and peer-reviewed secondary source material), deeper socio-political meanings and relationships have been discovered and chronicled in a structurally relevant manner. Also, by systematically investigating topical data, key themes relating to public reactions, government responses, and international perceptions, patterns have been identified, which in turn have helped uncover narratives and discourses surrounding the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath. Finally, through employing reliable research methods using qualitative content analysis, resultant findings have arisen regarding how and why the Sharpeville Massacre continues to affect post-apartheid violence.

Thematic coding: Anti-apartheid resistance and state response (1980s)

The second of this thesis's case studies – anti-apartheid resistance and state response (1980s) – has been investigated using thematic coding.[10] By reviewing primary and secondary

[9] Content Analysis, at https://open.oregonstate.education/qualresearchmethods/chapter/chapter-17-content-analysis/ accessed on November 17, 2024; Florian Kohlbacher, "The Use of Qualitative Content Analysis in Case Study Research", *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7,1, 2006, 1-30. "Qualitative content analysis (sometimes referred to as QCA) is particularly useful when attempting to define and understand prevalent stories or communication about a topic of interest – in other words, when we are less interested in what particular people (our defined sample) are doing or believing and more interested in what general narratives exist about a particular topic or issue."

[10] Prokopis A. Christou, "How to use thematic analysis in qualitative research", *Journal of Qualitative Research in Tourism* 3,2,2022, 79-95; Thematic Coding, at https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/thematic-coding accessed on November 17, 2024. "Thematic coding is a form of

source data and marking segments with codes that specify relevant themes, data has been analysed systematically, which has assisted in drawing valuable insights relating to this thesis's research questions. Furthermore, thematic coding applicable to themes like anti-apartheid activism, state repression, internal conflicts within resistance movements, and global response have arisen, the sum of which has facilitated a multilayered examination of the diverse dynamics that created and sustained 1980s violence, along with how violence patterns and trends continued into the 1990s toward present-day South Africa.

Comparative analysis: Post-1994 - Contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings

This thesis's third case study (Post-1994 – contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings) has been examined using comparative analysis.[11] This research method has been used to systematically review numerous texts, theories, and details relating to TRC public hearings to highlight relevant similarities and differences. Applying this research method (together with elements of thematic coding) has catalysed an efficient and accurate distillation of the literature relating to the post-1994 era using the TRC lens. Accordingly, a sustained focus on the TRC hearings (and their limitations) per addressing apartheid-era injustices has provided insights into how and why the TRC, despite admirable intentions, has played a part in fomenting and sustaining post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'.

Following the individual examination and analysis of this thesis's three case studies, cross-case comparative analysis has helped synthesise relevant data to present holistic and accurate findings relating to this study's research questions. Encompassing commonalities, divergences, and violence-related trends, data found in each case study has assisted in formulating a body of academic research that offers substantive insight into how and why a 'culture of violence' dominates South Africa thirty years into democracy while

qualitative analysis that involves recording or identifying passages of text or images that are linked by a common theme or idea, allowing you to index the text into categories and therefore establish a framework of thematic ideas about it."

[11] Comparative Analysis, at https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_492 accessed on November 17, 2024; Kohlbacher, "The Use of Qualitative Content Analysis", 1-30. "The goal of comparative analysis is to search for similarity and variance among units of analysis. Comparative research commonly involves the description and explanation of similarities and differences of conditions or outcomes among large-scale social units, usually regions, nations, societies, and cultures."

simultaneously offering ideas as to whether anything can be done to lessen this violence's harmful effects.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES

> *A Khmer Rouge element is emerging in the black townships of South Africa that is beyond anyone's control, an element so brutalised that it now seeks only to kill and burn in blind revenge. This happens when situations of violence and repression become endemic with no prospect of political solution in sight… Sixty percent of the black population is under 16. That is the size of the Khmer Rouge we are creating… Now the ANC is losing control over them. Tomorrow they could be ruling over us.* [1]
>
> - Allister Sparks, 1986

A. Case 1: The Sharpeville Massacre and its Aftermath (1960)

Considered a South African historical touchstone event that thrust the blood-stained intransigence of the *apartheid* regime onto the world stage, the Sharpeville Massacre centred around the killing of sixty-nine Africans (and injuring of one hundred and eighty more) by Sharpeville police during a March 21, 1960, protest against passbook laws.[2] Occurring within the international context of sweeping African decolonisation and increasingly tightened revisions of discriminatory *apartheid* policy domestically, the Sharpeville Massacre profoundly impacted South Africa's political landscape, its international relations, and the country's social psyche due to the state inflicting brutal repression in the massacre's aftermath.[3] The results of this repression – initiated by the state and countered by resistance forces – have undoubtedly played a role in both fomenting and sustaining an enduring 'culture of violence' in South Africa, elements of which have proliferated beyond the *apartheid* era and now play out in myriad violent ways within modern South African society.

This case study will examine how the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath have contributed to a present-day South African 'culture of violence' by analysing and linking interconnected elements that include the historical context of *apartheid*, the radicalisation

[1] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 86.
[2] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 72.
[3] Andrew S. Roe-Crines, "'The Wind of Change': a rhetorical political analysis of Harold Macmillan's 1960 'decolonization' speech'", *British Politics*, 19,1, 2024, 46-63; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 74-75. Roe-Crines and Dubow detail the significance of Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' speech concerning African decolonization and Hendrik Verwoerd's reaction to it.

of resistance movements, the nationwide institutionalisation of state violence, the psychological impact this has played on society, and the enduring effect of socio-economic inequality.

Historical context and events

To understand what happened at Sharpeville on March 21, 1960, and the effects this event and its aftermath have played in sustaining a post-apartheid 'culture of violence', it is essential to understand *apartheid* policy architecture and the role of 'passbooks'. Saul Dubow elucidates in *Apartheid: 1948-1994:*

> The key to (Hendrik) Verwoerd's effort to integrate urban and rural initiatives, and to exercise unprecedented powers over the individual person, was a 'reference book', known colloquially by Africans as the dompas (idiot book). This would link data concerning an individual's birth, race, residency, tribe, tax status, and employment status. The 1950s Population Registration Act made this theoretically possible. By the mid-1960s, a universal archive of some 10m fingerprint records and photographs was maintained in the Central Reference or Bewysburo (Bureau of Proof). This ambitious device constituted the heart of Verwoerd's ambitious 'biometric state', which was perhaps unequalled in scope by any country in the world at this time.[4]

In what can be considered a prototypical case of surveillance capitalism, Verwoerd, following the slew of *apartheid*-related discriminatory legislation already in place, was looking to divide further and corrupt (for White benefit) the capacity of Black people to resist autocratic minority rule, which in effect marginalised affected populations to breaking point.[5] The angst generated by passbooks – how they came to dictate the lives of those condemned to carry them – is a point that cannot be underestimated when attempting

[4] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 63.
[5] Keith Breckenridge, *Biometric State: The Global Politics of Identification and Surveillance in South Africa, 1850 to the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 5; Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2019), 8. Regarding surveillance capitalism in a South African *apartheid* context: the *dompas* system – predicated on the encoding of fingerprints, photos, and ethnoracial classifications into passbooks – correlates to Shoshana Zuboff's description of surveillance capitalism as "the unilateral claiming of private human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data." This segues with Keith Breckenridge's argument that Hendrik Verwoerd's system functioned as "a totalizing biometric regime", its goal being to fix African mobility and labor into calculable, governable forms that foreshadowed modern-day, capitalist-oriented surveilling equivalents.

to fully understand the prevailing context against which Sharpeville happened and how its aftermath manifested.

Concerning passbooks, to know how and why the Pan-African Congress (PAC) managed to make substantive political inroads in Sharpeville requires contextual elaboration. First, a brief explication of Sharpeville and its surrounding areas can illustrate how and why *apartheid* policy managed to foment distress that served as an at-hand flint for violence.

Lodge explains that the township of Sharpeville came into being following the demolition of Topville, an old inner-city location that, due to nearby Vereeniging's wartime boom as a steel producer, had turned into an unhealthy slum that later birthed a pneumonia epidemic. While Topville's health-addled condition did, *prima facie*, qualify as a valid reason to relocate its residents, their forced removal to Sharpeville (which coincided with Vereeninging's municipal managers reclaiming Topville's land for factory-building purposes) was not universally welcomed: some residents resented being told to leave, a contingent of elderly folk was forcibly relocated to Witziehoek (a desolate rural reserve near the Basotho border), and Sharpeville was three kilometres from Vereeniging's city centre, which meant the commute to and from work for many new Sharpeville residents became a significant financial burden with bus fares having doubled in 1959. Added to this were rules prohibiting Sharpeville residents from keeping livestock, chickens, and goats (as they had done in Topville), and sharp 1959 rent rises put two thousand householders (a third of Sharpeville's tenants) in economic arrears, the reality of which, as expected, included eviction, but also the stripping of people's dignity in that rent-defaulters were not allowed to bury their dead in Sharpeville's resident cemetery.[6]

Lodge also details the situation that young people living in Sharpeville and the surrounding areas faced. Unemployed youth constituted a significant share of the local population (nearly twenty-one thousand out of the township's thirty-seven thousand residents were below the age of eighteen). This situation was compounded in that this youthful element was relatively well-educated; by 1959, there were insufficient senior high school places in nearby Vereeniging to accommodate African junior certificate holders, thus illustrating a

[6] Lodge, *Sharpeville*, 79-80.

social stratum that expected more than what was occupationally available. Also, with there being little other than menial factory work available (most of which was taken by Basotho migrant workers who industrialists preferred because they took lower wages, were housed in controlled worker's compounds, and there was less chance of them joining trade unions), by 1959 juvenile gangs had become more active, many of which preyed on commuting school pupils at the local bus station. Sadly, for those aspiring to work beyond the greater Sharpeville-Vereeniging area, hard-to-afford train fares and prohibitive passbook regulations hampered them from doing so.[7]

With omnipresent passbook-related issues swelling socio-political resentment in Sharpeville, the PAC (under Robert Sobukwe's leadership) "were certain that amongst grass-roots supporters of organised African politics, their championing of an ascriptive 'aboriginal' African identity offered emotional and moral fulfilment."[8] Lodge adds, "They (the PAC) were convinced that they could offer inspirational leadership not just to activists but to people who had hitherto held back from joining political organisations."[9] However, the PAC had not yet established an effective political foothold for its African-first mandate. Their primary opportunity to do so nationally came when the ANC chose March 31, 1960, as their date to launch an anti-passbook campaign. Realising this to be an ideal opportunity to launch their nationalist directive and score political points by beating the ANC to addressing the passbook issue, the PAC chose to launch their anti-passbook campaign ten days earlier, despite the inevitable logistical pitfalls that would accompany organising a national campaign over a spectacularly short time.

Differing narratives emerge at this point, and responsible historical curatorship becomes essential. According to anti-apartheid activists, most international observers, Tom Lodge, and other reputable historians, the mainstream narrative concerning Sharpeville describes

[7] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 340-341; Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 80-82. Glaser describes the effects that forced removals and migrant labor had on Black family life. Due to the widespread absence of fathers or father-type figures, he states that "young men, often subjected to unstable family life, poor schooling, and high levels of youth unemployment were attracted to gang life, which offered protection from other gangs, a sense of belonging, local status, and potential material gain." This factor's consistency – beginning before Sharpeville and still widely prevalent in present-day South Africa – is unquestionably a significant element behind the enduring nature of post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'.
[8] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 72.
[9] *Ibid,* 72.

that day's anti-passbook protest as largely peaceful. As outlined in this thesis's Literature Review section, Lodge's book contains interviewees' testimonies detailing violent elements preceding the massacre, the scope of which must be considered where narrative analysis is concerned. With news of the anti-passbook campaign only being announced in Sharpeville on Friday, March 18, interviewees reported that PAC 'Task Forces' (whom Lodge describes as primarily composed of "truculent unemployed teenagers who congregated around the beerhall, reputedly a hooligan element whom most householders would have regarded with apprehension")[10] employed coercive means and strong rhetoric to persuade Sharpeville's residents to join the following Monday's demonstration.[11] While Task Force sentiments undoubtedly originated from pent-up anger at being socio-economically marginalised through repressive governmental policy, their coercive methods were at odds with official PAC policy, which stated that the demonstration should happen along nonviolent lines.[12] Nevertheless, despite the Task Forces' questionable methods at getting demonstrators to join, Lodge's interviewees largely agreed that the crowd assembled outside Sharpeville police station did not wish to spill police blood; whilst anger was naturally present, it was mixed with apprehension, curiosity, and an imagined capacity for social change, all of which came to a bloodied mess when armed police started shooting into the crowd.[13]

This mainstream narrative also highlights the idea that the police used excessive force against unarmed protesters, many of whom were shot in the back while fleeing. Both logically and optically, this indicates that the protestors knew they could not match the police's weaponry and could not realistically have been considered an equal threat to what assets and options the police possessed, despite whatever grievances they may have held.

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[10] *Ibid,* 90.
[11] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 343-348. Glaser delves into the 'youthenization of crime', mentioning that "the majority of violent crime in South Africa is carried out by men between the ages of 16 and 25, with an astonishing concentration between 18 and 20." This assertion syncs with the ages of those who commandeered the PAC's Task Forces at the time of Sharpeville, and generally-speaking – both historically as in the present day – disaffected young men continue to be a driving factor behind South Africa's enduring 'culture of violence'. Adversely affected by prevailing socio-political circumstances, these youngsters engage whichever ways and means possible to improve their lives within environments that offer severely limited capacity for social and material progress.
[12] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 72.
[13] *Ibid,* 1-27.

Subsequent investigations, including those done publicly through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, largely corroborate the idea that the shootings happened deliberately rather than spontaneously. Adding to witness reports that police placed stones and knives into the hands of dead people (supposedly to diminish culpability) and of police mocking dying people with inversions of the slogans they had heard throughout the morning (including "Ja, nou gaan jy an Mayebuye-toe" ["Yes, now you are going to return"] and "Daar hey julle dit; vat dit; dit is julle Afrika daardie" ["There you have it, take it, that is your Africa]),[14] Sharpeville survivor Solomon Lesito offer his account of the day's horror:

> Nearby, another policeman known as Kobuwe went about stabbing those who were still alive. By accident he stabbed a woman who was eight months pregnant. When the woman said to the policeman 'Pini, my child, how could you?', he discovered it was his mother. In his frustration he attempted to remove his uniform, but his white colleagues refused and said: 'Jy draai hom aan, nie so nie, ons gaan jou toesluit.' (Get dressed, not that way, we'll lock you up.)[15]

The mainstream narrative also frames the events at Sharpeville as a gross violation of human rights that drew noted domestic and international attention to the *apartheid* regime's systemic brutality. The widespread condemnation that followed Sharpeville subsequently helped galvanise both domestic and international opposition to *apartheid*, particularly after the ANC and PAC's bannings caused these organisations to shift from peaceful to militant strategies to help achieve socio-political parity for all South Africans.

The National Party government's antithetical Sharpeville narrative is centred around provocation, self-defence, and minimisation of severity. As justification for the police's actions, the *apartheid* government claimed the crowd provoked the police, and thus self-defence measures were initiated. This narrative includes how the Sharpeville protestors were 'unruly', threw stones at and injured police officers, and made public calls for police-directed violence.[16] Insight into the confusion the police force purportedly experienced

[14] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 76; Lodge, *Sharpeville*, 106.
[15] Lodge, *Sharpeville*, 107-109. The extent that the police purportedly went to cover up their actions and shift the blame to the protestors is covered from pages 107 to 109 in Lodge's book. This details the police's 'ferocious *ratissage*' that saw them "investigate the township in force, on the hunt for 'troublemakers' and 'ringleaders', searching even the hospital words to which the wounded had been taken."
[16] *Ibid*, 104-105.

comes from Major Willem Van Zyl, the Vereeniging district police commander who, upon arriving at the police station, described the protesting actors as follows:

> At Sharpeville there was not one leader. There were dozens of them. Every youngster from 25 to 16 was edging [sic] them on. They made no attempt to hand themselves over, no leader came forward to say 'I am here with my men to hand myself over', as I thought they would. No passbooks were handed over, or any attempt was made to hand them over.[17]

This perceived amalgam of discontent caused the police to shoot, their justification being that they had been attacked first and were forced to counter an escalating threat. Regarding minimisation of severity, the National Party government sought to publicly downplay the event, framing it as the Sharpeville police rationally maintaining order rather than committing a massacre. Emphasis centred on the police responding to difficult circumstances (according to Lieutenant Colonel Pienaar's description to the Sharpeville Commission of Enquiry, they were up against a "frenzied mob of twenty thousand natives"), meaning that the police perceived and reacted to an increasingly dangerous situation to avert an even worse eventuality.[18]

Sharpeville's aftermath cannot be conclusively classified as existing within an exact timeframe, for its effects – at least qualitatively – arguably persist to the present day. Nevertheless, Sharpeville's immediate aftermath included banning the ANC and PAC and declaring a State of Emergency from March 30 through to August 31, 1960. Both events were predicated on and sustained by violence and would later give rise to evolving iterations of violence (expanded state repression, armed resistance movements [Umkhonto We Sizwe and Poqo], stringent pass laws, censorship, and paramilitary actions) that played out between the state and those resisting its rule.

Concerning the State of Emergency, eighty-three magisterial districts across South Africa were affected, all of which were subjected to government forces that had been granted extensive powers to suppress dissent. Said powers granted to state security apparatus

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[17] *Ibid*, 96.
[18] Aftermath: Sharpeville Massacre 1960, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/aftermath-sharpeville-massacre-1960 accessed on November 20, 2024; Lodge, *Sharpeville*, 98-104.

included detaining individuals without trial, prohibiting public gatherings of more than three people, and censoring publications deemed 'anti-state.' This abuse of power can, arguably, be considered state-sanctioned violent acts committed against those who suffered. Also, this period saw eighteen thousand people arrested, many of whom were held without access to lawyers or family members and had to endure depraved conditions of incarceration that included solitary confinement and torture. Notable political figures like the PAC's Robert Sobukwe and the ANC's Chief Albert Luthuli were also imprisoned, while influential political figures like Oliver Tambo entered exile rather than succumbing to the state's violent machinations.[19]

Just over a week into the State of Emergency, April 7 saw the *apartheid* government pass the *Unlawful Organizations Act*, which effectively banned the ANC and PAC from existing within South Africa's political spectrum. Left with little traction toward initiating political change through peaceful means, the ANC and PAC created military wings (Umkhonto We Sizwe and Poqo, respectively) to resist apartheid-induced repression. While the empirical gamut of what these military wings did per committing state-directed violent acts is pertinent to this thesis's findings, the most critical element comes via ideological change. The adoption of violent ways to fight violent measures was the fixing of a cycle – or a *culture* – of violence that saw antagonising agents caught in a manifestation of Gramsci's *Cultural Hegemony*, or endless warring state.[20] While the methods used to wage this war of political attrition brought many South Africans across the colour spectrum into the struggle and made them knowledgeable of the rampant repression happening under *apartheid*, a turning point had been reached: no longer would South Africa – within view of a watching world – be exempt from moral and economic judgment; instead, scrutiny would grow increasingly distinct, which – along with the 1976 Soweto Uprising, the armed

[19] Thompson, *A History*, 210; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 73.

[20] Antonio Gramsci, at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gramsci/ accessed on June 16, 2024; Eugenio-Enriques Cortes-Ramirez, "Cultural hegemony today. From cultural studies to critical pedagogy", *Postcolonial Directions in Education*, 4,2, 2015, 126-129. Gramsci's theory of *Cultural Hegemony* refers to how the ruling class maintains control militarily, politically, and ideologically. With the ANC and PAC creating military wings and engaging in armed struggle, this appears to satisfy the necessary conditions for Gramsci's *War of Position* and *War of Maneuver* to occur, which require antagonizing agents – ruling and subordinate – to fulfil the requisite dominant and revolutionary elements needed to legitimize struggle on the way to achieving political legitimacy.

struggles of the 1980s, and the countless sacrifices of named and unnamed South Africans – would deliver democracy in 1994, albeit it a fragile democracy constructed along fractured, unequal, and violent lines.

Root causes of violence

Apartheid – the policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by the National Party government from 1948 to 1994 and "underpinned by systemic racial domination, brutal political repression, mass pass law arrests and oppressive working conditions"[21] – was the bedrock upon which South Africa's institutionalisation of state violence occurred. Following the Herenigde National Party's 1948 ascension to the highest echelons of state power, *apartheid* policy – much of which mirrored the willful intent and design of arguably its chief architect, Hendrik Verwoerd – purposefully engineered South African society along discriminatory lines. With a slew of legislative acts essentially dividing up South Africa along racial parameters, Black South Africans were most directly affected, the result being that individuals, families, communities, and whole races were subjected to both asinine and murderous policy directives that channelled sufficient acrimony toward the state.

A cornerstone element of *apartheid* policy came in the form of passbooks, which dictated where Africans could live, work, and fraternise. Designed to separate Africans from Whites and to subjugate the former to the latter's will, passbooks became an icon of resistance against the *apartheid* regime, with an increasing number of activists and organisations condoning civil disobedience centring around either the rejection of carrying passbooks or, for added effect, burning them.[22]

The Sharpeville Massacre was built upon existing passbook-directed ire. As Tom Lodge explains, the protest leading to the massacre – organised by the PAC to capitalise on an existing nexus of local grievances that could theoretically grow the organisation's political footprint – centred around passbooks. Moreover, while the South African state using lethal force to quell protest violence was nothing new (the 1921 Bulhoek Massacre saw one-

[21] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 33.
[22] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 63; Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 1-2, 5-6.

hundred-and-eighty-three people killed and one hundred wounded, the 1949 Durban Uprising saw eighty-seven Africans shot dead by police or army, and the protest violence in and around Cato Manor between July 1959 and February 1960 reportedly played a role in the police's decision to open fire in Sharpeville), the capacity to employ lethal force – while understood by both the police and protestors' sides – became politically transformative post-Sharpeville.[23]

Splitting into divergent narratives, the post-Sharpeville institutionalisation of state violence was advantageous to the *apartheid* regime in that it could weaponise the perceived threat to what White privilege had grown under its rule and pass force-affirming legislation to safeguard this. The State of Emergency passed nine days post-Sharpeville illustrates this: thousands were imprisoned, and governmental security organs were given increased powers that, with hindsight, translated into unambiguous human rights affronts.[24] This state-driven narrative initially won over competitors in that South Africa's economy – despite international condemnation following the Sharpeville Massacre – grew substantially during Sharpeville's aftermath. As David Welsh details:

> During the tense times of March and April 1960 some believed that the revolution was at hand. Sharpeville and Langa, international condemnation, a massive outflow of capital, the failed assassination on Verwoerd on April 9, the temporary suspension of the pass laws, and evidence of doubt about policy in NP circles combined to suggest that the government was in trouble. The wobble, however, was of strictly limited duration. With Verwoerd back at the helm and a hardline new Minister of Justice, BJ Vorster, appointed in 1961, the state unleashed ferocious new powers to combat the opposition.[25]

With the White privileged elite enjoying continued economic prosperity and Henrik Verwoerd attaining republic status for South Africa in 1961, the National Party began attracting increased numbers of English-speaking Whites to its nationalist platform, the result being that in 1962, it won its best-ever election result. Armed with a growing mandate to govern the republic with state security and White privilege as cornerstone

[23] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 24-25. The Bulhoek Massacre of May 24, 1921, saw eight-hundred police fire into a crowd of members of the millenarian Israelite sect assembled on Ntabelanga Hill outside of Queenstown, killing one-hundred-and-eight-three sect members and wounding a hundred more.
[24] Thompson, *A History,* 210; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 73.
[25] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 125.

elements (made ineffably easier with the ANC and PAC banned and the majority of resistance leaders on trial, in jail, or exiled), the National Party – operating through *apartheid* policy – continued to entrench and execute institutionalised state violence on a national level, thus causing significant pain, suffering, and increased violent methodology whose effects have persisted beyond the 1994 democratic threshold and contributed both qualitatively and quantitatively to South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence'.[26]

While the degree to which the Sharpeville Massacre proved a historical turning point in the *apartheid* struggle is difficult to quantify, modern South Africa cannot deny the ideological change that happened in its aftermath.[27] First, international recognition of the massacre came via the United Nations, which passed a resolution condemning the South African government's actions that subsequently affected a growing global sentiment leaning toward imposing sanctions on the country.[28] Then, on March 30, 1960, the South African government declared a State of Emergency, leading to around eighteen thousand people being detained under the emergency regulations. In April of the same year, the ANC and the PAC were banned under the *Unlawful Organisations Act*. This banning was enormously significant in that while the ANC and PAC had encountered instances of violence before Sharpeville, these groups did not, as a point of policy, engage in or espouse violence. However, due to the state-triggered violence employed at Sharpeville and the brutality of its aftermath (underscored by the ANC and PAC's figurative political beheadings via their bannings), these organisations, along with the individuals and communities they represented, had little choice but to overhaul their personas, political strategies, and tactics.[29]

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[26] *Ibid*, 163-233. Lodge's Chapter 5 (*Aftermath: Effects and Consequences*) firmly situates the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath within the state's willingness to use violence to suppress dissent, later iterations of which manifested through the implementation of emergency laws, widespread mass arrests, and use of torture. State institutions such as the police and military were empowered to act with impunity, effectively setting the tone of a 'culture of violence' that pervaded all societal levels. This 'institutionalization of violence' grew beyond direct physical repression; psychological violence via constant surveillance and harassment of activists and their families occurred, and economic violence manifested through policies that sustained poverty and inequality among the Black majority.

[27] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 73. In Welsh's words, "Sharpeville was a seminal event that went to the heart of apartheid."

[28] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 83.

[29] Stephen Ellis, "The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948-1961", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37,4, 2011, 657-676. Ellis's article offers in-depth information regarding the

In 1961, the ANC and PAC adopted armed struggle to orient their resistance. Umkhonto we Sizwe (the ANC's armed wing, known shorthand as MK and translated as Spear of the Nation) was formed to sabotage government installations and symbols of *apartheid* power, and Poqo (the PAC's MK equivalent, translated as Pure) was formed with similar destabilising goals in mind. Along with the physical acts these armed wings initiated, they also stood as symbolic figures against the South African state, which in 1961 severed ties with the British monarchy and became a republic. This official detachment meant Prime Minister Verwoerd and the *apartheid* regime he governed could become increasingly entrenched in daily South African life, the knock-on effect of which would see White minority rule further institutionalised.[30]

With pressure growing on those left politically disenfranchised by the events of Sharpeville's aftermath, the debilitatingly small space left for peaceful dissent meant those affected had few options to express their grievances in standard democratic manners. And while Sharpeville did not catalyze immediate mass mobilization (this was more characteristic of the 1970s, with the Durban Strikes and the 1976 Soweto Uprising), it did serve as an inflection point within public consciousness; it became understood that previously pacifist organizations would have to broaden the scope of what 'resistance' meant to gain significant socio-political wins. This shift in public consciousness would, spearheaded by the ANC and PAC in later decades, materialise in the mass mobilisation underwritten by the capacity to inflict violence strategically; the understanding that violence could and *should* be condoned as a legitimate tool for political change was gaining social traction. This evolving mindset regarding violence – stoked and sustained between the state and anti-apartheid movements over forthcoming years and decades – would, on the premise of violence being a feasible way to achieve parity across social-political and economic lines, become normalised and hence contribute toward forming and sustaining the dynamics of South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence'.[31]

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creation of *Umkhonto We Sizwe*, which, over and above links to Sharpeville, also details the South African Communist Party's (SACP) involvement and influence in the proliferation of the armed struggle.

[30] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 86.

[31] Julian Brown, *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976*, (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2016).

Impact on subsequent violence

History shows that the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath had far-reaching consequences, particularly in how it altered South Africa's political trajectory and, as a South African historical touchstone, was a historical progenitor of state oppression and anti-state resistance that helped establish patterns of violence that still influence modern-day South Africa's ′culture of violence'.

With the Sharpeville Massacre being promoted to global news following the United Nations's condemnation of the event, swift and vociferously negative attention turned toward South Africa and the National Party. This scrutiny led to increased isolation, calls for sanctions against the country, heightened criticism regarding what *apartheid* was, and how – as a racially-tinted affront to human rights – it could no longer be ignored by those doing business with the country.

With significant domestic and international attention drawn to *apartheid's* myriad injustices, a strategy shift on behalf of anti-apartheid activists and resistance groups occurred. Mass protests by the politically disenfranchised became common, particularly with the government's declared State of Emergency having significantly curtailed these people's ability to voice dissent peacefully. This situation lent the ANC and PAC political feasibility and public support when shifting toward militant strategies, which the same disenfranchised masses understood as viable methods to counter increasingly oppressive state apparatus designed to grow and defend White minority rule.

As was the case during the Sharpeville era and in the present day, socio-economic disparities remain influential in sustaining South Africa's ′culture of violence'. While it was passbooks that determined the timing and nature of what happened at Sharpeville, the declared State of Emergency and subsequent oppression characterising the event's aftermath further entrenched the divide between the haves and have-nots. By galvanising state policy to defend national security (White interests) through relegating the socio-political and economic mobility of South Africa's major demographic groups, the disruption of the social and economic fabric of Black communities (primarily through fear

of violence, high unemployment rates, inadequate access to education and healthcare, and insufficient housing) further exacerbated poverty and inequality, thus leading to a sense of hopelessness and despair that, in line with South Africa's present-day economic woes, continues to stir violence as a result of anger, desire for retribution, economic desperation, or an as amalgam of these factors.[32]

Adding to Sharpeville's impact on subsequent violence is how the trauma inflicted during the massacre and its aftermath have contributed to shaping a 'desensitised' psychological element with which South Africans perceive violence.[33] With Sharpeville being essential to forming the state/anti-state cycle of violence, the constant exposure to violence – whether as a direct victim or as a witness – has been instrumental in making South Africans accept violence as an inevitable byproduct of living in an unequal, multiracial society. This legacy of 'inevitable trauma' – coupled with the adoption and normalisation of violence as a way for the government to oppress and the resistance to resist – has resulted in an understanding that violence resolves conflicts and produces results, thus contributing to the ongoing high levels of interpersonal violence, domestic violence, gang violence, and other forms of violent crime that have coalesced to form and sustain South Africa's modern-day ′culture of violence'.[34]

The Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath has been chosen as this thesis's first case study to contextualise how and why post-apartheid South Africa remains wedded to a ′culture of violence'. As a modern South African history touchstone event, the Sharpeville Massacre illuminates the brutal nature of the *apartheid* regime, both in how the oppressors were willing to use violence to maintain their rule, how violence evolved from resisting the oppressors, and what material and psychological trauma this caused within South African

[32] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 164-233.
[33] Godobo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died,* 35. Kaminer and Eagle, *Traumatic Stress in South Africa,* 8-27. While the extent to which South African society has become ‘desensitised’ to omnipresent violence is empirically difficult to verify, psychologist Godobo-Madikizela offers an inferential assessment in that, during the *apartheid* period, “Violence had become a normalized part of life. It was institutionalized, routinized, and ultimately desensitized into the cultural psyche of both victims and perpetrators.”
[34] Pandey, "Political Mobilisation", 140-141.

society to help legitimise the use of violence to the point that South Africa remains endemically violent thirty years post-apartheid.

Employing hindsight, what began as a passbook protest on a sunny March Monday in 1960 can be regarded as a historical turning point when discussing South African race relations and how these have contributed to modern-day violence. Coming to know what happened at Sharpeville that day, in the months that followed, and how everything grew into a violence-laced amalgam that eventually toppled *apartheid* is sharply relevant when decisions are made regarding future policies seeking to make South Africa less violent. By understanding Sharpeville as symbolic of South Africa's inherent social, political, and economic inequality (all of which continues to the present day), accurate historical nuance – combined with contemporary understandings and technological know-how – can be applied to inform more inclusive methodology that, with sincere and authentic attempts to address past injustices contributing to modern-day violence, can elicit equitable dialogue, efforts, and successes aiming at making South Africa a less violent country.

B. Case 2: Anti-Apartheid Resistance and State Response (1980s)

Twenty years on from the Sharpeville Massacre and with South Africa still reeling from massive nationwide violence shadowing the 1976 Soweto Uprising, the 1980s saw a surge in anti-apartheid resistance that included widespread protests, civil disobedience, and a growing international movement directed against *apartheid*, all of which happened against an omnipresent background of violence that, at times, appeared destined to lapse into a nationwide civil war.[35]

With the 1976 Soweto Uprising serving as a violent precursor, this thesis's second case study will seek to encapsulate how and why the violence characterising 1980s South Africa has played a significant role in perpetuating the ′culture of violence' still plaguing South Africa today. Charting a course that can best be conceptually understood by the *apartheid* state's 'Total Strategy' countering a perceived 'Total Onslaught', South Africa – with *apartheid* collapsing and power vacuums sliding into view – became a hotbed of violence that witnessed numerous cross-border raids, two declared States of Emergency, the rise of 'necklacing' as a murderous deterrent, and a veritable ethno-political civil war in Kwazulu-Natal that, along with the daily slew of violence playing out on televisions across the nation, led Hermann Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga to state, "The level of violence in South Africa during the 1980s exceeded that of any other decade, with the declaration of emergency rule and the militarisation of both state and society."[36]

Historical context and events

Prefacing the 1980s, it is essential to acknowledge the role the 1976 Soweto Uprising played in the struggle against the *apartheid* regime. Sparked by students protesting the imposition of Afrikaans as an enforced instructional medium in schools, the Soweto Uprising's violent fervour spread rapidly across the country as an angry wave of resistance representing the individual and collective frustrations Black South Africans felt living under *apartheid*. Chris Hani offered context in 1991:

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[35] Melander, "The Limits of Manipulation Theory", 1.
[36] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 200-203; Hermann Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 346; Melander, "The Limits of Manipulation Theory", 1-45; Schuld, "The Prevalence", 60-71.

> As usual in our country, if the police had not overreacted that revolt would not have shaken the world. But the response of the police to a really peaceful demonstration by students – the violent response – spread to other parts of the country and impacted on the world. This was a turning point in terms of the militant struggle in our country. From then on there was no turning back, we latched on. For the first time we had conditions where the young people were angry and where they had experienced the brutality and atrocities that had been perpetrated against them by the police, and they were ready to join Umkhonto We Sizwe.[37]

John Kane-Berman and David Welsh explain that the Soweto Uprising's violence mobilised a new generation of activists within South Africa and its neighbours, with many young Black South Africans fleeing the country to join the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), to resist state authority through armed struggle. This reality allowed the exiled ANC to reassert its influence in South African politics as a vessel to channel collective anger and resentment held by the resistance against the state.[38] Added to this, Kane-Berman points out the development of a new type of militant personality, the effect of which would resonate violently throughout the 1980s and decades to come:

> An equally important result was the birth of a new type of township youth, inside and outside the ANC's military formations. The explosive reaction of these youngsters in 1976 was turned within a few years into the major revolutionary impulse, which, fuelled by steadily rising unemployment, characterised the ferocious 'people's war' of the 1980s and early 1990s.[39]

By the early 1980s, the National Party-led *apartheid* government found itself locked in an escalating conflict with both internal resistance movements and external forces. To counter outside threats, in 1981, the South African Defence Force (SADF) began launching cross-border raids into neighbouring countries such as Angola and Mozambique, their targets being ANC bases and newly trained guerrilla fighters.[40] Officially framed as defensive actions against external enemies, these military exercises – over and above what violence

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[37] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 30.
[38] Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse", 110; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 170. Welsh notes that "The most important consequence of the uprising was that it breathed new life into the ANC, which, while not moribund, was certainly dispirited… By the end of 1978 MK had gained an estimated 3000 new recruits. Guerilla attacks had begun again and the ANC claimed to have established underground organization in nearly all parts of the country. A new phase of the armed struggle had begun."
[39] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 30.
[40] Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 184.

occurred between military opponents – caused significant civilian casualties, which in turn showcased the willingness of the *apartheid* regime to operate beyond the bounds of international law to maintain power. [41]

Also in the early 1980s, the ANC intensified its armed struggle against the *apartheid* regime. Between 1980 and 1985, Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) carried out over one hundred and fifty acts of sabotage, targeting power stations, military installations, and railway lines. One of the most infamous of these was the May 1983 Church Street bombing in Pretoria, which left nineteen people dead and more than two hundred injured.[42] Turning again to its violence-etched, twenty-year-old playbook to counter the broader ANC campaign that sought to destabilise the *apartheid* state and force it to the negotiating table, the *apartheid* government enacted a violent crackdown that included mass arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings.[43]

In 1983, the government introduced a Tricameral governing system (Constitution and Parliament) to defuse domestic unrest and present a veneer of political reform. Offering limited political representation for Coloured and Indian communities while continuing to exclude Black South Africans, the Tricameral system – despite receiving positive support from White voters in a November referendum – only deepened political disillusionment and exacerbated social tensions.[44] Amid the Tricameral proposal, the United Democratic

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[41] TRC Final Report – Volume 2, at https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/ accessed on November 19, 2024, 58. Regarding cross-border incursions, the SADF launched Operation Protea in August 1981, its largest mechanized operation since World War II. It aimed to install UNITA (*National Union for the Total Independence of Angola*) as the *de facto* government of southern Angola. During the operation's initial eighteen days, the SADF occupied fifty-thousand square kilometers of Cunene province, parts of which remained under occupation until 1989 to support UNITA. From January 1982, UNITA took administrative control of most of the province. Over three hundred people were killed during Operation Protea.

[42] Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse", 111; TRC Final Report – Volume 2, at https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/ accessed on November 19, 2024, 171. "In May 1983, a bomb detonated outside the South African Air Force (SAAF) headquarters in Church Street Pretoria. The following week, the SAAF launched a retaliatory raid on a suburb in Maputo, killing six people, including a child in a creche."

[43] Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation, and Apartheid* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 166; Thompson, *A History*, 224; Tutu, *No Future*, 153-154. It is estimated that between 1983 and 1986 over thirty-thousand people were detained without trial under the government's security laws, many of whom experienced torture. Extrajudicial killings also increased significantly during this period, with suspected ANC sympathizers and activists accounting for at least two hundred documented assassinations.

[44] Stephen Ellis and Tshepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 132–134. The proposed reforms offered by the 1983 Tricameral system offered limited political roles to Coloured and Indian communities and excluded Black South Africans altogether. This farcical situation galvanized the opposition further

Front (UDF) was formed, this a broad coalition of anti-*apartheid* organisations, civic groups, and trade unions that quickly became a powerful domestic force advocating for systemic change. The UDF's formation was significant in that, in the ANC's physical absence, it organised over four hundred peaceful protests and resistance campaigns between 1983 and 1987, which the state often responded to with violence. During this same period, more than twenty-five thousand people were detained without trial under emergency regulations, many of whom were UDF activists and supporters.[45] The state's heavy-handed action in this regard (along with the UDF widely endorsing the ANC and supporting the leadership of Nelson Mandela) meant many UDF members and affiliates became supportive of the broader, more militant campaign for systemic change, and in doing so, the lines between peaceful protest and armed resistance became blurred.[46]

Year-on-year through the 1980s, the *apartheid* state became increasingly violent in their efforts to stifle opposition. A notably violent flashpoint was the Vaal Triangle Uprising in September 1984, set off by the local Black Local Council's (BLC's) decision to raise rent prices in townships such as Sharpeville, Sebokeng, and Boipatong.[47] Much like the 1976 Soweto Uprising, the unrest shadowing this event quickly spread, with South Africans nationwide voicing their anger over systemic economic and social injustices. Security forces killed at least sixty people during the Uprising's initial weeks (the total death toll is likely higher given the Uprising's prolonged nature and the state's ongoing violent crackdown in the affected townships), all of which points to the state yet again choosing violence to secure its preferred status quo.[48]

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against *apartheid*, leading to increased anti-apartheid activism that included protests, strikes, and in turn, increased state repression.

[45] Jeremy Seekings, *The United Democratic Front: A History of Resistance in South Africa, 1983-1991* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 55-63.

[46] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 158.

[47] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 37; Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 280-294. Lodge's Chapter 7 *(Sharpeville and Memory)* offers a reflective comparison between 1960 Sharpeville and its reappearance in the Vaal Triangle Uprising a quarter century later.

[48] Ellis, "The Historical Significance", 272. Per Ellis's description, "In September 1984, a wave of rent boycotts and other protests broke out in the Vaal Triangle and spread rapidly, leading to violent disturbances which were met with brutal counter-methods by the Police. So intense was the conflict in Sebokeng that the SADF was deployed in the township, which did much to sharpen the always latent antagonism between rival security forces."

Also in 1984, education-related violence surged during extensive school boycotts organised under the slogan 'Liberation before Education,'[49] this sentiment encapsulating what students felt as they protested apartheid-tinged indoctrination within the education system. With schools becoming arenas of political activism and sites of clashes with police, the disruption in schooling heightened frustration and radicalised many youths, thus fueling township unrest and anti-apartheid sentiment.[50] The shunning of education also birthed a dangerous precedent – that of the 'Young Lions' – which came to describe militant youth emerging as township protest leaders, often under the influence of UDF and ANC directives. Thokozani Xaba explains:

> Being referred to as a 'young lion' or 'liberator' was an intoxicating and psychologically satiating accolade. This was especially so to young men who were members of a group with low social status where accolades of any kind were hard to come by. The accolades would have given any young man an idea of himself that was disproportionate to reality. Such accolades also came along with the kind of power and respect which attracted women to men. As such, 'young lions', especially those in leadership positions, were coveted by women."[51]

Spiking during school boycotts, township uprisings, and protests against government-imposed rent hikes, the leadership and tone of these 'Young Lions' – along with the state-directed ire they represented – charted a more aggressive form of anti-state resistance, which in turn further fueled the frequency and intensity of the resistance's confrontations with the state.[52]

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[49] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 53; Pandey, "Political Mobilisation", 139. Marks and Andersson mention the slogan "No education before liberation" while Pandey uses "Revolution now, education later".

[50] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 347-348. Describing the role of education in catalyzing violence, Glaser notes that "By the mid-1970s Bantu Education became so discredited that it eventually sparked rebellion… While the black education system fell apart – most of the best teachers left the profession, schooling became tainted by 'collaboration', boycotts became almost routine – political movements of the youth gained in stature… In many townships across South Africa older residents had to accept the political leadership of the youth."

[51] Thokozani Xaba, "Masculinity and Its Malcontents: The Confrontation between 'Struggle Masculinity' and 'Post-Struggle Masculinity' (1990–1997)", in Robert Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001), 110.

[52] Jeremy Seekings, "Heroes or Villains? Youth Politics in the 1980s", *Third World Quarterly*, 14,3, 1993, 425; Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 88. Seekings offers Young Lions context by stating, "The 'Young Lions' emerged not simply as a product of ANC rhetoric, but as a reflection of the intense political frustration and radicalization of a generation born into the chaos of apartheid's crisis years." Kane-Berman notes, via an excerpt from a 1993speech by Black writer Nomavenda Mathiane in Italy that, per the 'Young Lions' culture, "Political organisations have created monsters they cannot control. In the interests of mobilization, they gave

A year after 1984's Vaal Triangle Uprising, South Africa was gripped by intensifying political violence. By mid-1985, at least eight hundred and seventy-nine people had lost their lives, predominantly during confrontations between police forces and protestors.[53] Amidst growing fears of an impending civil war, state security forces abducted, tortured, and assassinated the Cradock Four – Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto, and Sicelo Mhlauli. This state-sponsored extrajudicial killing – detailed by its perpetrators during TRC hearings – was part of a broader strategy to eliminate influential anti-apartheid leaders and sow fear among communities, all geared toward intimidating the resistance in the face of state-resourced terror.[54] The effect of the Cradock Four's murder at the hands of the state is mentioned in Antjie Krog's book *Country of My Skull,* where she recounts a discussion with a certain Professor Kondwe from Grahamstown, who summarised the symbolism of their execution:

> The funeral of the Cradock Four on July 20 1985 changed the political landscape of the country forever. It was like a raging fire. ANC and SACP flags were defiantly displayed, buses and buses full of people turned up – a state of emergency was declared. But in a sense it was the real beginning of the end of apartheid.[55]

Other events also underscored the regime's reliance on violence as a tool of suppression. March 1985's Langa Massacre near the Eastern Cape town of Uitenhage saw police open fire on demonstrators, killing many and wounding dozens.[56] Similarly, the targeted assassination of human rights lawyer Victoria Mxenge (wife of anti-apartheid lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, assassinated in 1981) highlighted the state's focus on silencing

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the children the power to disrupt life – they used them to enforce boycotts, work stayaways, etc. etc. and having tasted that power, they are not about to give it up. These children are now a threat to democracy."
"The 'Young Lions' emerged not simply as a product of ANC rhetoric, but as a reflection of the intense political frustration and radicalization of a generation born into the chaos of apartheid's crisis years."

[53] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 160.

[54] Derek Charles Catsam, "'Permanently Removed from Society': the Cradock Four, the TRC, Moral Judgments, Historical Truth, and the Dilemmas of Contemporary History", *Historia Actual Online*, 7, 2005, 135-137; Tutu, *No Future*, 130-132; TRC Final Report – Volume 2, at https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/ accessed on November 20, 2024, 227-228.

[55] Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 58.

[56] Robert J. Thornton, "The shooting at Uitenhage, South Africa, 1985: the context and interpretation of violence", *American Ethnologist*, 17,2, 1990, 217-222. In March 1985, police opened fire on a crowd of protesters in the Langa township near Uitenhage, killing at least twenty people.

prominent activists.[57] Incidents like these elicited sharp international condemnation, exposing the *apartheid* government's violent repression to viewing global masses.

In response to the mounting unrest exacerbated by the ANC's implementation of its 'People's War' strategy, the South African government declared a State of Emergency on July 20, 1985. Aimed at rendering the country ungovernable, the ANC's strategy combined mass protests, armed resistance, and widespread political mobilisation to destabilise the *apartheid* regime and force its collapse.[58] In Thabo Mbeki's words:

> The general orientation of the armed struggle up to this point has been what we have called 'armed propaganda'… Now it is necessary to move beyond that point, it is necessary to move to what we call 'people's war'. We're saying this now because there is not only a mass popular opinion in favour of armed struggle – there is a mass popular willingness to carry it out.[59]

To counter the 'People's War' threat, the declared State of Emergency granted state security forces extensive powers that included being able to detain individuals without trial, enforce curfews and restrict movement, search and seize property without a warrant, and use enhanced force in terms of torture, beatings, and assassinations, all of which was supplemented by banning and censorship capacities that could be used when deemed necessary. Empowered by these sweeping measures, security forces intensified their crackdown efforts, deploying widespread violence and coercion to disrupt and disband anti-apartheid networks and terrorise communities whose sympathies lay with the liberation movement.[60]

At the height of 1985's township unrest, the practice of 'necklacing' became prominent. Widely used as a punishment for alleged informants or collaborators with *apartheid*

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[57] Mlungisi Griffiths Mxenge and Victoria Nonyamezelo, at https://www.presidency.gov.za/mlungisi-griffiths-mxenge-and-victoria-nonyamezelo, accessed on November 3, 2024; TRC Final Report – Volume 2, at https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/ accessed on November 20, 2024), 229-230. A prominent anti-apartheid lawyer, Griffiths Mxenge was murdered on November 19, 1981, by members of the *apartheid* government's death squad. His wife, Victoria Mxenge, also an anti-*apartheid* activist and lawyer, was attacked and killed by four men (in front of her children) in the driveway of her home in Umlazi, Durban, on August 1, 1985.

[58] Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse", 107. Stemmet mentions the 'people's war' strategy rested on four pillars: mass mobilization; organization of a political underground; armed struggle; and internationalisation of the *apartheid* issue and the isolation of the *apartheid* state.

[59] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 273.

[60] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 41-48; Max Coleman, "A Crime Against Humanity: Analysing the Repression of the Apartheid State", *Human Rights Committee*, 1998, 101–103.

authorities, particularly during the State of Emergency, 'necklacing' encapsulated the fear, distrust, and acrimony felt within anti-apartheid communities.[61] Meted out at the behest of township leaders (with 'Young Lions' notably involved), this vigilante-style 'justice' could be applied when and wherever deemed necessary by its practitioners, meaning it could be used as easily to settle personal scores as it could be justified as political justice in the name of the liberation cause.[62]

Also in 1985, open conflict between Inkatha supporters and ANC/UDF-aligned communities erupted, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and urban areas with migrant Zulu populations. Viewing the ANC and UDF as a threat to its regional power base (and with differing ideological orientations per how South Africa's political future should unfold), Inkatha employed violence to suppress ANC support. Accordingly, an increased number of violent confrontations occurred, with Inkatha attacks on ANC-aligned communities often marked by intimidation, arson, and killings.[63] Offering insight into the nature of this violent rivalry, Morris and Hindson state:

> The weakening of state control in the aftermath of the township uprisings of the mid-1980s led instead to the formation of competing local centres of power within the black residential areas. In Natal these often took the form of youth structures (mostly allied to the ANC) and warlords (allied to Inkatha) as well as a range of other more minor political groupings and

[61] Krog, *Country of My Skull,* 63. Commenting on TRC proceedings, Krog adds as a footnote "It has been said before the Truth Commission that the first necklacing – of Maki Skosana – was instigated by third force elements, because there were no television cameras on hand that immediately broadcast this terrible brutality around the world."

[62] Seekings, "Heroes or Villains", 430-432. It is important to note that so-called 'popular justice', often delivered through hastily assembled and emotionally-charged 'people's courts' or 'kangaroo courts', was a controversial feature of 1980's township resistance. While advocates (mostly young, including 'Young Lions') of this type of 'justice' maintained that these systems helped purge 'collaborators' and upheld 'revolutionary discipline', they could also be used to settle personal vendettas, which, mostly along generational lines, caused tensions relating to communal, ideological, and liberation-oriented morality and integrity.

[63] Ellis, "The Historical Significance", 261-264; Melander, "The Limits of Manipulation Theory", 31. Melander details the animosity between the ANC and Inkatha, describing how Inkatha's Mangosuthu Buthelezi accused the ANC's advocacy of 'necklacing' as brutality exceeding that of the police, and how two ANC exiles speaking at California State University in 1985 said, "Among us we have people [Inkatha] who have openly collaborated with the enemy [the state]… They have to be eliminated. We want to make the death of a collaborator so grotesque that people will never think of collaborating." Ellis, meanwhile, describes how the Inkatha-ANC conflict was useful for the *apartheid* government to further legitimize the use of force to suppress 'intra-Black' violence.

> factions. This gave rise to local, regional and national struggles for hegemony in the urban areas between these competing power centres.[64]

South Africa in 1986 saw additional violence centred around a second State of Emergency, declared in June.[65] Via deployment of military resources to townships, carrying out mass arrests and assassinating activists, the *apartheid* government intensified its efforts to quash resistance acts and groups. One case study relating to township-based violence played out in Alexandra Township in February during what became known as the 'Six-Day War'.[66] Following a funeral made fractious by police intervention, ensuing battles between township residents and security forces saw violence responsible for at least forty deaths and over four hundred injuries. Karen Jochelson offers contextualisation:

> … the spark that set fire to the township was the funeral of an unemployed youth attended by over 11,000 people on February 15 1986. When police used teargas to disperse mourners, youths retaliated and took to the streets armed with petrol bombs and dustbin lids. Over the following few days, a civil war raged within the township, popularly baptised the 'six-day war'. Youths pitted themselves against the SADF, SAP and township collaborators. Police reported they were fired at by armed residents. Frequent targets of popular anger were councillors. West Rand Development Board employees, municipal police and black policemen who fled the township on February 17.[67]

Also, in 1986, an evolved form of the 'Young Lions' mentality that arose two years previously surfaced: the *comtsotsi*. Initially aligned with the liberation struggle, some youth

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[64] Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence", 50-53. Morris and Hindson delve into the nature of the Inkatha-ANC conflict, including how the Inkatha-led militarization of Natal shack-dwellers, primarily to supply conscripts for *impi* [Zulu warrior] raiding parties, was based on the promise of living better material lives by doing so. It appears that material benefits, particularly in as unequal a country as South Africa, has been the impetus for much conflict and a cornerstone element in the development of South Africa's 'culture of violence'.

[65] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 240. Dubow describes the 1986 State of Emergency as a "major escalation that went significantly further than the September 1985 state of emergency… During the second state of emergency, the state detained more than 25,000 people, perhaps more than all the detentions combined since 1960 (estimates vary widely)."

[66] Belinda Bozzoli, "The Taming of the Illicit: Bounded Rebellion in South Africa, 1986", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46,2, 2004, 328-332; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 63. Bozzoli describes the Six-Day War as "a six-day period of ghetto revolt, during which old definitions of space were radically disrupted by the use of fire, bombs, stones, whistles, crowd energy, the moving of gangs down the streets, and the introduction of random violence. The latter included the killing of policemen and local councilors and the burning of their homes. The previously predictable street life of residents was now transformed into a disturbingly unpredictable, unforgettable time of horror."

[67] People's power and state reform in Alexandria, at https://www.sahistory.org.za/search?s=Karen%20Jochelson#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=Karen%20Jochelson&gsc.page=1 accessed on November 24, 2024.

activists (comrades) became involved in criminal activities under the guise of political activism (tsotsis). Not unexpectedly, this development further complicated township dynamics as already-stressed communities – having to contend with state-sponsored violence – now also had to deal with violent local thugs claiming to be part of the resistance yet exploiting the struggle for personal gain. As the line between activism and criminality became increasingly blurred, further tension and mistrust arose within communities, leaving those caught up in violently-addled circumstances having to accept, live with, and possibly employ violence as a daily part of living.[68]

Government-wise, 1986 saw the state establish the demure-sounding Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB), which was a unit within the South African Defence Force (SADF) tasked with carrying out assassinations, sabotage, and psychological operations that targeted anti-apartheid activists both domestically and internationally. Tying into the 'Third Force' paradigm and often collaborating with Vlakplaas, the CCB was involved in targeted killings and destabilisation tactics in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and other African nations where ANC members sought refuge.[69] Notable examples of the CCB's reach include the 1988 car bombing of ANC activist Albie Sachs in Maputo, Mozambique, and its implication in the 1989 assassination of Namibian anti-apartheid activist Anton Lubowski in Windhoek, all of which further indicate the state's willingness to sustain and proliferate a 'culture of violence' to maintain its preferred status quo.[70]

Continuing with the 'Third Force' paradigm, 1986 saw *apartheid* security forces – atop existing animosity between Inkatha and the ANC – covertly support Inkatha to destabilise and weaken the ANC and other liberation groups' resistance momentum. Via 'Third Force' channels, the state provided Inkatha with weapons, training, and intelligence, thus effectively turning the group into a paramilitary force against the ANC and United Democratic Front (UDF) members.[71]

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[68] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 340.
[69] Ellis, "The Historical Significance", 274-280; Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse", 106.
[70] History in the active voice, at https://africasacountry.com/2014/03/whitehistorymonth-counter-revolutionary-agents-in-apartheid-south-africa/ accessed on November 21, 2024.
[71] Ellis, "The Historical Significance", 261-299. Ellis's article provides a thorough explanation of the 'Third Force', charting its origins from organizing personnel via cross-border incursions (Rhodesia, Angola,

In response to government-sponsored violence, 1987 saw the ANC intensify its armed struggle, Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) carrying out a series of bombings and sabotage operations aimed at state infrastructure.[72] One of MK's most significant operations was the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court bombing, which killed three people and injured dozens.[73] Following this, the government again reverted to violent type and reciprocated with repression that included continued covert operations and state-sponsored vigilante violence such as the *Witdoeke* attacks. Carried out in Cape Town's Crossroads township, the *Witdoeke* (a conservative vigilante group marked by white armbands and backed by the state) attacked ANC and UDF supporters, particularly those resisting forced removals. Characterised by violent assaults that included arson and shootings (with police forces either complicit or deliberately inactive), the *Witdoeke* attacks were responsible for hundreds of deaths and the displacement of over sixty thousand people due to entire neighbourhoods being destroyed.[74] Marks and Andersson mention that the state used this violent episode to move displaced Crossroads squatters to the new Black township of Khayelitsha, an act these people had long resisted.[75]

Between 1987 and 1989, violence in South Africa escalated dramatically. Often backed by state forces, Inkatha militants targeted ANC-aligned activists, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and migrant hostels in Johannesburg.[76] With the 'Third Force' continuing to manipulate conflicts to destabilise communities and further discredit the ANC by fostering a narrative of intra-Black violence (which proved a handy propaganda tool for the *apartheid* government to justify enforcing harsher security measures), violence raged on

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Mozambique) to counter insurgency efforts (C1 Vlakplaas Death Squad, CCB) to clandestine, amorphous roles in stoking intra-Black violence to destabilize communities and undermine anti-apartheid resistance.

[72] Stemmet, "Apartheid and the Anticipation of Apocalypse," 111. Stemmet writes that MK executed two hundred attacks in 1987 and two-hundred-sixty-two in 1988.

[73] Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid*, 187–188. On May 20, 1987, MK operatives detonated a car bomb outside the Magistrate's Court in Johannesburg. Focusing on a symbol of *apartheid's* judicial system, the attack caused widespread controversy due to its civilian casualties and the extensive property damage it caused.

[74] Coleman, "A Crime Against Humanity", 225-227; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 219-220; Thompson, *A History*, 229.

[75] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 38-54.

[76] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 338-339. In addition to ethnic-based violence played out between ANC and Inkatha mine workers, Glaser delves in the ‘culture of violence’ prevalent within the greater mine worker context, including “…the harshness of living conditions in mine compounds and hostels; the cheapness of life in mine employment; the sense of male powerlessness which leads to sexual violence, and the abuse of drugs and alcohol resulting from the stresses of apartheid life.”

multiple fronts, and with *apartheid* growing increasingly untenable, infighting between rival resistance factions created a sense that the country was quickly spiralling toward civil war.[77]

Drivers of violence during this period

Myriad elements drove 1980s violence, all of which were essentially linked to the oppressive nature of *apartheid* policies, the state's repressive measures, and conflicting anti-apartheid movement internal dynamics that caused things to spiral out of control.

More so than any factor, the violent core of 1980s South Africa lay in the *apartheid* system's effects and the systemic violence that existed within its myriad discriminatory policies. A society built upon normalised racism, gross economic inequalities, and the denial of fundamental rights could never feasibly expect to hold back the undeniable sense of desperation and frustration that many South Africans held, much of which would be channelled and released as violent action in the 1980s.

If *apartheid* was the heart of societal discord, the state – particularly the National Party – was the brains. The fact that the state was willing to conduct cross-border raids into Angola and Mozambique from the early 1980s indicates how dedicated it was to maintaining its *apartheid* status quo. Declaring States of Emergency in 1985 and 1986 further empowered the state's security forces to use extreme measures to maintain order, and the totality of this – the shootings, arrests, and torture – undoubtedly added fuel to the anger and resistance felt by the oppressed, thus setting up a violent counterbalance to the threat that the state posed, which in turn propagated the normalisation of a ′culture of violence'.

While the state was undoubtedly the source of the ongoing violent schematic, an examination of what internal conflicts existed within the anti-apartheid movement is also necessary. Internal divisions caused by disagreements over strategies, ideologies, and leadership often led to violence among anti-apartheid groups, which in turn contributed to

[77] Hamber, "'Have no doubt", 6. Commenting on late-1980s South Africa, Hamber states that "South African society was placed under continual stress of potential violence, either through acts of sabotage as the liberation movement resisted state control, or as was more often the case, through living in dangerous, tumultuous and tightly policed townships. By the 1990s the term 'culture of violence' was frequently used to describe the conflict that had enveloped South African society. The pervasive nature of this violence seeped into all parts of public life, undermining the moral, interpersonal and social fabric of society."

a complex and fractured resistance whose effects linger to the present day. Analysis of this entails understanding what divisions existed between anti-apartheid organisations during the 1980s, with noted emphasis on the political interplay happening between and within the ANC-UDF, Inkatha, and BCM-aligned groups such as AZAPO. From this veritable historical smorgasbord, one insightful element emerging, as described by Von Holdt, is South Africa as a 'violent democracy', this referring to fierce and often violent competition for state resources and local political power. Whether this translates as members of the same political party assassinating each other to achieve political superiority (and accordant patronage links) or clientelist networks rooted in earlier factional alignments involved in influencing local government, land disputes, or service delivery logistics, it appears the legacies of intra-movement rivalries continue to play a role in fomenting elements of South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence'.[78]

The anti-apartheid movement should not be recognised as a cohesive whole; instead, it was a range of political ideologies populating the political spectrum. While moderate groups like the United Democratic Front (UDF) publicly advocated for a nonviolent path toward ending *apartheid* (only to be inevitably drawn into the decade's pervasive violence), the ANC (aligned with the South African Communist Party [SACP] and influenced by Marxist-Leninist thought) considered a future South Africa as a socialist state. The IFP, on the other hand, appeared complicit in the *apartheid* government's plans, particularly per its TRC-reported engagement with 'Third Force' actors and agencies as it sought to destabilise the ANC and find its niche within South Africa's political future.[79]

Adding complication to South Africa's future political orientation was the influence of Black Consciousness movements (such as Steve Biko's), which, prior to being banned in 1977, emphasised Black self-reliance and rejected working with White liberal groups, thus situating ideologically against the ANC's more integrationist-leaning stance.[80] With South

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[78] Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 589-604.

[79] Tutu, *No Future*, 176-177. Tutu details one Inkatha/'Third Force' arrangement discussed at the TRC hearings, in which police captain Brian Mitchell gave an order to a group of 'special constables' to attack ANC-aligned UDF supporters. These 'kitskonstabels' [*kits* meaning 'instant' in Afrikaans, referring to the minimal training they'd received] misunderstood their orders and attacked the wrong target, which caused them to kill eleven innocent people a vigil held at Trust Feed Farm.

[80] Debby Bonnin, "Political Violence – Disrupting Ways of 'Doing' Politics: An Exploration of Organisational and Political Life in Mpumalanga Township, 1970s-1980s", *Journal of Natal and Zulu*

Africa's political future at stake, these ideological rifts catalysed significant tensions regarding what kind of society would emerge post-apartheid, and as competing visions of democracy, socialism, and Black autonomy all vied for socio-political relevance, violence – to promote or undermine causes – was understood and utilised as an advantageous political tool.

Regarding strategic disagreements concerning achieving liberation, the ANC – through its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) – adopted an armed struggle, conducting sabotage operations from the 1960s onward. Moreover, while it would appear that armed struggle against the state would work better if conducted cooperatively, the PAC and its armed wing, Poqo (which in 1968 became the Azanian People's Liberation Army [APLA]), often clashed with the ANC on both strategic and ideological grounds, the PAC advocating for a more Africanist-oriented militant approach that promoted African identity over the ANC's more inclusive stance. At the other end of the political spectrum, nonviolent resistance (championed within the UDF by influential figures like Walter Sisulu's wife, Albertina Sisulu) also caused friction, especially with the ANC (utilising Radio Freedom to disseminate violent anti-state rhetoric) formulating its 'People's War' strategy as an effective way to meet state brutality.[81] Thus, differences over what violence meant, symbolised, and could achieve – played out between visible mass mobilisation and underground resistance – shaped the identity and tactics of various competing resistance factions, leading to noted disunity that often turned violent.

Alongside ideological and strategic conflicts, ethnic, cultural, and regional differences also drove 1980s violence. One of the most enduring examples of this can be cognised through the role of Inkatha. Representing the Zulu ethnic group's interests and often in direct conflict with the ANC and its more national, multi-ethnic focus, Inkatha started as a part of the anti-apartheid struggle but increasingly collaborated with the *apartheid* state's

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History 29,1, 2011, 101-130; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 153-156. Bonnin's article provides background information on AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation), which acted as the 'successor' to the BCM-aligned groups following their banning in the late 1970s.

[81] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence*, 70-72. Kane-Berman writes that "The object of all wars, just and unjust, is to kill the enemy. In fact, Radio Freedom explicitly called for the elimination of collaborators, puppets, sellouts, and the like. By hanging the deadliest of all political labels around its opponents' necks, Radio Freedom and others put them beyond the pale."

homeland structures and security apparatus, despite the group formally rejecting nominal independence for KwaZulu. Inkatha's strategic political alignment in this case – along with the multi-tiered ethnic, cultural, and regional differences separating it and the ANC – played a significant part in intra-Black conflict that, historically speaking, added to establishing a 'culture of violence' in the 1980s. This assertion is supported by empirical evidence in that between 1984 and 1994, an estimated fifteen to twenty thousand people died due to Inkatha-ANC-related violence.[82]

By coming to a thorough understanding of the drivers of violence during 1980s South Africa, it is possible to recognise patterns that have contributed to violence both then and in the present day. At the heart of all societal discord were the National Party's *apartheid* policies, the machinations of which undermined everyone they did not represent on equal socio-economic terms. This systemic racial bias naturally catalysed resistance, the sum of which – through ideological, political, and economic differences – could not gel cohesively enough to put up a united resistance front but, instead, incited intra-Black violence that caused innumerable deaths and suffering while setting in motion gears of socio-economic structural trauma that still plague South Africa in the form of a modern-day 'culture of violence'.

Links to the Sharpeville Massacre and post-1994 violence

With the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre serving as this thesis's first case study, it is essential to understand how the massacre and its aftermath have played a role in exacerbating violence throughout 1980s South Africa and beyond.

[82] Berkeley, "The 'New' South Africa", 73-80; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 217-218; Morris and Hindson, "South Africa: Political Violence", 49-50; Rupert Taylor, "Justice Denied: Political Violence in Kwazulu-Natal after 1994", *African Affairs,* 101,405, 2002, 473-508. Other than offering an IFP history and situating it within South Africa's political spectrum, Berkeley's article describes the 1995 Shobashabane Christmas Day Massacre in Kwazulu-Natal. Detailing how "…an Inkatha *impi*, or war party, comprising some 2000 Zulus wielding spears, clubs and knives, attacked Shobashabane at dawn," it is quickly made evident that intra-Black violence continued beyond the 1994 election, the how and why of which correlates with this thesis's aim of uncovering the details of South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence'. Taylor's article – which along with the Shobashabane massacre also describes post-apartheid Inkatha-ANC violence in Richmond and Nongoma – situates the post-election violence as follows: "…post-apartheid political violence has been systematically overdetermined, and fuelled, by a failure to confront past wartime divisions and their legacy. Cases of violence can be directly traced back to, and are contaminated by, and interconnected through, the 'unofficial' war between Inkatha and the ANC."

Arguably, the Sharpeville Massacre's defining element was the use of violence to suppress dissent; the reality of sixty-nine dead and one hundred and eighty injured stands as an empirical reflection upon the historical record. The cowardly symbolism of many victims being shot in the back while trying to escape police fire catalysed further resentment toward what grew into an armed struggle and later a mass mobilised resistance, all of which came to a second historical head with the 1976 Soweto Uprising that saw more death and destruction occurring along racial lines throughout South Africa.

At the start of the 1980s, it appeared clear that the *apartheid* state realised its need to reform for present and future security, but it never intended to relinquish power. PW Botha's 1983 Tricameral proposal was a headline reform example that fell flat due to its exclusive nature, backed up by the reality that the state was sponsoring cross-border incursions to seek out and destroy vast numbers of Black South Africans who had escaped to neighbouring Southern African countries after 1976 to train for and assist the resistance. Like many examples of the state using its pronounced resources to quash resistance (some of which have been detailed in this thesis), these acts were macro examples of how the Sharpeville Massacre had played out twenty years prior. On the other hand, the oppressed – who had become (partly) educated, urbanised, and hence could no longer tolerate living in a diminished manner – realised that the world was now watching South Africa. As such, it used channels centring on the UDF/ANC to mobilise and meet the state with mass resistance, aware that what it lacked in military power, it made up for in moral and attritional fortitude. Also, knowledgeable that the South African economy was in trouble and the state needed to handle domestic affairs with an eye to how these affected foreign relations, an opportunity existed to oust the *apartheid* government in favour of a new ruling regime. Collaborative resistance, however, was never unanimously attained as ideological, political, and ethnic discrepancies (most clearly understood through the Inkatha-ANC prism of violence) brought additional bloodshed to a pronouncedly violent period of South African history.

Regarding post-1994 violence, the 1980s – primarily characterised by state-sponsored violence meeting anti-apartheid resistance violence – has played a notably significant role in constructing and sustaining social systems that exacerbate modern-day violence. The

combined effects of the armed struggle, internal conflicts regarding ideological differences, ethnicity, and what would be best for South Africa (as well as what coercive and violence-centred strategies were adopted and let loose by the state and the resistance in the 1980s) have thwarted South Africa from becoming more peaceful in the post-apartheid era. While violence has long shadowed South African history, it is from 1960's Sharpeville Massacre through 1976's Soweto Uprising and into the 1980s that a 'culture of violence' – born from the implementation of *apartheid* and resistance efforts against it – has grown and left lasting physical and psychological harm, the sum of which continues to impede the country's post-apartheid trajectory.

The 1980s anti-apartheid resistance era was a violently multi-layered period that, academically, is essential to constructing a history that accurately reflects South Africa's struggle for freedom. With the decade's violent parameters significantly influenced by the events and aftermaths characterising the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and 1976 Soweto Uprising, the 1980s serves as a bridge linking *apartheid's* initial designs on the use of violence to quash dissent through subsequent iterations, the sum of which found an apex in the late 1980s leading toward the 1994 democratic elections.

What is most pertinent to this thesis is how and why the violence played out as it did, for it is within the forms and functions of South Africa's violence that empirical data can be gained per how these domains continue to fuel post-apartheid's 'culture of violence'. Whether citing violent trauma, widespread paranoia, economic devastation, or the socio-cultural upending that South Africa dealt with in the 1980s, it is no overstatement that 1980s drivers of violence still fuel violence today, albeit in different forms that deviate (but still find causal links) to the mainly politically-motivated violence of that decade. Additionally, if future research can further delineate the how and why elements of 1980s violence, academics, policymakers, and others with a vested interest in South Africa's future will be better equipped to understand, and hence contend with, South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence', and in doing so they could perhaps find relevant and contemporary ways to make the country a less violent place.

C. Case 3: Post-1994: Contemporary Violence and the TRC's Shortcomings

Contemporary violence and its manifestations

Despite thirty years of post-apartheid Black-majority rule, South Africa remains an intrinsically violent place coloured by interpersonal, criminal, gender-based, vigilante, xenophobic, political, and other forms of violence. This violence-tinged legacy can be traced back to the structural and symbolic violence embedded in South Africa's modern history, most notably from the 1960s Sharpeville Massacre period to the 1980s anti-apartheid unrest, as well as up to and beyond the 1994 democratic elections.

While the political violence that marked South Africa's history from the 1960s to 1994 is no longer as commonplace, it has been replaced by high levels of interpersonal and criminal violence widely attributed to the country's entrenched socio-economic inequalities and a sense of disillusionment instilled in South Africa's population during the *apartheid* era. The distrust formed between citizens and law enforcement (not to mention between fellow citizens) during that six-decade-long period still exists, and it is upon this and other elements of the country's violent history that modern-day grievances – often solved with criminal bloodletting – exist.[83]

Of multiple types of violence, South Africa in recent years has been cast in an unfortunate light due to gender-based violence, which appears to be rooted in earlier periods of conflict.[84] The militarisation of South African society during the *apartheid* years (most notably during the 1980s) fostered a culture of hyper-masculinity that persists today, much of which manifests in widespread domestic abuse and violence against women. As an extrapolation of the 'young lions' and 'comtsoti' social templates that took the law into

[83] Burger, "To Protect and Serve", 13-22; Kaminer and Eagle, *Traumatic Stress in South Africa*, 13-15; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 39-41; Van Der Spuy and Shearing, "Curbing the Killing Fields", 194-195.

[84] Kaminer and Eagle, *Traumatic Stress in South Africa*, 16-21. Chapter 2 (*Patterns of Trauma Exposure in South Africa)* of Kaminer and Eagle's book contains a gender-based violence section. Other than citing points like most gender-based violence incidents go unreported and, in 1995, South Africa, was labelled (per a Human Rights Watch report) as 'the rape capital of the world', an additional element propagating South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence' is the disturbingly high incidence of childhood sexual abuse, with it being mentioned that "in 2004 more than forty percent of all rapes reported to the police, and nearly half of indecent assaults, were perpetrated against children. In numbers this amounted to almost 25,000 children, and since only one in twenty cases of child sexual abuse are reported, it is likely that between 400,000 and 500,000 children are raped in South Africa every year."

their own hands while a *de facto* civil war raged on in South Africa forty years ago, the normalisation of violent behaviour that dominated that time has contributed to the persistence of violent acts as acceptable expressions of power and frustration in modern South Africa.[85]

Vigilantism is another form of violence that, due to mostly right-wing-based efforts to enforce order outside the law, has repeatedly made news headlines in the post-apartheid era. While the state-supported *Witdoeke*-Crossroads episode of 1986 holds a firm place in South African history due to the deaths, destruction, and forced removals that it caused, vigilantism – symbolically identified by the 'necklacing' method used to execute 'collaborators'[86] in South African townships during the 1980s – rages on. This reality is evident in that 'Operation Dudula', a political party running on a violence-backed, anti-foreigner mandate, has established sufficient social traction to have been publicly condemned by South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, despite he and his government overseeing a policing administration that appears unable to prevent or combat criminal activity to the point that individuals and communities prefer to settle personal or communal scores on their own.[87]

While political violence, *prima facie,* cannot be considered the essential driving force that it was in driving South African violence during the *apartheid* era, it continues to exist and

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[85] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 339-348; Susan Booysen, "Mass media, social networks and the political socialization of South Africa's white student", *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa* 10,1, 1991, 58-84. Booysen's article deals with the informational interfaces that white South Africans encountered during the *apartheid* era. Considering how strictly the state – particularly in a politicised sense – controlled the media during that period, it is understandable how and why White South Africans also indulged in violent activities, whether these were backed by state organs (SADF, SAP), aided and abetted by the state in the form of 'death squads' (Civil Cooperation Bureau [CCB], Vlakplaas), religious teachings emphasizing the 'special status' of Whites (SADF bibles were, at a point, edited to support state-sanctioned killing), or other violent manifestations.

[86] In the context of 1980s South African violence, the term 'collaborators' refers to Black individuals or groups that were perceived to aid, abet, or align themselves with the *apartheid* state or any of its agencies or policies.

[87] Berkeley, "The 'New' South Africa", 73–80; Gottschalk, "Vigilantism v. the State", 14; Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 65-78; Nkateko Mabasa, "South Africa's Operation Dudula vigilantes usher in new wave of xenophobia", *Al Jazeera,* September 26, 2023, at https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/9/26/south-africas-operation-dudula-vigilantes-usher-in-new-wave-of-xenophobia accessed on January 22, 2024.

catalyse tremendously detrimental effects.[88] Whether citing political assassinations, 'service delivery' protests that are often used as a front to oust political incumbents (and henceforth benefit from political patronage), or safeguarding political-business interests (such as in the case of 2012's Marikana Massacre), South Africa remains an endemically violent place, the how and why of which are essential to answering this thesis's research questions.

Connections to earlier periods of violence

The Sharpeville Massacre and 1980s anti-apartheid violence serve as critical antecedents to the violence currently characterising post-apartheid South Africa's 'culture of violence'. The trauma, distrust, and violent legacies associated with these events have produced intergenerational effects, the sum of which has led to a commonly held understanding that violence is an acceptable and strategic element of life.[89]

The police brutality exhibited at Sharpeville left an enduring impression that the state, rather than an entity of protection, could be an entity of repression. This sentiment, subsequently violently rammed home over decades of discriminatory legislation, practices, and law enforcement, has generated a deep, intergenerational mistrust among many South Africans towards law enforcement authorities, manifest in that an empirically large amount of South Africa's populace views the police force as a corrupt, ineffective, self-serving entity that catalyses more evil than good.[90]

Twenty years after Sharpeville and simmering atop the violence and chaos unleashed by the 1976 Soweto Uprising, 1980s South Africa – characterised by armed resistance, internal state and resistance strife, and the militarisation of communities – set an empirical foundation for the proliferation of violence in the post-apartheid era. Charting a violent course that included state-sponsored cross-border raids, rent boycotts, school stay-aways and the rejection of formal (Bantu) education, two States of Emergency, military-

[88] Kaminer and Eagle, *Traumatic Stress in South Africa*, 12. Kaminer and Eagle note that "Nearly 10,000 politically motivated killings were reported to the TRC by surviving family members of the victims, and these are likely to represent only a portion of politically motivated deaths during apartheid."
[89] *Ibid*, 8-27. Kaminer and Eagle's book chapter *Patterns of Trauma Exposure in South Africa* offers details supporting the assertion that, in South Africa, there exists "a commonly held understanding that violence is an acceptable and strategic element of life."
[90] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 74; Ncube, "South Africa's Police", 53-56.

initiated township violence, crude vigilantism via 'necklacing' at the hands of 'young lions' and opportunistic 'comtsotis', and violence-laced conflict between Inkatha and the ANC/UDF that saw the state of KwaZulu-Natal resemble a warzone, the 1980s – essentially the death spiral of *apartheid* – set in place violence-etched structures that continue to plague present-day South Africa.[91]

While politically transformative and certainly a reason for South Africa's Black majority to celebrate, the 1994 transition from National Party autocracy to multi-party democracy could not fully dismantle the structural violence and economic inequalities that *apartheid* set in motion, the scope and structure of which were too deeply entrenched to be comprehensively solved at the negotiation table. Unfortunately, failure to equitably address these root causes (which for any administration would prove an admittedly difficult task) permitted the violent responses developed by those suffering under *apartheid* to endure, setting in motion new iterations of violence (including but not limited to criminal, gender-based, vigilante, xenophobic, and political forms) that have followed directly from unresolved historical and material grievances.

Considering the present day, the enduring socio-economic challenges faced by marginalised communities (which, according to a May 2023 article, accounts for 47% of South Africa's population)[92] mirror those of the *apartheid* period, the sum of which may hold varying degrees of grievance vis-à-vis the unfulfilled promises of economic upliftment mentioned by the 1994 transitional government. South Africa's ongoing economic disunity further reinforces a cycle of frustration and hopelessness within these marginalised communities, which in turn can see their members turn to violence for reasons that include (but are not limited to) social mobility, material gain, or basic survival. This harsh modern reality is most strikingly witnessed in the use of violence to reclaim power – consider township protests or xenophobic attacks – and is not dissimilar

[91] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 200-203. While rent boycotts and the rejection of Bantu education were primarily non-violent political strategies, their enaction caused violent responses that further propagated violence.
[92] 47% of South Africans rely on social grants - study reveals how they use them to generate more income, at https://shorturl.at/IXx5R accessed on December 3, 2024.

to apartheid-era actions where violence was a way (and in many cases, the only way) to make a statement against perceived injustices.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and South Africa's 'culture of violence'

Pivotal to this thesis vis-à-vis the exacerbation of violence in post-apartheid South Africa is the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Established in 1995 to address apartheid-era atrocities, the TRC aimed to assist in the healing of South African society while helping to create a unified national identity.[93] Despite these admirable intentions, shortcomings both within and beyond the TRC's control have contributed directly or indirectly to South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence'.

The first of three primary criticisms levelled at the TRC was its focus on individual acts of violence rather than addressing systemic injustices and widespread socio-economic disparities. As a governing system and utilising physical, psychological, and economic forms of violence, *apartheid* operated to enforce racial segregation and economic disenfranchisement of South Africa's Black population. Accordingly, by choosing to only address violent acts between 1960 and 1994 (thus excluding the first twelve years of National Party *apartheid* rule and what violent misdeeds were committed then) and focusing on 'gross human rights violations' rather than addressing *apartheid's* myriad systemic issues that catalysed much of the original violence, the TRC – by design – limited its scope (and hence, efficacy) to tackle more prominent, foundational violence-perpetuating elements that, if left unchecked, could continue to inflict violence nationwide.[94] Ashley Dawson explains:

> … the TRC's emphasis on reconciliation imposed a narrative of healing and nation-building that threatened to promote a kind of amnesia among South Africans. Not only did the model of "restorative justice" promoted by TRC spokespeople like Desmond Tutu displace victims' demands for retribution, but broader crimes of the apartheid era such as forced removals and relocations were suppressed from the narrative of national suffering. The TRC thus narrowed the scope of historical memory to the acts of freedom fighters and regime assassins alone, eliding the suffering

[93] Tutu, *No Future,* 76. Tutu details how the TRC organised its reconciliation work around three separate committees: a Human Rights Violations committee, an Amnesty committee, and a Reparation and Rehabilitation committee.

[94] Some of these 'larger, foundational violence-perpetuating elements' include (but are not limited to) land dispossession, gross economic exploitation, and unequal education via the Bantu Education model.

> of average South Africans caught up in the quotidian forms of state and civilian injustice that characterised apartheid.[95]

Also, while the TRC offered an admirable public platform for truth-telling and did grant amnesty to specific violent perpetrators, a second major criticism concerned the Commission's inability to deliver substantial reparations or bring about concerted systemic reforms, this leaving many victims and their loved ones feeling disillusioned and additionally resentful. The victims and their families' psychological and material disenfranchisement – predicated on anger, hopelessness, material lack, or an amalgam of these – may have subsequently been channelled using violence.[96] Regarding the critical role of reparations, Dawson adds:

> The controversy over reparations for apartheid abuses is indicative of the reasons for such hostility. In its final report, the TRC recommended the creation of a 3 billion rand (approximately $385m) compensation fund for the era's victims. This fund was to be financed in part by a 'wealth tax' on businesses that profited from apartheid while operating in South Africa. In his formal response to the final report on April 15 2003, however, President Mbeki announced that the government would not introduce the wealth tax, proposing $4,000 in state-funded compensation for each of the 21,000 or so victims rather than the roughly $19,000 envisaged by the members of the TRC.[97]

Following on from victims' understandable bafflement caused by inconsistent reparations policy, Dawson adds a third criticism: that of how victims, witnessing the relatively lenient repercussions felt by violent perpetrators due to the TRC's 'restorative-over-retributive' model, appear to have traded in the ability to achieve personal 'justice' in favour of the state promoting national reconciliation and healing, both of which, almost thirty years on from the TRC's work, cannot objectively be said to have materialised.

> After waiting for years to receive compensation for injustices suffered during the apartheid era, and, in addition, seeing some of the perpetrators of such violence granted amnesty while they waited, victims had grounds for feeling anger when offered such meager reparations by the

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[95] Ashley Dawson, "Documenting the Trauma of Apartheid: Long Night's Journey into Day and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission", *SCREEN-LONDON*, 46,4, 2005, 3-4.
[96] James Lull Gibson, "The Truth about Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa", *International Political Science* Review, 26,4, 2005, 341-361. Gibson conducted a national survey that revealed amnesty was perceived to be 'unfair' to victims and those who died fighting against *apartheid*. The study also showed that amnesty was, to a certain extent, 'fair' to those seeking amnesty.
[97] Dawson, "Documenting the Trauma of Apartheid", 2-3.

> government. The inadequacy of the proposed compensation suggested that the suffering of apartheid-era victims was being subordinated on both a material and a symbolic level to the harsh necessities of post-apartheid nation-building. The TRC, in other words, does not simply recognise popular suffering during the apartheid era, but also confers legitimacy on a once discredited state and the bureaucratic elite who now control it by folding the sacrifices of the people into the narrative of the new nation.[98]

Considering these three significant criticisms levelled at the TRC (its inability to deliver on addressing systemic issues, which was likely outside its mandate and scope; lack of consistent reparations paid, which was within the TRC's mandate and scope; the failure of individual victims and their families to achieve justice in favour of national reconciliation and healing, which was within the TRC's scope but not mandate), sufficient individual, communal, and possible racial acrimony may have spilt over to perpetuate post-apartheid violence to the point that modern-day South African remains plagued by a 'culture of violence'.[99] One cornerstone element contributing to this is persistent economic inequality. As mentioned in this thesis's Introduction section, South Africa's 2023 Gini coefficient of 63 was the highest in the world that year, thus indicating that economic inequality has not significantly improved.[100] While efforts at economic reform and wealth/opportunity redistribution have occurred in the post-apartheid era, a wealth gap between the White minority and the Black majority remains persistent enough to warrant violence committed to right perceived systemic wrongs (criminal violence, vigilantism, xenophobic violence, political violence), to channel latent psychological or economic difficulties (criminal, gender-based, xenophobic violence, political violence), or as part of communal efforts (vigilantism or gangs) for economic/status gains that translate into

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[98] *Ibid*, 3.

[99] Richard Ashby Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14. Wilson views truth commissions as potentially part of the political machinery that legitimizes incoming political regimes, which, should researchers desire comprehensive scope, raises questions about researching the underlying intentions of South Africa's TRC. While there appears to be have been sufficient 'goodwill' per the Commission's creation and work, it can be argued that the only 'winners' to emerge from the TRC process were those who received amnesty and the ANC, which, despite 80% of amnesty hearings relating to ANC members, arguably came out of the process less-maligned than the National Party and Inkatha. Also, while how influential the Commission's work may have been in securing Thabo Mbeki's 1999 election victory is outside this thesis's scope, it is something to consider when analyzing political 'victories' in a fledgling democracy like that of South Africa in the 1990s.

[100] 2023 Gini Index, at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI, https://wisevoter.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country/#countries-with-highest-gini-coefficient accessed on December 5, 2024.

enhanced future material capacity, both for complicit individuals and the communities or gangs that they represent.[101]

Following economic inequality, youth disenfranchisement was another systemic element not comprehensively addressed by the TRC. Much like *apartheid* South Africa, post-apartheid South Africa remains plagued by high unemployment rates, which, as this thesis's first and second case studies have shown, lead to both frustration and a sense of hopelessness that leaves the youth element prone to participating in violent activities or joining gangs.[102] *The Sharpeville Massacre and its Aftermath* case study described how youth gang members, essentially unable to find work despite relatively advantageous educational situations, terrorised local youth and may have been subsumed into PAC Task Forces that helped coerce a significant number of people to assemble at Sharpeville's police station on Monday, March 21. The *Anti-Apartheid Resistance and State Response* case study outlined the youth resistance's development from 1976's Soweto Riots to 'young lions' and 'comtsotsi'-dominated township difficulties, which Clive Glaser, amongst other academics, cites as one of the most influential factors contributing to violence in both the old and new South Africa.[103] This dangerous element of not being able to control the youth – long stirred under anti-state resistance through channels such as ANC/MK, PAC/Poqo/APLA, the UDF, and associated propaganda organs (Radio Freedom being but one example) – led Black journalist, Phil Molefe, to state:

> The black community is reaping the whirlwind of hailing ten-year-olds as 'young lions'… Once regarded as the foot soldiers of the liberation

[101] Thompson, *A History*, 279-304; Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 593-594. Examples of economic and wealth/opportunities the South African government initiated in the post-apartheid era include the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP - 1994), Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR - 1996), Black Economic Empowerment (BEE – late 1990s) and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE – 2003), along with land reform and social welfare and grants programs.

[102] Statistics South Africa on official unemployment rate in third quarter of 2024, at https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/statistics-south-africa-official-unemployment-rate-third-quarter-2024-12-nov accessed on December 4, 2024. Statistics South Africa states "The official unemployment rate was 32,1% in the third quarter of 2024."

[103] Glaser, "Violent Crime", 343-348; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 37-38; Pandey, "Political Mobilisation", 139. Glaser's section titled *Youth Socialisation* offers a lucid indictment of how "It can be argued that the stability of any society depends on the effectiveness in socializing and restraining young men. This is something that South Africa is struggling to achieve." Glaser's analysis links how African cultural norms, South Africa's migrant labour system (heavily weighted in favour of children being raised by single mothers), the lure and appeal of juvenile gangs, and the failure of Bantu Education (discarded in favour of political organization) have, as socializing factors, kept South African youth either on the precipice of or within violence-tinged contexts throughout the post-apartheid era.

> movement, the 'young lions' have been allowed to claim too much power.[104]

Considering the TRC's lack of addressing violence-catalysing systemic issues, its inability to favourably and equitably pay our reparations, and victims giving up their right to seek justice in favour of national reconciliation and healing, myriad other instances of criminal activity covered in TRC hearings abide in popular memory. One such case linking interpersonal, criminal, and politically violent activity can be understood through the actions of the Mandela United Football Club, a quasi-vigilante group overseen by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela that was reputedly involved in the torture and murder of young Black activists in the Johannesburg township of Soweto between 1988 and 1989. In what, per television audience numbers, was the Commission's highest-profile hearing, Madikizela-Mandela and her bodyguards were questioned for nine days regarding her role in the Mandela United Football Club's violent dealings. Despite being roundly accused of being both knowledgeable and, in some cases, complicit in criminally violent behaviour (the torture/murder case of fourteen-year-old Stompie Seipei being a notably violent sticking point), Madikizela-Mandela denied all charges levelled at her. The fact that she was able to avoid censure (most likely predicated on her 'Mother of the Nation' sobriquet bestowed in recognition of her role as Nelson Mandela's resistance icon wife) indicates to both her supporters and detractors that, much like modern-day South Africa, individuals and organisations can avoid unwanted consequences under certain political or business-related circumstances. However, for those not afforded this type of social privilege, violence (as in the *apartheid* era) remains a feasible manner (and, in many cases, the only manner) to make a political, material, status-related, or economic point.[105]

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[104] Kane-Berman, *Political Violence,* 87; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 286-288. While difficult to empirically link the 1980s 'disenfranchised youth' (comtsotis, 'young lions', the uneducated due to rejection of Bantu education) with the propagation of post-apartheid violence, it appears reasonable to assert that, by virtue of living within fractured and violent family and community structures, these 'disenfranchised youth' have – in times of need and possibly want – employed forms of violence to achieve personal, social, or political goals.

[105] Godobo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died,* 101-102; Krog, *Country of My Skull,* 318-340; Tutu, *No Future,* 133-137, 167-175. Krog's Chapter 20 (*Mother Faces the Nation)* ably recounts the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela/Mandela United Football Club TRC hearing. Krog raises an important hearing-related point, stating (in reference to the hearing's venue and Madikizela-Mandela) that "The hearing held in Mayfair is an unusual one. As she does not want amnesty from the commission, she needn't tell the truth."

Situated on the post-apartheid side of history, gender-based violence, xenophobia, vigilantism, myriad forms of political violence, and land reform disputes – all of which persist in part due to TRC failings – continue to populate the scope of South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence'. While gender-based violence was robustly detailed during the TRC hearings, the fact that this type of violence, together with present-day violence directed at LGBTQI+ communities, persists so vociferously in South Africa indicates that – with thematic rather than TRC-style individual focus on gender-based crime – more could have been done in the post-apartheid era to educate and 'rehabilitate' South African society to a point where marginalised peoples need not live in omnipresent fear of being victimised.[106] With explications of gender-based torture, sexual violence, and victimisation forming a brutally graphic part of the TRC hearings (and brought violently home in recent years with, among other violent gender-based cases, the detailing of Uyinene Mrwetyana's 2019 vicious murder),[107] it may have been hoped that this televised stratum of pain would affect society in a manner moving toward a reconciliatory gender-based stance. However, the South African Police Service's Annual 2023-2024 Crime Statistics Report indicates that incidences of gender-based violence remain high: over the 2022-2023 period, there were 42780 reports of rape and 7418 reports of sexual assault, among multiple sexual crime-related statistics.[108] Accordingly, continued investigation into whether gender-based violence persists as vociferously as it does due to systemic issues, interpersonal issues, or other complex variables may prove beneficial toward possibly lessening the effects of this violent scourge.[109]

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[106] Combating Violence against LGBTI People in South Africa, at https://humanrightsfirst.org/library/combating-violence-against-lgbti-people-in-south-africa/ accessed on December 7, 2024. As described in the Literature Review section, examples of the types of violence South African LGBTQI+ communities face include corrective rape (the raping of lesbians or transgender individuals to "correct" their sexual orientation or gender identity), hate crimes based on LGBTQI+ intolerance, family ostracization, as well as school, workplace, and general societal harassment and discrimination.

[107] South Africa post office murderer given life for killing Uyinene Mrwetyana, at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50431903 accessed on December 7, 2024.

[108] South African Police Service: 2023-2024 Annual Crime Statistics Report, at https://www.saps.gov.za/services/crimestats.php accessed on December 7, 2024. Statistics for 2022-2023 were used as, with 2024 having just concluded, these may be considered more reliable. It also remains important to understand that incidences of gender-based violence and sexual crimes generally remain severely underreported; accurate figures may be many-fold higher than those reported by the SAPS.

[109] Krog, *Country of My Skull,* 231-250. Krog's Chapter 16 (*Truth is a Woman*) offers accounts from hearings where women describe what physical and psychological torment they faced at the hands of *apartheid*-era

Another contrary element to that of 'national healing and reconciliation' is continuing xenophobic violence. Despite South Africa having twelve official languages and, as arguably Southern Africa's social and economic hegemon, being home to people hailing from different nationalities, creeds, and ethnicities, the reality that socio-economic concerns – notably that of economic disenfranchisement via 'foreigners taking jobs' – remain and serve as at-hand flints for violence.[110] Also, with the TRC's mandate being to cover 'gross human rights violations' stemming mainly from political violence rather than xenophobic-directed attacks, the reality that, as a headline televised event centring around national healing and reconciliation, the TRC did not devote more time to xenophobia as a detrimental form of violence could be considered a missed opportunity, such is the pain and suffering xenophobic episodes (like those that happened in Alexandra in 2008 and Durban and Grahamstown in 2015) have wrought.[111]

Concerning political violence (which can also serve as reasoning behind why certain instances of criminal violence and vigilantism occur), a notable sticking point in post-apartheid South Africa is that of 'service delivery' protests. While outwardly appearing to occur due to mismanaged or ill-maintained infrastructure that subsequently influences service delivery, Kynoch, Von Holdt, and other scholars have described that political patronage – essentially the premeditated usurping of one administration by another – is responsible for much of what constitutes these protests.[112] The reality that politically ambitious characters are willing to sabotage public infrastructure (and, at times, assassinate incumbent political figureheads to achieve their goals) indicates again that the

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security forces. The torture methods described by these women almost defy belief, such is the unimaginable cruelty they exacted and the depravity they inflicted.

[110] Dassah, "Naming and Exploring", 130-139; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 279; Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 71; Misago, "Politics by Other Means?", 40-42.

[111] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 71; South Africa: Events of 2015, at https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/south-africa accessed on December 7, 2024.

[112] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 68; Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 596. Balanced within an analysis of *apartheid* and post-apartheid models of 'corruption,' Von Holdt assesses the modern situation as follows: "The subordination of state, legal and constitutional institutions to the goals of personal and factional enrichment and accumulation is frequently condemned in the public arena as 'corruption', or the criminal activity of a small number of rotten apples. However, these practices are so pervasive that they amount to collective and tacitly acceptable practices in wide political circles; it can be argued that the informal rationales that support elite formation through such practices constitute a local moral order within the elite, legitimating this as an avenue for overcoming the constitutional and policy constraints of the democratic settlement in order to establish their own economic bases."

TRC's failure to address the bedrock systemic issues – that of power being corrupted in myriad ways by the ruling elite for self-serving rule (much in the vein that the National Party and its security organs did during *apartheid*) – is a violence-exacerbating factor that promotes a 'culture of violence' as an advantageous way to achieve desired results and circumstances, regardless of how this may affect marginalised populations.[113]

Adding to the discussion regarding modern-day political violence, the TRC has been criticised for downplaying apartheid-era corporate abuses, particularly those tied to the mining industry. These abuses, which remain relevant today, highlight the devastating legacy of South Africa's industrial practices and mining operations involving gold, diamonds, platinum, and other resources. During *apartheid,* these industries were directly complicit in the systemic fragmentation of family units through exploitative migrant labour policies, the appalling working conditions faced by miners, and the eruption of ethnic violence, most notably between ANC and Inkatha supporters in and around Johannesburg in the late 1980s.[114]

In the post-apartheid era, the 2012 Marikana Massacre stands as an example of corporate interests being prioritised over individual human rights. Precipitated by mineworker members of the unrecognised AMCU (Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union) striking for two-fold wage increases when the global demand for platinum had decreased, this event, characterised by thirty-four dead, allegations of police shooting fleeing strikers and tampering with crime scene details, and talk of 'toxic collusion between state and capital', illustrates how the economic value of industries often supersede consideration and investigation into justice and accountability when it might compromise people in positions of power. While the Marikana narrative – much like Sharpeville in 1960 – is multi-layered and not entirely clear-cut, the suffering endured by

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[113] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 68; Schuld, "The Prevalence", 68-69; Von Holdt, Langa, Molapo, Mogapi, Ngubeni, Dlamini and Kirsten, *The Smoke That Calls*, 27.

[114] Krog, *Country of My Skull,* 314-317; Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 41-47; Tom Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 205. Marks and Andersson describe mineworker life in mine compounds, safety in the mines, and mineworker life in the hostels. Lodge states that "Business was central to the economy that sustained the South African state during the apartheid years. Certain businesses, especially the mining industry, were involved in helping to design and implement apartheid policies. Other businesses benefitted from cooperating with the security structures of the former state. Most businesses benefitted from operating in a racially structured context."

slain miners and their families appears to have been subsumed into the TRC's broader narrative of 'national healing and reconciliation,' this a paradigm that increasingly risks being perceived as a propaganda tool to be used where and when necessary per shaping advantageous public narratives.[115]

Underlying an enormous amount of tension within South Africa (and forming the *Izwe Lethu* ('Our Land') rallying cry for PAC passbook holders at Sharpeville in 1960) are continued land reform disputes that can catalyse violence, instances of which include present-day farm attacks and murders, land occupations, and protests turning violent.[116] Citing bureaucratic delays, insufficient post-settlement support, and disputes over land ownership, Ramutsindela, Davis, Sinthumule, and other scholars agree that the slow pace of land redistribution has left historical land dispossession largely unaddressed, thus rendering those left marginalised at a marked economic disadvantage.[117] In the case of land reform disputes, it can be argued that due to the TRC's focus on individual cases of 'gross human rights violations' rather than addressing South Africa's forced relocations and historical dispossession of land, this critical issue – while in instances remedied but certainly not having met sufficient expectations – remains as divisive and attuned to violence as any issue in post-apartheid South Africa.[118]

South Africa's historical violence – most notably from the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and through the 1980s leading up to the 1994 democratic elections – appears to be causally

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[115] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 69; Van Der Spuy and Shearing, "Curbing the Killing Fields", 191-192; Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition to Violent Democracy", 601. As one of the most significant post-apartheid incidences of violence to have occurred to now, further research on how the Marikana Massacre has been a product of (and mirrors) contemporary state-corporate dynamics, the role of the police, and its symbolic resonance in contemporary South African politics is warranted.

[116] Adeoye O. Akinola, "Farm attacks or 'white genocide'? Interrogating the unresolved land question in South Africa", *African Journal on Conflict Resolution,* 20,2, 2020, 65-91; Grant Colin Cloete, "Land reform and populism: amending South Africa's constitution", *Master's Thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås,* 2020, 6-64.

[117] Marks and Andersson, "The Epidemiology", 37-41. Marks and Andersson offer a detailed yet concise account of uprooting and forced relocation from 1960 to 1990.

[118] Chris De Wet, "Land reform in South Africa: A vehicle for justice and reconciliation, or a source of further inequality and conflict?", *Development Southern Africa*, 14,3, 1997, 355-362; Krog, *Country of My Skull*, 314-315; Maano Ramutsindela, Nerhene Davis and Innocent Sinthumule, "Diagnostic Report on Land Reform in South Africa, Land Restitution," *Cape Town: Parliament of South Africa,* 2016, 1-97; Theunis Roux, "Land Restitution", 154-171. Ramutsindela, Davis, and Sinthumule's diagnostic report details difficulties accompanying land reform and restitution. Citing bureaucratic delays, insufficient post-settlement support, and disputes over land ownership, these and other variables have complicated the efficacy of land reform initiatives.

linked to the country's present-day ′culture of violence'. This reality was exacerbated by the shortcomings of the TRC, which, despite facing challenges it could not be expected to remedy comprehensively, have been unable to translate the narrative of national healing and reconciliation into an actualised manner of societal engagement. It appears that, deeply rooted in South Africa's past, the widespread normalisation of violent conflict, institutional distrust, and socio-economic exclusion brought about before and during the *apartheid* era is still the country's socio-cultural driving force.

With the TRC failing to comprehensively juggle the nation's smorgasbord of hopes, grievances, and fears, the best opportunity for South Africa to transform into a less violent place has come and gone, and it is unlikely that history will again provide another opportunity to detail, in microscopic ways, the trauma modern South Africa has been built upon. It is for this reason that the TRC – rather than achieving healing through reconciliation – can be cognised as having added to rather than subtracted from the perception that post-apartheid South Africa can best be dealt with on violent terms, and in doing so, the TRC's processes and conclusions have ironically helped exacerbate the country's present-day 'culture of violence'.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

> *Negotiation and discussion are the greatest weapons we have for promoting peace and development.*[1]
>
> - Nelson Mandela, 2011

A. Comparative Analysis Across Cases

Identifying commonalities and patterns

Via analysing three historical periods (the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, anti-apartheid resistance and state response, and post-1994: contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings), this thesis has aimed to explain what historically-caused variables have contributed to South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence.'

Per situating a 'culture of violence' within a South African context, this thesis has employed the following 'culture of violence' definition:

> A 'culture of violence' typifies a society where violent behaviours, norms, or attitudes are widespread, ingrained, and utilised daily, usually on socio-economic or political grounds or via a combination of these, underpinned by contributions from both internal and external forces.

To this point, it has been established that a host of "violent behaviours, norms, or attitudes" pervade South Africa's present-day social landscape, many of which link to "socio-economic or political grounds or via a combination of these, underpinned by contributions from both internal and external forces." For the sake of distilling these myriad violence-etched forces into discernible parts, three enduring factors have been chosen to analyse: structural injustices as precursors to violence, state repression as a catalysing agent, and internal divisions within political movements. In both an individual and collective manner, these factors can illustrate how and why post-apartheid South Africa remains tied to a markedly corrosive 'culture of violence.'

[1] Nelson Mandela, *Nelson Mandela By Himself: The Authorised Book of Quotations* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2011), 251.

At its core, modern South African violence is a product of structural injustice. From the 1960's Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath to the present day, segregationist structures – predating and initiated from 1960 onward – have played influential roles in fueling violence in South Africa. Per this thesis's three case studies, the Sharpeville Massacre, as Saul Dubow and Tom Lodge explained, was set off amidst passbook-related grievances realised through structural injustice.[2] Sharpeville's aftermath was also characterised by structural injustice, in that a brutal State of Emergency imprisoned eighteen thousand people, the ANC and PAC were banned under the *Unlawful Organisations Act*, and 1964's Rivonia Trial put most of the resistance's leadership behind bars. These state-initiated actions – met with armed struggle via Umkhonto We Sizwe and Poqo – meant violence became a condonable strategic element for all invested agencies and actors to use in securing or resisting the political status quo.[3]

Prefacing the 1980s anti-apartheid resistance, the 1976 Soweto Uprising – like the Sharpeville Massacre – occurred off the back of structural injustice, the main point of controversy being the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974, which forced all Black schools to use Afrikaans and English in equal terms as languages of instruction.[4] The violence meted out by the state during and beyond the Uprising set the scene for a viciously violent 1980s period characterised by state-sponsored cross-border raids, rent boycotts, work and school stay-aways, two States of Emergency, an evolution toward a 'People's War' as part of the greater 'armed struggle', ruptures in the educational system which set the tone for certain 'young lions' and 'comtsotis' to commit violent acts within South Africa's townships, and severe ethnic violence between the AND/UDF and Inkatha (shown to have been aided and abetted by 'Third Force' sponsored agencies and actors) that created a violent climate resembling that of a civil war.[5]

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[2] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 63; Lodge, *Sharpeville*, 1-27.
[3] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 210; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 73.
[4] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 153.
[5] Antonio Gramsci, at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gramsci/ accessed on December 16, 2024; Cortes-Ramirez, "Cultural hegemony today", 126-129; Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 200-203. As previously mentioned in this thesis, Gramsci's theory of *Cultural Hegemony* describes how the ruling class maintains control militarily, politically, and ideologically. When a state and its resistors are locked in violent armed struggle, Gramsci's *War of Position* and *War of Maneuver* arise, both of which require ruling and subordinate agents to fulfil the dominant and revolutionary elements needed to legitimize struggle before achieving political legitimacy.

The post-apartheid era was predicated on a decision to promote national healing and reconciliation amongst South Africans, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was responsible for delivering this. Mandated to hear of 'gross human rights violations' and provide rehabilitation and reparations for those affected, the TRC could, at its discretion, offer amnesty for violent perpetrators who confessed in full.[6] However, despite the TRC's admirable intentions, it was unable to undo much of the structural injustice (and hence, structural violence) that had initially catalysed many of the individual cases of violence it heard. Due in part to this structural failure, forms of violence (including but not limited to interpersonal, criminal, gender-based, vigilantism, xenophobic, corporate-based, and political) persist in present-day South Africa, these primarily attributable to ingrained structural elements implanted by *apartheid* and the political inability – both optically, pragmatically, and through TRC workings – to provide long-lasting utilitarian solutions.

Driving (and being driven by) structural injustice is state-directed repression, the totality of which – from before *apartheid* to the present day – has catalysed much of the pain and suffering South Africans at the unfortunate end of violence have experienced. Whether state-directed repression materialised historically in structural violence forms through laws like the *Population Registration Act*, the *Immorality Act,* the *Group Areas Act,* or the *Suppression of Communism Act* (all passed in 1950), or physically via mobilisation of state security forces in both visible (State of Emergency, military, and police-deployment) or opaque (cross-border raids, political assassinations, 'Third Force' type agencies and activities) manners, the state's clout and capacity to repress according to strategic agendas has long been a dangerous and trust-eroding mix, the reality of which still pushes South Africans entangled in violence-tinged environments to find ways, within and beyond standard law-enforcement procedures, to solve grievances in violent manners that add to the country's omnipresent 'culture of violence'.[7]

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[6] Desmond Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness,* Pumla Godobo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid,* and Antjie Krog's *Country of My* Skull, along with the official TRC Report, offer an immense number of details regarding the conception, workings, findings, and controversies the TRC was responsible for.

[7] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994,* 37-40; Thompson, *A History*, 198-199; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 54-57.

With structural violence and state-directed repression serving as long-standing tributaries propagating South Africa's 'culture of violence', there exists little wonder why internal divisions within political movements have diverted South Africa from cooperating toward making the country a safer, more prosperous place. With the ANC, UDF, Inkatha, the PAC, and Black Consciousness Movement groups situated at different points along a politically, ideologically, and ethnically diverse spectrum (all the while facing up to the resource-rich National Party and its *apartheid* policies for several decades prior to 1994), there was and remains several points that these organisations and its actors do not agree on, particularly per how a country should be run and who benefits from doing so. Furthermore, while it appears logical that differing political parties and groups value and work toward different things, South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence' is also fueled by political infighting; Gary Kynoch's analysis (backed by other scholars) regarding intra-party assassinations, using 'service delivery' protests as a platform to usurp political incumbents, and the scourge of corruption via intra-party patronage are all damaging to South Africa's diversely-populated democracy which, over the past thirty years of democratic governance, has been almost exclusively run as a legacy-backed, one-party democratic state by the ANC.[8]

Exploring interconnections and transitions between historical periods

DF Malan's arrival in Pretoria by train on June 1, 1948, saw him proclaim, "In the past, we felt like strangers in our own country, but today South Africa belongs to us once more. For the first time since Union, South Africa is our own. May God grant that it always remains our own."[9] This assertion of Afrikaner nationalism – spoken from the highest echelons of South African political power – would soon give rise to *'apartheid'*, and in doing so, one of modern history's most systematically cruel blueprints of discrimination would begin.

The twelve years between Malan's proclamation and the Sharpeville Massacre saw *apartheid* actualise under the stewardship of Hendrik Verwoerd and Werner Eiselen of the Bantu Affairs department, this process characterised by a slew of segregationist-tinged laws passed in the 1950s that entrenched structural injustice (and hence, violence) deep

[8] Kynoch, "Apartheid's Afterlives", 67-71; Malaquias, "Stress-Testing", 5; Mlambo, Mubecua and Mlambo, "Post-Colonial Independence", 184-202.
[9] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 186.

within the country's social, cultural, and economic spheres.[10] As expected, there was no lack of resistance to this. Although short-lived and unable to meet its goal of genuinely challenging the state, the 1952 Defiance Campaign was responsible for bringing the *apartheid* government's policies to global attention while simultaneously growing the ANC's leadership by thousands.[11] Despite this, state repression continued, and one element that proved as hazardous as any to Africans' aspirations of social mobility was that of passbooks (*dompas* in Afrikaans), which severely curtailed Africans' ability to move and live with anything resembling the freedom that White South Africans took for granted.[12]

Enter Sharpeville and its associated massacre. On March 21, 1960, the PAC – keen to gain a strategic political advantage by launching its anti-passbook campaign ten days before the ANC's equivalent – was on the resistors' side of the fence outside Sharpeville's police station. With calls for *Izwe Lethu* ('Our Land') ringing out, all optimism and hope for a fairer, more equitable deal for Africans ended when police started firing into the crowd, resulting in sixty-nine dead and one hundred and eighty injured. The brutality of the massacre and its aftermath, characterised by a declared State of Emergency that saw the state surveil, imprison, torture, and murder as it deemed fit, gave rise to a new form of resistance. With the traditional political vehicles of the ANC and PAC banned under the *Unlawful Organisations Act*, passive resistance gave way to new thinking and an armed struggle was born, the mantle of which was taken up by the ANC and PAC's armed wings (Umkhonto We Sizwe and Poqo, respectively).

Despite the capacities and intentions of armed struggle agencies and actors, little headway was made against the *apartheid* state's strengths and assets. While the Soweto Uprising of 1976 did manoeuvre the calculus of battle in the sense that thousands of Africans left for neighbouring countries to join and train for the resistance, the state responded with cross-border raids, intensified repression at home, and, via two State of Emergencies declared in 1985 and 1986, catalysed latter-1980s violence that resembled a civil war, such was the

[10] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 59-60.
[11] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 110-112.
[12] *Ibid*, 40-45; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 110-112.

fighting that raged in the townships, cities, and provinces of South Africa along economic, political, and ethnic lines.

The sum of South Africa's structural violence, long-term state-directed repression, and the effects of internal divisions within political movements coalesced to make the transition from oppressive state autocracy to multiracial democracy an intensely complex process. While the euphoria accompanying South Africa's new democracy appeared to herald the possibility of a more equitable political dawn for all South Africans, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – despite good intentions – could not stem the tide of violent causation that decades of mass-engineered social abuse had wrought. Accordingly, while victims of 'gross human rights violations' may have been able to share their stories and possibly find closure, a flawed and incomplete amnesty process that saw violent perpetrators escape prosecution, together with an addled reparations process that did not deliver on the TRC's recommendations, may well have placed the strategic use of violence even more firmly in the hands of the oppressed, the actualisation of which is evident in the country's present-day 'culture of violence' that remains marked by high levels of interpersonal, criminal, gender-based, vigilantism, xenophobic, corporate-aligned, and political violence that, per David Welsh's analysis, can be traced back to *apartheid* being "...the primary cancer underlying the violence."[13]

Throughout this thesis's three case studies, persistent socio-economic challenges have characterised the interconnections and transitions between and during the periods they represent. The marginalisation of the mass of South Africans – primarily commencing from 1948's birth of *apartheid* – has proved an incalculably traumatic and paralysing factor that has inhibited the country from casting off the past's evils and focusing on a fairer socio-economic present and future. The knock-on effects of structural violence, state-directed repression, and internal divisions between movements vying for power have led to South Africa becoming the world's most unequal society, it characterised by enormous discrepancies in wealth, education, housing, healthcare, and capacity for social mobility

[13] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall,* 313.

that, in the seeming absence of other feasible options, appears best settled by the medium of violence in a country where violence, quite frankly, has become an everyday part of life.

B: Theoretical Insights

Application of theoretical frameworks to explain the persistence of violence

Encompassing a broad temporal scope and involving myriad actors and agencies, analysing violence in post-apartheid South Africa through a comparative analysis of three historical periods should occur using relevant theoretical frameworks. This manner of theoretical engagement will accurately describe and reflect the complex interplay of historical, socio-political, and structural factors undergirding South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence'.

This thesis's three historical periods were examined using the following analytical lenses: Structural Violence Theory (SVT), Social Identity Theory (SIT), Cycle of Violence Theory, Human Needs Theory, and Conflict Transformation. This holistic theoretical amalgam has offered sufficient perspective to describe and reflect each case study accurately, thus providing a macro-view of how the three case studies' content has helped proliferate and sustain South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence.'

As mentioned in this thesis's Theoretical Framework section, Structural Violence Theory (SVT) refers to violence embedded within social, economic, and political structures. Rather than focusing on direct, physical acts of violence, structural violence is concerned with subtle, almost 'invisible' acts of violence that, by being systemic and hidden from daily view, can cause long-term harm that often supersedes direct acts of physical violence. Considering the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, structural violence is evident in how passbook-directed ire, off the back of twelve years of National Party *apartheid* rule, led to protestors being shot at, killed, and even hunted down in the event's aftermath.[14] With a State of Emergency to follow, the political beheadings of the ANC and PAC via their bannings, and the imprisonment or exiling of the resistance's leadership figures, the National Party and White South Africa – along structural-engineered lines – subsequently developed along Dubow's 'High Apartheid' route, which translated into a remarkably prosperous time for the majority of White people, thus

[14] Lodge, *Sharpeville,* 107-109.

illustrating the economic efficacy of employing structural violence to benefit its practitioners.[15] By extension, the 1976 Soweto Uprising can also be understood through the lenses of structural violence as well as Social Identity Theory (SIT), this event precipitated by students protesting against the Afrikaans Medium Decree that forced all Black schools to use Afrikaans and English in equal terms as languages of instruction.[16] With thousands of young Africans leaving the country post-Soweto Uprising to join and train with resistance forces, the state – cognizant of the fact that reform was becoming increasingly necessary – continued along a structurally violent path, it employing state security forces, both publicly and covertly, to wreak violence across the land. Furthermore, in what can be construed as a scorched earth-type strategy, 'Third Force' agencies and actors were utilized to train, arm, and work with Inkatha to wage war against the ANC/UDF (which, regarding ethnicity, can also be analysed using SIT), all of which was geared to retain power in diminishing political circumstances.

Thirty years into democratic South Africa, it is evident that structural violence – much of which relates to social identity – can still go unpunished. Animosity relating to how high-level political and security figures did not correctly account for their crimes at the TRC hearings remains a point of controversy, and violence-etched scandals (consider intra-party assassinations, 'service delivery' protests, Jacob Zuma's *Nkandlagate* episode, and the 2012 Marikana Massacre, to name but a few) in which power-wielding agencies and actors appear to escape severe censure illustrates, particularly to marginalised communities, that instead of objective, trustworthy justice-serving apparatus and a push toward an equal economic playing field, violence remains a valuable tool, thus adding to the notion that South Africa – as in the *apartheid* past – remains violently wedded to structural violence at all levels of life.

Transitional justice and reconciliation theories such as Cycle of Violence Theory, Human Needs Theory, and Conflict Transformation are concerned with holding perpetrators of

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[15] Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994*, 99. Regarding White prosperity, Dubow states that "Middle-class Johannesburg was said to have the greatest concentration of swimming pools anywhere in the world aside from Beverly Hills" and "Even lower-middle class whites would expect to employ at least one live-in female 'maid'.

[16] Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 153.

violence to account for their actions through trials or other judicial methods, the processes of which may uncover the truth, provide suitable reparations, consider and implement institutional reform, and structure future communities and societies in a way that steers people away from recommitting historical mistakes. Regarding the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, the thirty-five-year gap between that event and the TRC hearings meant that many victims and their loved ones could not uncover information concerning what may have happened, thus leaving holes in both their lives and the historical record. While the 1976 Soweto Uprising and violent events of the 1980s were, according to who spoke at the hearings and wished to apply for amnesty, covered in detail during the 1990s' TRC hearings, the 'gross human rights' mandate meant systemic violence abuses were mostly subsumed into a national healing and reconciliation narrative, meaning that provisions relating to how South Africa could avoid future violence were not effectively dealt with. Adding to this is the improper way that reparations were handled, along with how violent perpetrators may have escaped censure by refusing to attend, cooperate with, or accept the TRC's findings. While the TRC should be acknowledged for attempting to know and help atone for the sins of *apartheid* per its transitional justice and reconciliation mandate, the reality that national healing and reconciliation (playing into a grander 'nation-building' narrative) superseded the effects of individual cases and diverted attention away from violent systemic ills means that violence – via modernised, relevant iterations – still operates in South Africa to the point that the country remains tied to an omnipresent 'culture of violence'.

Utilising this thesis's employed theoretical lenses, the historical gamut extending from the Sharpeville Massacre to the present day (sixty-four years and counting) has produced troves of information detailing events, actors, agencies, and analyses of violence. However, no enacted solutions have made South Africa substantially less violent. Instead, it appears that deeply-rooted systemic violence – most notably that used by the National Party against South Africa's Black majority during the *apartheid* era – has continued into the present day, albeit in different forms. For one, while political violence is not as ubiquitous as it was during the *apartheid* years, it has been replaced by other forms of violence that keep South Africa near the top of key indexes (inequality and instances of

murders and rapes being but two of these).[17] Added to this are ongoing instances of interpersonal, criminal, gender-based, vigilantism, xenophobic, corporate-affiliated, and political violence, all of which, when seen in totality, form a smorgasbord of violence that appears an almost unsolvable problem.[18]

Perhaps dealing with South African violence requires tackling it at the grassroots level; education and community initiatives focusing on social assistance, economic empowerment, and forgiveness could be beneficial. However, if the state, its affiliates, actors, and agencies of authority condone and use violence as part of how they operate, the goodwill and intentions of such initiatives will be wasted, and South Africa will remain debilitatingly tied to its present-day 'culture of violence.'

[17] South African Police Service: 2023-2024 Annual Crime Statistics Report, at https://www.saps.gov.za/services/crimestats.php accessed on December 7, 2024.
[18] Von Holdt, "South Africa: The Transition", 594-596. Van Holdt's description titled 'The state, elite formation and the law' offers insight into the intersection of South African politics and business, with the idea of 'tenderpreneurs' being one of multiple malevolent elements undergirding the 'corporate-affiliated' violence that plagues modern-day South Africa.

C: Policy Implications

Recommendations for addressing the ‘culture of violence’ in South Africa

South Africa's 'culture of violence' is an amorphous, ever-evolving entity that defies standard definition. Accordingly, if anything is to be done about lessening its pervasively damaging effects, it must be addressed via multifaceted policies that pragmatically tackle structural inequalities, historical grievances, and socio-economic challenges that all members of South African society experience.

Concerning policy implications, this thesis will focus on three interconnected facets that, if actively and concertedly dealt with, can provide both the impetus and necessary direction for effective healing and growth amidst the country's prevailing violence. These three interconnected facets are socio-economic transformation, transformative transitional justice, and strengthening social cohesion and democratic institutions.

History offers us details and narratives concerning the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, which, both per the massacre and its aftermath, was characterised by immense violence on both structural and physical fronts. Concerning socio-economic transformation, the physical catalyst that drove the massacre (the passbooks) is no more, yet the racial stigma (and accordant socio-economic effects) underlying violent tensions remain. For effective change to occur, policies must continue to prioritise Sharpeville Massacre-related education, the massacre’s victims and their families should continue to be cared for in manners befitting their circumstances, and strategic economic empowerment should be implemented to mitigate any latent capacity for violence that may arise from Sharpeville Massacre-related grievances. Per transformative transitional justice, the fact that March 21 is celebrated as Human Rights Day in South Africa registers as a noble acknowledgement of Sharpeville's continuing historical value. Added to this, continued transformative transitional justice efforts focusing on historical understanding and empathy can be beneficial; one manner of implementing this could be through educational curricula that incorporate the Sharpeville Massacre as a key component to enable historical understanding and empathy. Regarding strengthening social cohesion and democratic institutions, future policy initiatives should seek to accurately and sensitively share and

distil historical narratives to foster unity. By creating inclusive democratic institutions that allow for this to happen, citizens who may typically be at odds with each other can find commonality and perhaps a modicum of peace, provided they are guaranteed equal voices and, if necessary, compensation for their efforts.

At least temporally and scope-wise, the Sharpeville Massacre is limited to the March 21 event and its aftermath. Despite numerous Sharpeville-related complexities that arose during that period, it remains an era markedly different from the 1980s anti-apartheid resistance period in that the 1980s witnessed an explosion of violence beyond anything the Sharpeville era experienced. The fact that, from 1976's Soweto Uprising to the end of and beyond the 1980s, violence raged so vociferously on both domestic and international fronts makes the 1980s era decidedly difficult to analyse per policy implications. With this complexity in mind, perhaps the first socio-economic policy directive to satiate all that era's pain and suffering would centre around inclusive economic development. Effective, transparent, and responsible land reform would be a good start, and even a reanalysis of historical structural violence not covered by the TRC hearings could be beneficial, provided this is conducted effectively, transparently, and responsibly. Regarding transformative transitional justice, contemporary reconciliation policies could focus on the internal divisions between resistance movements, as with so much of South Africa's 1980s violence being tied to this socio-political-ethnic realm, latent trauma must lie in wait to be addressed. As mentioned vis-à-vis the Sharpeville Massacre, policy initiatives looking to accurately and sensitively share and distil historical narratives to foster unity could further bolster notions of transformative transitional justice, provided these are conducted in objective, peaceful, win-win ways that prioritise an equal footing for all involved.

With the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath and the 1980s anti-apartheid resistance era providing challenging contemplations to policymakers per setting South Africa on a healing-based, conciliatory path, the post-apartheid era (which appears to have been more compromised than assisted by the TRC's workings and findings) presents a challenge perhaps even more complex than the Sharpeville and 1980s eras combined. With South Africa officially recognised as a democracy and led by a majority-elected government, persistent violence – rooted in structural elements predating 1994 but now also tied to

contemporary factors – remains condoned, practised, and valuable at all levels of society, including government-aligned figures. Regarding socio-economic transformation (set atop already-mentioned land reform and reanalysis of structural violence initiated during the 1980s era not covered by the TRC hearings), a feasible contemporary option could include targeted interventions centring around skills and small business support, which could assist in breaking persistent cycles of poverty and hopefully violence. With the TRC's work and findings now thirty years past, it is difficult to undo its mistakes that have added to rather than subtracted from the country's 'culture of violence'. Nevertheless, future transitional justice mechanisms – having taken heed of the TRC's failures – can better address economic injustices and foster accountability, provided their justice-level parameters are consistent and no one – particularly authority figures – is considered 'above the law'. Should conciliatory efforts not be addressed this way, the long-running 'have vs. have-nots' mentality will persist, and anger, resentment, and violence will continue to reign. Together with the strengthening of social cohesion and democratic institutions (which may improve with 2024's Government of National Unity having replaced the thirty-year-old, one-party democratic state presided over by the ANC), initiatives such as anti-corruption drives and increased legislative transparency via a trusted judiciary and an improved, efficient, people-first policing authority, South Africa could well chart a more peaceful and equitable future path.

Should South Africa wish to realise its inherent potential, the sum of which lies in its diverse citizenry currently divided by violence and misunderstanding, implementing corrective, people-first policies should be initiated and followed through. Addressing historically catalysed structural inequality, state-directed repression, the adverse effects of internal divisions between resistance movements, and the inadequacies of past policies that did not satiate victims of violence in terms of existential healing or material reparations will require collaborative efforts from government figures, civil society, and international partners all seeking to build a more peaceful and equitable South Africa.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

> *I conclude: do not let us invent the past or make ourselves and others ideologically hostage to it. The nature of our challenge is too stark and unambiguous: poverty, unemployment, housing, education, health. And yet we are better off than many other countries, not only in Africa, in addressing these challenges. So as an African, I say to my president, a fellow African, both of us from South Africa: 'Let us get on with it. We don't need no fancy talk.'*[1]
>
> - Fredrik Van Zyl Slabbert, 2006

A: Summary of Findings

This thesis has aimed to explain the persistence of violence in post-apartheid South Africa through a comparative analysis of three historical periods, namely the Sharpeville Massacre and its aftermath, anti-apartheid resistance and state response, and post-1994: contemporary violence and the TRC's shortcomings. Accordant research has pivoted around two research questions:

1. What are the historical roots of violence in South Africa that saw expression in the 1960s, 1980s, and post-1994?
2. How do these historical instances of violence interconnect to explain the enduring 'culture of violence'?

Regarding the nature of South Africa's 'culture of violence', this thesis employed the following definition with which to orient its research:

> A 'culture of violence' typifies a society where violent behaviours, norms, or attitudes are widespread, ingrained, and utilised daily, usually on socio-economic or political grounds or via a combination of these, underpinned by contributions from both internal and external forces.

With these questions and the 'culture of violence' definition in mind, this thesis has arrived at findings intrinsic to and interconnecting each case study.

[1] Fredrik Van Zyl Slabbert, *The Other Side of History: An Anecdotal Reflection on Political Transition in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2006), 13.

The first major finding concerns the continuity of violence across the three chosen case studies and eras. Research has shown that structural and physical violence initiated by the state before, during, and after the Sharpeville and 1980s eras have created a pattern characterised by state oppression met by resistance efforts, with a substantial number of regular South African citizens suffering economically, socially, and physically as a result. The fact that the TRC was unable to mediate and account for this gratuitous structural and physical violence meant that South Africa's 'culture of violence' was not adequately addressed at the start of the post-apartheid era, and due to structural reforms not occurring in a manner that prioritised the physical security and economic enfranchisement of those that had suffered, post-apartheid violence – charting a course that includes interpersonal, criminal, gender-based vigilantism, xenophobic, corporate-oriented, and political violence – has ensured that the historical roots of violence in South Africa expressed in the 1960s, 1980s, and post-1994 era have not been adequately dealt with.

The second significant finding is that South Africa's 'culture of violence' was primarily constructed around structural and institutional roots. Research has shown that violence during the *apartheid* era and post-1994 were symptomatic of entrenched structures – both state-initiated and informal via resistance efforts to meet state brutality – that have maintained (and even exacerbated) racial hierarchies and continued unequal resource distribution, the sum of which is illustrated via the fact that South Africa – thirty years post-apartheid – still rates as the most statistically unequal country on Earth.

The post-apartheid era began with a sense of optimism that the pain and suffering of so many marginalised South Africans had ended, and that a new socio-political dawn beckoned. Buoyed by this sentiment and wanting to start the 'new' South Africa on a premise of national healing and reconciliation, this thesis's third significant finding lies with how the TRC's shortcomings – occurring as a result of factors both within and beyond its control – ultimately failed to undo the systemic foundations causing such gratuitous violence. By diverting attention from adequately addressing structural issues to focus on individual cases of 'gross human rights violations', the TRC – South Africa's best opportunity to dismantle the organs of violence-causing power – added to rather than subtracted from South Africa's 'culture of violence', such was its failure to account

appropriately for individual suffering via a flawed reparations policy, an amnesty framework that allowed perpetrators of violence to escape prosecution, and – via victims left without the ability to achieve economic or existential justice by their plight being subsumed into a narrative of national healing and reconciliation – becoming an organ that promoted violence as an advantageous tool in an unequal, fragile democracy such as South Africa's.

This thesis's second research question (How do these historical instances of violence interconnect to explain the enduring 'culture of violence'?) is, via an amalgam of the three previously-mentioned research findings, found alive and violently thriving within South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence'. Alongside structural violence and its physical manifestations exhibited during the *apartheid* era, present-day South African violence occurs against a democratic backdrop that translates as the country having been almost exclusively governed by the ANC for thirty years, as well as attracting migrants from neighbouring countries due to it being southern Africa's socio-economic hegemon. This volatile mix (structural violence stemming from the *apartheid* era materializing in economic, land, housing, education, health, political, and other ways) corruption and corporate-political collusion at the expense of the majority of the country's citizenry, and the pull of migrants to the country and how this affects already compromised rural and urban socio-economic infrastructures is a dangerous one that threatens to turn violent at any time, thus presenting innumerable challenges to governments, policymakers, and others wishing for South Africa to chart a more equitable and peaceful future path.

B: Contributions to Knowledge

Complementing literature covering South African violence from the pre-apartheid era to now, this thesis offers an integrative historical perspective that can contribute to discussion vis-à-vis South Africa's present-day 'culture of violence.' Having comparatively analysed three historical periods that are key to charting South Africa's violence-related predicaments, this thesis's first contribution to knowledge comes from situating contemporary violence within an extended temporal continuum, the scope of which provides an accurate distillation of the key factors that drive modern-day violence. This academic delineation is beneficial in that, by moving beyond analyses occurring within more narrowly focused, shorter timespans, an extended view of violence in South Africa results, which allows future research endeavours to be additionally informed of historical causations and violent connections shared between the *apartheid* and post-apartheid eras, thus eliciting more accurate conclusions regarding South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence'.

This thesis's second contribution to knowledge is a critical evaluation of the TRC. Having academically disseminated the TRC's processes and findings, it is evident that, despite good intentions, the TRC did not deliver on real or presumed promises that it would manifest a genuine sense of national healing and reconciliation. Had it done so, it would be academically beguiling to reconcile this with the violence currently plaguing South Africa. This thesis's findings also question how efficacious and helpful truth commissions in post-conflict societies may be, and whether more traditional forms of justice (such as courts adhering to standard criminal law) might be better options should a post-conflict society genuinely wish to rid itself of violence-perpetuating structures, agencies, and actors.

With this study encompassing a broad temporal and theoretical scope and using elements of Structural Violence Theory (SVT), Social Identity Theory (SIT) and transitional justice and reconciliation theories like Cycle of Violence Theory, Human Needs Theory, and Conflict Transformation to comparatively analyse this thesis's three historical periods, this thesis's third contribution to knowledge - an integrative analytical lens for investigating South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence' - has emerged. With a focus on relaying

how structural, institution-initiated factors have stirred and proliferated violence, along with how resulting economic, ethnic, and material factors have sustained violence, the capacity to understand South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence' can be better understood and seen for the multifaceted phenomenon that it is. Accordingly, this integrative theoretical lens can assist in offering insight to government, policymakers, and others actively interested in making South Africa a more peaceful place.

C: Limitations of Study

Any study wishing to integrate different historical periods to produce accurate analytical insights will, by design, fail to consider myriad details that can offer additional nuance, relevance, and veracity. Per this study's limitations, one concern is geographical and temporal constraints. While extensive attempts have been made to critically analyse the structural and physical manifestations of violence characterising each historical period, accuracy has been restricted in that specific regions and historical flashpoints have been considered to the detriment of others that may be considered equally catalytic in fomenting and sustaining South Africa's 'culture of violence.' With South Africa being the world's twenty-fifth physically largest country and this thesis focusing on specific (Sharpeville) or general (Johannesburg, Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal) places, other communities and timeframes within South African history have been sidelined, and with that unique (and possibly relevant) patterns of violence may not have been fully explored.

A second limitation that accompanies researching a relatively large geographical and temporal scope is that, when investigating structural violence and its ramifications, there tends to be an emphasis on state and political agencies and actors, which in turn excludes a significant swathe of South African grassroots history that could leave this study less relevant and accurate. The single benefit from this scenario is that future research can scale this study’s more general insights in ways that suit more specific circumstances, which could assist in more comprehensively contributing to the historical record and thus further help South Africa chart a more equitable and peaceful future path.

Another thesis limitation is the possibility of overemphasising secondary sources over primary ones**.** While the Sharpeville Massacre happened sixty-four years ago and the 1976 Soweto Riots and 1980s violence have been well-covered in academic articles, books, and the official TRC Report, it is difficult to ignore the point that increased use of primary sources may have made this thesis additionally relevant and accurate. Nevertheless, this study has endeavoured to provide a distillation of pertinent historical and contemporary points relating to how and why a 'culture of violence' persists in South

Africa, and future research on this or similar topics can endeavour to fill in this study's research gaps.

D: Future Research Directions

Considering what this thesis has and has not contributed to the academic canon of knowledge regarding South Africa's post-apartheid 'culture of violence, opportunities abound to fill in the gaps that this study's broad geographical and temporal scope have not attended to. One such study direction could aim at micro-level community studies. With this thesis having researched three historical periods in a more general than specific manner, future research working with primary sources at a grassroots level can seek out ethnographic, oral histories, and community-based participatory opportunities, all of which may elicit findings that further refine analyses and conclusions regarding South Africa's modern-day 'culture of violence.' By understanding how grassroots members, communities, and organisations cope with the myriad difficulties presented by violence, the possibility exists to scale successful local-borne strategies on city-wide, province-wide, and even nationwide levels, all of which may prove successful in lessening instances of violence.

While this thesis is limited by its research being more broad-based than specific, one advantage that arises concerns comparative transnational study. Elements of this study – most notably in the realm of truth and reconciliation-type efforts conducted in post-conflict contexts – have touched on historical incidences like those found in post-*Troubles* Northern Ireland, post-*Khmer Rouge* Cambodia, post-*Yugoslav Wars* Bosnia-Herzegovina, and post-*1994 genocide* Rwanda, the sum of which produced variable results.[2] What this thesis's findings can do is offer theoretical and case study insight not only about post-conflict transitional justice models, but it can also offer countries that share similar histories and social trajectories to South Africa's descriptions and solutions regarding how they can better attune their policies and social orientations in more equitable and peaceful directions.

Much of this thesis focuses on the structural violence that originated and proliferated through state institutions and the resistance that rose to meet this. Future research can delve deeper into how specific reforms (i.e., governmental capacity to eradicate corruption,

[2] McEvoy and Mallinder, "Amnesties in Transition", 410-440. It is important to continue charting how post-conflict countries that hold TRC-style hearings fare into the future, as the effects of conflict – and how they are handled – operate at innumerable socio-political levels, the sum of which goes some way toward influencing how economically prosperous and socially harmonious a country can be.

restructuring of the police force and the application of policing strategies, the nature of comprehensive judicial overhaul, and economic empowerment programs) could work, and if these are already operational, the state of their ongoing efficacy. Should this type of research be conducted to complement grassroots efforts aiming to empower communities toward economic and existential self-sufficiency that transcends South Africa's omnipresent violence, it could assist those most marginalised to live better, more peaceful lives.

With 1994 proving to be a historical inflexion point in South Africa and the work of the TRC still young relative to how long *apartheid* took hold and dominated South African society, continued research relating to the TRC's 'gross human riots violations' over structural violence methodology can further explain how and why violence continues in South Africa as it does. As the TRC's processes, findings, and conclusions are passed on to successive generations, it remains uncertain whether the moral compass initiated by Desmond Tutu and his TRC cohort could, in fact, have sewn positive effects on national identity formation and future policy reforms. It is also of value to the country – still enmeshed in violence but, with responsible government, possessing sufficient capacity to move beyond it – to better understand how transitional justice processes can shape, or fail to shape, collective memory and ongoing patterns of violence. If South Africa is ever again allowed to exorcise the violent extremes of its complex nature, it is hoped that the right structures, along with the right priorities and vision, can chart the way forward toward a more peaceful country for all of its citizens.

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APPENDICES

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Where leaders learn

RESEARCH ETHICS DECLARATION

To be included in the Appendices of research papers / dissertations / theses submitted for postgraduate examination where research did not involve interaction with human participants, or the use of animal subjects, and therefore did not require research ethics approval.

Candidates whose research did require ethics clearance must include their ethics approval letter in the Appendix of their examination submission.

Name of Candidate: NICHOLAS PANSEGROUW
Name of Supervisor: ALAN KIRKALDY
Degree: MASTER OF ARTS
Title of research:
BLOODBATH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE HISTORICAL PERIODS (THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE AND ITS AFTERMATH, ANTI-APARTHEID RESISTANCE AND STATE RESPONSE, POST-1994: CONTEMPORARY VIOLENCE AND THE TRC'S SHORTCOMINGS) EXPLORING THE PERSISTENCE OF VIOLENCE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

I declare that my research did not require ethical clearance because (tick all that apply):

I did not collect data from human participants or animal subjects	✓
I used previously collected data that had already received ethics clearance.	
I analysed documents / open-access digital texts that are freely available in the public domain.	✓
I did a literature review/analysis of theoretical or secondary material only.	✓
I used human datasets of non-sensitive information that are either anonymous (identifiers were never collected) or have been deidentified (identifiers have been completely removed).	
I used commercially produced human biological material (e.g. established human cell lines).	
I observed people in public spaces and natural environments where they had no reasonable expectation of privacy and I did not interact with them or intervene in any way.	
I used non-living animal materials (eg bones of already deceased organisms or fossils) while complying with any custody and/or jurisdiction requirements.	
I did a content analysis of public media (newspapers, advertisements, and social media posts).	✓
I did a simulation study with no real-world consequences and does not involve disturbing or distressing content.	

I observed flora, fauna, and ecosystems without interfering with or disturbing their natural state while complying with any jurisdiction requirements.	
Other (Please provide details):	

Signature of Candidate: Nicholas Arthur Pansegrouw Date: 2025/09/04

Signature of Supervisor:  Date: 2025/09/04

Signature of Supervisor: J.O. Thumbran Date: 2025/09/04