Black Peril, White Fear –

Representations of Violence and Race in South Africa's English Press, 1976-2002, and Their Influence on Public Opinion

Inauguraldissertation
zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde
der Philosophischen Fakultät
der Universität zu Köln

vorgelegt von

Christine Ullmann
Institut für Völkerkunde
Universität zu Köln

Köln, Mai 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of the first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories.

Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

The present dissertation is an attempt at uncovering the role of the mass media in this process of creating reality. Language will be of central concern because, in my opinion, by lending structure to experience, language is vital to all social processes. [1] However, my concern is not with language in the sense of Saussure's 'langue', but with language use in a specific socio-cultural context at a specific time. The reporting of violence in South Africa's English language press between 1976 and 2002 is what I am interested in. My question is how the newspapers have approached the subject of violence throughout this period of political transition and in which way their portrayal of the situation has influenced white South Africans' views of their country.

I will argue that, through the use of culturally salient images, the press manage to influence their readers' perception of and reaction to reality, thus making an important contribution to the creation, maintenance, changing, and development of society as a whole. This is not to mean that the press have total control over people's ideas. Rather, by providing them with information, they give them an option to build their views themselves. This relative power of the media is due to the nature of ideas. While they are often the result of personal experiences, even more frequently they are formed by absorbing the knowledge of other people. In modern societies the mass media play a growing role in communicating such knowledge. Everyone can make use of them to learn about things outside their immediate sphere of experience and, what is more, the media enable us to take facts out of their temporal and spatial context and insert them neatly into our own world of experiences. [2]

Central in this process of opinion formation are the frames of reference used, as the organisation of messages substantially influences the recipients' understanding of it. For our purpose, the term 'frame' is understood as the way concepts are associated within discourse. The framing of a message is, as Nelson et al. put it, "the process by which a source defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or political issue and outlines a set of considerations purportedly relevant to that issue" [3]. Like windows, different textual frames provide the reader with different views onto the world, which in turn reveal different aspects of reality. [4]

The world presented in the media should therefore be strictly distinguished from extra-medial reality. The latter is made-up of real people engaged in real actions and is thus independent of

---

[1] This theory also lies at the core of the so-called 'Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis', which postulates an intrinsic link between language and worldview. (Sapir (1962 (1929): 162) and Whorf (1956 (1940): 212))

[2] Ginsburg (1994: 5), Herman & Chomsky (1988: 1), Fowler (1991: 121), Altheide (1976: 12), Brewer (1986: 301) and Spitulnik (1993: 297)

[3] Nelson et al. (1997: 222)

[4] Fairclough (1992 b: 200), Nelson et al. (1997: 222) and Janney (1999: 263)

mediation through the common channels of mass communication. The former on the other hand derives its very existence from such mediation. It is composed of images of people and their actions as well as descriptions of social relations. Such media representations are never exact mirror images of the real world. Language, the very tool used to construct them, imposes a certain structure upon them, which is quite distinct from that of extra-linguistic reality. It forces the speaker (or writer) to select one of many theoretically possible formulations, every one of which contains a certain point of view. No one can ever express all there is to say about a subject. Thus, all media representations of the world are by their very nature subjective. They are worldviews. [5]

This, however, is not normally how the reporting is seen by its recipients. They often take it to be true in an absolute kind of way. To them the reports have a certain authority and are acted upon accordingly. This is not only true if they contain direct calls to action – such as Radio Mille Collines' call to arms in the Rwandan genocide – but also of mere factual reporting. Such elements as the news offer a platform for erecting the intellectual foundation of a society. They create, communicate, confirm, refine, and modify worldviews. [6]

These ideological and theoretical processes of interpreting, evaluating, explaining and understanding the world generally take place on a hidden, often sub-conscious level. According to Trew they only become visible at times of ideological crises. These are at hand when things happen that the persons involved do not consider normal and logical. They are events that do not comply with their view of the world and therefore stand as a challenge to the correctness of this view and the social order linked to it. If the gap between reality and theory grows too large, the two become incompatible and either the world or the worldview will have to change. As the real world can only be modified up to a point, the shift generally has to happen in the ideological sphere. Thus, the repairmen of the current worldview, as well as the proponents of alternative worldviews, get particularly active during such times and the mechanisms of theoretical correcting and ideological revolution become visible. [7]

As I will show in greater detail in chapter 2.1, anthropology takes violence to be a crossing of culturally defined borders of legitimacy. Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, for example, point out that "[w]hat constitutes violence is always mediated by an expressed or implicit dichotomy between legitimate/illegitimate, permissible or sanctioned acts" [8]. Violence thus stands as a challenge to the social order, which means that, if Trew is correct, it should incite an appropriate media response. I will show in the course of this paper that this is indeed the case.

---

[5] Fowler et al. (1979: 1), Brink (1989: 81), Whorf (1956 (1940): 214), Dyer (1990: 33), Fowler (1991: 4) and Kress & Hodge (1979: 5)
[6] Tomaselli (1996: 45-46), Wodak (2002: 12), Fowler (1991: 4), Schulz (1976: 29) and Carey (1989: 43 and 87)
[7] Trew (1979 a: 97) and Trew (1979 b: 118)
[8] Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois (2004: 2)

However, when investigating South Africa, we need to keep in mind that the country has experienced a high degree of violence for decades. Individual acts as well as the newspapers' approach to the subject as a whole must be viewed against this background, for, as an integral part of public discourse, the media will have to represent violence in society within its context. [9]

We also need to be aware of the difference in experience between different people in South Africa. While the black [10] population has historically been directly affected by the violence, white South Africans have until fairly recently remained largely untouched by it. The political protests of the 1960s and 1970s took place entirely in the townships and even the ANC's call in 1985 to "Take the Struggle to the White Areas" [11] did not export large-scale violence to white South Africa. The end of apartheid has brought with it a slow democratisation of violence, but white South Africans are still less touched by it than their black compatriots. Blacks are still victimised disproportionately more often.

And yet many white South Africans live in constant fear of violence. Their everyday lives are over-shadowed by the apocalyptic vision of a terrible blood bath, which will wipe out their culture in the not too distant future. [12] Thornton put it in his study of South African society:

> "For most of its history the sense of the end of history, the coming of bloody and final conflict, has characterized South Africa's view of its own history. (…) It is a vision of a 'rolling apocalypse' in which the predicted end is only just put off by another war, another proclamation, another bomb, by segregation, by Apartheid, by the end of Apartheid, by 'one settler, one bullet', and now by the elections." [13]

I was personally first confronted with such views in 1995 while I was living in America. I worked with a large number of white South Africans all of whom had relatively clear ideas about the violence in their country: It is bad, it is getting worse and it is perpetrated by blacks. When I investigated the matter more systematically, I found that these views were only voiced by whites who had either actively supported apartheid or silently enjoyed its benefits. Black

---

[9] Isaaks (1988: 26) and Riches (1986: 1)

[10] The term black is, unlike apartheid's other population classifications (white, coloured and Indian). Throughout the apartheid years, the government attempted to force people to accept its system of classifying people by the colour of their skin because they felt that several small population groups were much easier to control than one large opposition. The liberation movements on the other hand, knowing the purpose of the classifications, tried to unite all disenfranchised people under one common flag. To achieve this goal, they made use of the same linguistic strategy as the government: naming. In order to set themselves apart from the oppressors they chose the term 'black' to describe anyone who was not part of the privileged white elite. (North (1986: 7), TRC (17th September 1997: Don Mattera, 5) and Dennis Pather in an interview with the author, 11th April 2002)

In this paper I will use the term black in this latter sense. I do so mainly because I believe that everyone has the right to name themselves, but also because I feel that, even after its fall, the philosophy of apartheid does not deserve to be given further legitimacy by having its terminology made part of everyday language. For the same reason, I have not followed the official apartheid practice of capitalising the terms of racial classification. Throughout this paper I have used lower case to avoid making the described categories appear given by nature.

[11] ANC (1985: 1)

[12] du Preez (1982: 210), Steinberg (2001: 2), van den Berghe (1965: 3) and Thornton (1994: 14)

[13] Thornton (1994: 14)

South Africans or whites who had never supported the political mainstream did not seem to share them.

This led me to ask where these ideas come from. Why do different views of history result in such different ideas? My curiosity was further enhanced by a personal factor. To me, opposing the violent system of apartheid seemed to be the natural reaction of every thinking and feeling human being. I could not understand why the white population, for whom the country had technically been a democracy, had supported such an inhumane system for so long. Their decision was entirely alien to me. In order to understand them better, I wanted to find the factors that had influenced their choices.

I am hoping to find the main influence in the media, or more specifically in the English language press. The newspaper market is clearly dominated by the English groups with English language publications accounting for around four-fifths of the total daily circulation. Several cities, among them Durban, Kimberly, East London and Pietermaritzburg, have at least one English newspaper, but none in Afrikaans. Until the 1985 closure of the *Friend* in Bloemfontein, no city had an Afrikaans paper alone. [14]

Furthermore, although television and lately the Internet are important sources of information, newspaper readership is widespread among white South Africans and has been for decades. According to a survey carried out by Marked Research Africa in 1968, 72.5% of white South Africans read a daily paper on a regular basis and only 15.2% of English speakers never picked up a paper. [15] A study done by Giffard in 1976 found that only 3% of urban respondents (English and Afrikaans speaking whites above the age of 16) never read a newspaper, while many read more than one. [16] In 1980, about 73% of English speaking South Africans read a daily newspaper on a regular basis, and in 1984, about two-thirds of all white South Africans read a daily. The number for English speaker was even higher. [17]

Newspaper readership as measured by absolute numbers has risen substantially since the 1980s, but as both, population increase and the rise in literacy, outstripped the increase in readership, South Africa's newspapers are de facto becoming less popular. According to an estimate by the World Press Review, only 36% of South Africans use newspapers as a source of information. The share of white English speakers among newspaper readers has become difficult to assess because, since the end of apartheid, the different population groups are no longer listed in separate statistics. However, as, according to the South African Advertising Research Foundation's (SAARF) yearly All Media Products Surveys (AMPS), the total readership of English language newspapers has remained stable over the past years, it is safe

---

[14] Hachten (1984: 269), Phelan (1987: 46) and Jackson (1993: 31)
[15] Potter (1975: 85)
[16] Giffard (1976: 655)
[17] Hachten (1984: 269)

to assume that the English language press still plays an important role as a source of information for white South Africans. [18]

In order to show that the South African press has constructed a code, in terms of which the subject of violence is described, and that properly understanding this code involves adopting the values, assumptions and worldviews which are built into them, I have collected and analysed a corpus of over 250 news reports on violence from a number of South African dailies [19] printed between 1976 and 2002 [20]. To get to know the views ordinary white South Africans, I spent a total of nine months in South Africa, questioning people in interviews and everyday interaction. Finally, to prove my theory that the newspapers' cultural code of violence has actually influenced white South Africans' views, I compared the concepts found in my media analysis with the ideas expressed by the people I spoke with. However, a mere correlation is not yet proof of a causal relationship. I had to show that the reporting and the emergence of certain ideas are part of complex cultural processes which, studied as a whole, can reveal the mechanism of reality formation. Only if I manage to show who used which image at what time in order to present people with what version of reality, and to demonstrate how these images were constructed as well as how they were received, internalised and used by the public, will I be able to find the cultural code that was used to describe the ongoing violence and understand how this code is linked to the people's understanding of the world.

I will start in chapter 1 by creating a frame of reference for my work in a brief survey of the current state of research into the media's role in culture and society. I have been primarily influenced by three disciplines – anthropology, Cultural Studies, and Critical Discourse Analysis – and their history as well as their specific use to my work will be the focus of this chapter. Next, I will move on to my own research and explain my methods and my strategy of approach. The collection of material will play a central role here for this was the biggest challenge for successfully completing this dissertation.

When this preliminary work is completed, I will turn towards my actual subject. The first step is to outline the socio-cultural context of the news reports. In chapter 2, I will therefore briefly sketch the modern history of South Africa, paying special attention to the aspect of violence

---

[18] Vermeulen (2001: 1) and Biz-Community (2003: 1-3)

[19] I have concentrated on national and regional newspapers, daily and weekly, however, with a clear emphasis on the dailies. They were chosen by circulation size, in order to eliminate small local papers that do not have a profound impact beyond their immediate communities. Also excluded are specialised publications, such as financial newspapers like *Business Day* or the *Financial Mail*. The individual issues used were chosen by criteria of relevance (for example to find out how a particular incident was reported by a certain paper or to check how newspapers looked on a randomly chosen date in time to find developments in the incidence of violence in the news) and, of course, subject to availability. Particularly censored editions of more vociferous opposition papers were hard to come by. However, I believe that I have achieved to compile a balanced cross section as my corpus. For a detailed list of all newspapers used see the literature list.

[20] I have chosen such a large and divergent sample quite consciously. Although it makes an in-depth analysis of every single article impossible, which means that the end result might differ substantially from one that is obtained by looking at certain individual reports, I believe that it is still more representative of 'the press' as a whole. What I am looking for is not a one-size-fits-all universal key, but a general pattern. And, as Stuart Hall explained in an interview in 1994, "on the whole, over the output of a long period, you would tend to get the hegemonic message more frequently" (Angus et al. (1994: 263)).

and confrontation. From there I will move on to the violence itself. In a series of sub-chapters, each dedicated to an individual aspect of the ongoing violence I will try to give the reader an overview of the different meanings of the term. Hopefully, this patchwork approach will in the end lead to a broad understanding of this infinitely complex subject.

Before turning to the question of how the ongoing violence in South Africa was dealt with in the press, I will use chapter 3 to survey how South Africans' political views and ideologies have developed throughout history, because I believe that if we are to understand how the media operate in society, we must first know what exactly the society under review is all about. Categorization will play an important role here as in the South African context the terms of categorization are strongly charged with ideological significance. Making a difference between 'us', the category of oneself, and 'them', the category of the other, is quite important to most South Africans.

The next task will be to explain how the newspapers fit-in with society as a whole. The media landscape in South Africa is quite unique. On one hand, an immense variety of papers have existed there over the years, on the other hand the individual categories are relatively homogenous. The newspapers written for Afrikaners, English speakers, Indians, coloureds, and Africans were clearly distinct from one another. Within these groups, however, readers did not generally get much variety. The focus of my attention is, of course, the English language press. In an attempt to make their editorial choices more transparent, I will briefly sketch their history at the beginning of chapter 4. At the same time, I will also deal with the substantial amount of political interference in media affairs through censorship and propaganda operations in apartheid South Africa.

Once I have explored all aspects that influenced South African news reports during the period under review, I will turn to the subject of violence in the media. I will first show how the reporting has changed in quality and quantity over the years. Next, I will elaborate how the ideologies described in chapter 3 become manifest in the language and presentation of news reports. Then, in chapters 4.1 and 4.2, I will have a look at what exactly violence is when it is reported in the press. What acts are classified as violence? Who is involved? How are they described? The question here is not only what is said but also what is not said, because the omission of certain stories or of certain aspects of the stories printed is one of the most effective ways ideology functions in media texts, because it works at a level that the audience is not aware of. No one knows what has been left out and why. We generally accept news stories as complete and comprising all there is to know about a certain subject at any given

time. This lowers our willingness to question whether we are really presented with a carefully chosen section of reality, one that serves a certain ideological purpose. [21]

Then it is time to turn to the linguistic and visual codes that the newspapers constructed to explain the world to their readers. I will analyse a number of reports and explain the individual elements used in the description of violence. Here the question is no longer what is said, but how things are said, as the application of the above-mentioned codes is actually more important to the reports' effects on the audience than their content. I will thus analyse the media reports using all semiotic tools available, while at the same time correlating my findings with historical documents and first-hand accounts of the reported events, in order to make visible the point of view of the text thus contextualising it.

As my final step, I investigated how white South Africans think about violence. The results of this research will be presented in chapter 5. I will try to draw-up a comprehensive image, based on my own and other scientists' research, of what white, English speaking South Africans think of their country in general and the ongoing violence in particular. Throughout the chapter I will compare this world with that portrayed in the media reports, in order to show that clear parallels exist between the two. However, as I have already said, just correlating text and context will not be enough to accomplish the aim of this dissertation. I have to show that there is a relationship between the two whereby one influences the other. Using the method of triangulation (in this case comparing extra-medial reality as documented in chapter 2, the media reports and the results of my ethnographic work), I will attempt to show that the parallels between the white population's worldview and the media's reporting of violence cannot be the result of mere coincidence.

Through this work, I am hoping to render parts of South Africa's history more easily explainable, and to help all of us understand the current situation in South Africa a little better.

1. Defining my Approach: Scientific Background and Methods

1.1 Scientific Background

When I first began investigating the mass media, I did so from the point of view of anthropology. I saw the media as cultural artefacts and focussed mainly on the texts and images used in the reporting. However, I soon found that the media's relevance for society and culture goes much further. As Spitulnik put it, they are "at once artefacts, experiences, practices, and processes. They are economically and politically driven, linked to

---

[21] Cirino (1973: 40-42), van Dijk (1989 b: 220) and van Dijk (1991: 114)

developments in science and technology" [22]. A reliance on but one scientific discipline therefore necessarily stands in the way of a full understanding of the media. [23]

As I looked further afield, I found that in recent years scholars, mainly in English speaking countries, have often combined sociological theories with the knowledge of the cultural sciences, as well as with philosophical speculations, historical approaches and political and economic analyses in a new approach kind of media studies. [24] I am planning on following the tradition of this holistic research. The subject of my dissertation is a combination of a number of different problems that have to be solved individually before the whole can be understood. In order to achieve this I have drawn on three sources:

- Anthropological media studies, a discipline which has focused mainly on the people involved in the production and reception of media messages as well as the social processes and structures that gave rise to the media texts;

- Cultural Studies, whose main concern has been documenting the political and ideological role of the mass media in society; and

- Critical Discourse Analysis, a part of linguistics, which, besides studying language, also pays close attention to non-verbal carriers of meaning, such as images, page layout and position of a report within the media discourse.

These will be outlined in more detail in the following chapter in an attempt to explain how I combined them to form my own, interdisciplinary study of the social construction of reality.

1.1.1 Anthropological Media Studies

In 1993, Spitulnik bemoaned the fact that anthropologists had to that date largely managed to "neglect the centrality of mass media in twentieth century life" [25]. And while there are a few exceptions, it is still true today that anthropologists in industrial countries have paid scant attention to the mass media. While anthropological linguistics and Lévi-Straussian structuralism have spent ample time researching the relationship between culture and symbolic structures, and there are emerging wide-scale debates about films and television within the field of visual anthropology, a fully-fledged anthropology of mass media is still in its infancy. [26]

Until very recently, the study of mass media and society was neigh-on exclusively the realm sociology. However, the dominance of quantitative research methods in media sociology, especially in America, has led to an increasing appropriation of its work by commercial and political marketing interests. In recent years, the gap left by this narrowing of the research

---

[22] Spitulnik (1993: 293)
[23] Kellner (Unknown: 2)
[24] Fairclough (1992 a: 1) and Kellner (Unknown: 3)
[25] Spitulnik (1993: 293)
[26] Orywal et al. (1996: 24), Ginsburg (1994: 6), Tomaselli (1996: 10-11) and Spitulnik (1993: 293)

agenda has more and more often been closed by anthropology. Since the early 1990s, the discipline has shown an increasing interest in the media as a sphere of cultural action and expression, drawing on the work of sociology, but approaching the subject from a completely different angle. [27]

Anthropologists do not approach the media trying to find out how messages are transmitted through space. Instead, they see them as a means for creating, maintaining, modifying and transforming culture through time. Anthropology thus contextualises the media into larger fields of cultural practice, paying special attention to those areas that are of relevance for the existence of cultural values and shared identities: collective representations (from myths to movies), social formations (from kinship systems to newsrooms) and systems of exchange (not only transmission of message and market distribution but reciprocal and redistributive exchanges, such as community media). More specifically, researchers study how media producers put together their texts and investigate the reasons for, and patterns of, media consumption by different audiences. And in doing so they focus primarily on social relations: Social relations that organise media production and consumption, social relations between people and media, and the question of how social relations are mediated by communication and information technologies. [28]

This obviously calls for a different scientific approach than traditional media studies with their quantitative content analyses and artificially created focus groups have provided. Like other kinds of anthropology, the anthropology of mass media is rooted in fieldwork, that is, in a reflexive engagement with social actors in the contexts in which they live and work. Participant observation is an integral part of the anthropologist's work. The specific questions asked by the anthropology of mass media during such research are not so much driven by pre-existing theoretical assumptions but derive from the fieldwork experience. It does not 'test' projected effects on statistical samples but looks at the actual impact of the media in the lives of real people. It does not seek to reduce complexity by controlling social variables but rather seeks to theorize this complexity. [29] And last, but certainly not least, it employs the anthropological perspective. This means that anthropology of mass media is:

- Holistic:

  Holism posits that objects of analysis and their environments interpenetrate each other and even define one other. Anthropology is holistic in that it assumes things are inter-connected, even if we cannot immediately see the connections. It looks for connections between seemingly unrelated things. [30]

[27] Corner (1980: 73), Ginsburg (1994: 6) and Spitulnik (1993: 293)
[28] Ginsburg (1994: 13), Sanders (2000: 9), Servaes & Lie (1996: 8-9), Spitulnik (1993: 295) and Carey (1989: 43)
[29] Geertz (1994: 26), Ang (1991: 164-166), Ginsburg (1994: 12-13), Carey (1989: 56) and Shi-Xu (2003: 14)
[30] Keesing (1979: 27), Radcliffe-Brown (1987 (1940): xii), Geertz (1994: 17) and Carey (1989: 42)

- Relativistic:

Relativism is a crucial part of anthropology's strategy for handling difference. Anthropology accepts difference as meaningful in its own terms without reducing it to universalistic (and inevitably ethnocentric) categories. As most fieldwork takes them across cultural lines, anthropologists have learnt that what most people assume to be natural and universal is generally cultural and particular. With regards to the media this means that anthropology takes all meaning to be cultural and that without knowledge of a given culture, the meaning its members find in a medium cannot be understood by the researcher. [31]

- Interpretive:

Since Clifford Geertz's introduction of hermeneutics into anthropology, human behaviour has widely been viewed as symbolic action, which needs to be interpreted and whose meaning is to be understood. "What we call our data," Geertz writes, "are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to." [32] Thus, in the act of observing and documenting cultures, we automatically interpret them. [33]

- Evolutionary:

Anthropology assumes that social change is the norm. Rather than positing dichotomies like 'traditional' and 'modern', it works with a specific concept of culture, which is based on the assumption that innovation, diffusion, borrowing and hybridity are normal social processes. [34]

- Empirical:

Anthropology does not attempt to predict human behaviour. Instead, it attempts to understand it by way of observing it. The discipline hopes to render mankind understandable by accumulating information about it, by building an archive of possible behaviour so to speak, and by subjecting its findings to methods that help it to inductively construct a theory of how different cultures organise their world. [35]

The importance of anthropology for my work does not lay in the wealth of previous work on mass media to draw on, but in providing me with a set of tried and tested ways to do research. The present dissertation is meant to be an ethnography – at least in parts – in the sense of interpretive anthropology as practiced by Clifford Geertz. I share with Geertz a dislike for objectivism, as I believe that no social scientist can ever be objective in the sense in which the

---

[31] Radcliffe-Brown (1987 (1940): xi-xiii), Kress (1985: 72), Carey (1989: 56-57 and 65) and Geertz (1994: 17)
[32] Geertz (1994: 9)
[33] Clifford (1999: 34), Geertz (1994: 10 and 17-20) and Thompson (1990: 274-275)
[34] McMahon & Quinn (1993: 1), Kellner (Unknown: 3), Geertz (1994: 25) and Carey (1989: 66)
[35] Keesing (1979: 27), Geertz (1994: 17-18), Carey (1989: 56) and Goodenough (1964: 36)

word is used in the natural sciences. While it makes no difference to the outcome of an experiment in chemistry if the scientist is watching, in anthropology, the mere presence of the researcher affects the results of his/her work. I have therefore drawn on Geertz's advice that, if anyone is to profit from an ethnographic work, the writer should not obscure his/her role as an interpreter, but admit their biases and allow every subject, including themselves, self-awareness and agency. This has the added advantage of giving the reader the chance to filter out what he/she perceives to be the author's subjective point of view. The result is comparability despite the above-mentioned lack of objectivity. [36]

Thus, according to Geertz, a meaningful account of culture has to go beyond mere descriptions; it has to interpret what is observed. If approached in this manner, the work of ethnography appears rather like literary criticism – as unravelling the structures of meaning and determining their significance in society and, obviously, describing them intelligibly within the context of culture. [37] To this end, Geertz suggests a complete break with the old definition of what it means to do ethnography – "establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on" [38] – and to define the endeavour anew by what "kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow the notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description"" [39]. Critics have denounced this term as a mere catch phrase for the mixing of description and interpretation. But there is more to it. A 'thick' description is one which acknowledges the depth of culture and digs beyond what is visible at the surface to find the complex, hidden layers of significance. And it is an attempt of solving the anthropologist's paradox of wanting to describe a culture from the point of view of its members while accepting his/her status as an outsider.

And as such, cultural analyses are by their very nature incomplete. No matter how often we go back to re-assert our findings and no matter how often we have them reinterpreted by our informants, they will at all times remain interpretations. There is no getting to the bottom of it all, to the pure truth. All we can expect, even from a hermeneutic approach, is a refinement of our writing. [40] An ethnography will always present a limited view, a certain section, a passing impression of a culture for, besides being bound to the individual writer, they are also influenced by the way a particular culture presented itself to him or her at a particular point in time. Cultures are always in flux; never can you go back to the same place at a later date and hope to find the same things again. This should not be seen as a loss though, because, as

---

[36] Moreley & Silverstone (1991: 154), Cohen & Rapport (1995: 2) and McRobbie (1982: 52)
[37] Clifford (1999: 34 and 40), Geertz (1983: 58) and Geertz (1994: 9-10 and 14)
[38] Geertz (1994: 6)
[39] Geertz (1994: 6)
[40] Geertz (1968: 154), Geertz (1994: 29) Moreley & Silverstone (1991: 161) and Clifford (1999: 13)

Geertz has pointed out, the analysis of culture does not need to seek exactness, for "it is not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" [41].

1.1.2 Cultural Studies

The second important influence on my work has come from Cultural Studies, a discipline that emerged in Great Britain during the second half of the 20th century. It is concerned with phenomena at the interface between formerly distinct disciplines such as sociology, literary analysis and communication studies. Unlike anthropology, Cultural Studies is interested more or less exclusively in industrial societies and looks at culture in a highly politicised way and essentially from a Marxist point of view. The discipline draws on a critical paradigm in formulating its theories, that is, it approaches subjects with an eye on their role in constructing, maintaining and changing power relations in a society. [42]

For students of the media, this leads to a multiperspectival approach that combines the analysis of the production of culture with textual analysis and audience reception studies. Unlike proponents of what Teer Tomaselli has called the "Market / Libertarian / Pluralist theory" [43], who take the media to be a neutral transmitter of information controlled by audience demands, Cultural Studies see them as important carriers of ideology. They also credit the media with a very active role in "selecting and representing, of structuring and shaping" [44] events and thus providing audiences with ways of seeing and interpreting the world. By assigning meaning to things and events they become (co-) producers, rather than merely products, of the social context they emerged from. [45]

So much for the media themselves, but where does this model leave the audience? Are they not free to interpret messages in accordance with their views and opinions? Some critical theorists, such as those of the Frankfurt School, did claim that media consumers were mere passive recipients of pre-fabricated messages who had no understanding of the true nature of mass communication and thus no choice but to naively believe what they were told. On the other end of the scientific spectrum, the proponents of the libertarian theory pointed at the freedom of choice on the part of the audience and argued that people who are informed truthfully by a free media will always remain in control of their knowledge. [46]

When scholars of Cultural Studies first turned their attention to the media during the 1970s, they tended towards the Marxist power model of communication and argued that the ruling classes used the media to force their worldview on unsuspecting, passive recipients and to

---

[41] Geertz (1994: 5)
[42] Fiske (1987: 255)
[43] Teer Tomaselli (1992: 7)
[44] Hall (1984: 65)
[45] McCombs & Gilbert (1986: 2), Hall (1977: 340), Bennett (1982: 295-296) and Glasgow Media Group (1976: 339)
[46] Bourdieu (1991: 168 and 209-213) and Wodak (2002: 20), Hodge & Kress (1988), Kellner (Unknown: 9), Thompson (1990: 267-268) and Teer Tomaselli (1992: 10-11)

maintain the status quo. [47] However, with time Cultural Studies largely abandoned this rigid, deterministic point of view, for it has a fatal flaw: It does not take into account people's ability to think. The audience is not a herd of sheep without a will of their own. They are people who can choose if and what they want to watch or read. And they will not accept news that portrays a world completely different than what they think is real. [48] Moreover, as several researchers have shown, understanding and recall of media messages are greatly dependent on people's previous knowledge. They will generally find and remember what they knew before and forget almost everything else. [49]

The only way of solving this apparent incompatibility between media power and freedom of choice was to abandon both the behaviourist stimulus-response model of media 'effects' favoured by sociology and the 'hypodermic needle' model advanced by many Marxist scholars and instead view the media as a cultural and ideological force with a certain power in a broad social framework. This also entailed a move beyond the standard three-stage model of communication, sender – message – receiver, to take into account the serious intermeshing between these three moments. This new approach was inspired by Frank Parkin's and advanced by Stuart Hall in his groundbreaking research on encoding and decoding. [50] Hall pointed out that before there can be a sender or a message an event has to happen, which then has to be transformed into a text, a "story" [51] as he put it, and only then can it become a "communicative event" [52]. Thus, far from being separate, sender and message – producer and product as it were – are closely intertwined. One would not exist without the other. [53]

The same is true at the other end of the old model, that of the receiver. As Hall wrote: "Before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined), satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use', it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded." [54] Thus, without a decoder, there is no message. And while the person doing the encoding sets certain limits for possible understandings of the message, the one decoding it is not a mere receiver, but an active participant in the process of making meaning.

Applied to news discourse this suggests that, when writing an article, the journalist has in mind a preferred or intended meaning, which he/she encodes in the article. During the actual

---

[47] Golding & Murdock (1978: 201 and 213), Chibnall (1977: 3-5), Fiske (1987: 260) and Moores (1993: 12-15)

[48] Kress (1985: 73), Carey (1989: 52 and 54), Östgard (1965: 46) and Fowler (1991: 43)

[49] Hartmann & Husband (1974: 95-96), van Dijk (1988 a: 153-154), Stocking & LaMarca (1990: 295), Bell (1991: 233) and Findahl & Höijer (1981: 395-396)

[50] Hall, Stuart, 1973, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, University of Birmingham, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Stencilled Occasional Papers, No. 7. Reprinted in 1980 as *Encoding/Decoding*. In: Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe & Paul Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson, 128-138.

[51] Hall (1980: 129)

[52] Hall (1980: 129)

[53] Hall (1984: 56-57), Hall (1980: 129-130) and Morley (1983: 104)

[54] Hall (1980: 130)

process of media consumption, the audience decodes the meaning of the text on the basis of their own previous experiences – with the media as well as other aspects of the world. [55]

This, obviously, does not always lead to the understanding intended by the author. Cultural Studies have identified three positions the reader can take when faced with a text: The 'dominant code', the 'negotiated code' or the 'oppositional code'. If they opt for the first, the message encoded in the text is likely to be accepted as intended by the writer. Under the negotiated code, readers decode the message partially or resist part of it. For example in an article about violence in the South African townships, readers might accept the general definition of an incident as a riot, but reject explanations about the causes of this particular riot. Considering the multiplicity of messages encoded in every text, this is probably the option taken in most instances. The final option, that of an oppositional code, the dominant ideology encoded in the text is rejected outright. [56]

The above-described assumptions about the process of news production and the role of the audience have had a profound impact on the aim of media research. The purpose was no longer to find some absolute truth or real reality behind the message and expose ideological distortion of these facts. Nor did researchers any longer feel that a correlation of social factors (such as class, creed or gender) with psychological variables of the media consumed (credibility, appeal of the message) would help them make solid predictions about future behaviour (choice of political allegiance, voting behaviour). The onus now lay on discovering how a particular system of representation offers us a way of experiencing the world. [57]

This is not to mean that the accuracy or truthfulness of an article cannot or should not be tested by the researcher. However, in order to do so successfully, the researcher has to redefine the term 'truth'. Foucault's metaphor of "regimes of truth" [58] is helpful in this respect. Here, the notion of truth as a state is replaced by one of truth as relationship. A text is never intrinsically true or untrue. It can only ever be true in relation to a specific frame of reference. Accordingly, the truth of a statement can always be tested in relation to the conceptual system of the person making it. [59]

Truth is of undisputed importance to my work. I must investigate if and to what extent the newspapers deceived their readers by, either knowingly or unknowingly, providing them with false accounts of the facts. However, the question of meaning clearly takes precedence, for how can we measure such categories as 'unrest', 'revolution' or 'black-on-black violence' in terms of truthfulness? We cannot. No one can count them, photograph them or verify them.

---

[55] Hall (1980: 134-136), Fiske (1987: 260), Hartley (1982: 25), Corner (1980: 78-79), Davis (1993: 38) and Kress (1985: 73)
[56] Hall (1980: 136-138), Hartley (1982: 148), Moreley (1983: 107-110) and Wren-Lewis (1983: 186-187)
[57] Thompson (1981: 99-100), Bennett (1982: 302-306), Fiske (1987: 256) and Carey (1989: 60-63)
[58] Foucault (1980: 133)
[59] Searle (1995: 8), Sayer (1984: 64-67), Ricoeur (1981: 213), Potter (1996: 86) and Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 161-162)

All we can do is understand their meaning in any given context and to investigate how this meaning came about. [60] This is exactly what I intend to do.

1.1.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Despite their concern for the communication process, the approaches described above paid only scant attention to the linguistic features of media messages. Cultural Studies borrowed from semiotics the notion of code as a conventional meaning system, but never looked at the signs that convey the meaning. Similarly, anthropology looks at media texts under the assumption that language operates as a transparent vessel for meaning. [61] The first attempt at studying language in society was made in the 1970s by linguists, especially those who followed a critical paradigm. Their interest was with language use in public and institutional settings that reflect unequal power relations. [62] Many of them turned away from the notion of language, focussing instead on discourse, which was seen as a "systematically organized set of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution" [63].

This emphasis brought "social science and linguistics (…) together within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them" [64]. Language and society were seen as too closely intertwined to be viewed independent of each other. Language is socially conditioned, that is, it is the result of its use in social situations. At the same time it is socially constitutive, though, in that it shapes these very situations and the social identities of, and the relationships between, its users. As such it has the power to sustain and reproduce the status quo or to challenge or even change it. [65] The central notion of CDA hence echoes that of Cultural Studies: Meaning cannot simply be found in texts. It is constructed in a dialogue between the writer and an active reader; it emerges only in discourse. [66]

Researchers therefore do not limit themselves to textual analysis, instead looking at the entire communicative event. Fairclough advances an analytical model of concentric squares with the text in the middle, surrounded by the discourse practice (text production and consumption), and finally the sociocultural practice (the social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event). For Fairclough, discourse practice mediates between society and culture on the one hand and language on the other. [67] This view closely resembles van Dijk's three dimensions of ideological analysis: Discourse analysis, analysis of sociocognition, and social analysis. [68] The main difference between the two approaches is the second dimension.

---

[60] Johnston (1996: 82), Geertz (1994: 5) and Hodge & Kress (1988: 122)
[61] Geertz (1964: 57), van Dijk (1985: 2), Jensen (1991: 28), Scollon (1998: 269) and Sayer (1984: 57)
[62] Wodak (1996: 15), Weedon et al. (1980: 209-210), Shi-Xu (2003: 1 and 11) and Fairclough (1995 54)
[63] Kress (1985: 68)
[64] Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999: 6)
[65] de Cillia et al. (1999: 157), Wodak (1996: 15), Kress (1985: 67 and 81) and Fairclough (1992 a: 28-29)
[66] Garrett & Bell (1998: 2-6), Fairclough (1995: 27-28), Fowler (1991: 43) and van Dijk (1988 a: 99)
[67] Fairclough (1992 a: 71-73) and Fairclough (1995: 57-60)
[68] van Dijk (1988 a: 18-26) and van Dijk (1995: 30)

While Fairclough takes discourse practices to be the mediator between the text and the world, van Dijk's model favours social cognition and mental models. [69]

This difference in emphasis has resulted in two slightly different approaches to news analysis. In the basic dimension, Fairclough focuses on a micro-level analysis of the surface structures of media texts, while van Dijk is mainly concerned with the macro-level, that is, the thematic/ topic structure of news stories and their overall structural schemata. Still, the two have much in common in this core area. Both combine linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar and semantics with the investigation of rhetorical elements that lend factuality to the reports, such as quotations and indirect speech, and the study of textual organisation above the sentence level, such as cohesion or turn-taking in interviews. [70]

In the second dimension, the two approaches differ most strikingly. Fairclough's main concern is with the routines of news gathering, news selection, writing and editing. [71] One central notion here is that of intertextuality [72]. As Fairclough pointed out: "The media help build up 'mnemonic frameworks of definition' in terms of which news stories are subsequently interpreted." [73] Before an event is first reported, it is still open to a number of different descriptions and their associated interpretations. Once it has been captured in an article it becomes fixed and generally eludes understanding in any new terms. Any further accounts of the event then tend to be based on this first interpretation. [74]

The question of access to the media as sources and distributors of information and the practices and contexts of media consumption, do not remain unaddressed, but Fairclough approaches them in a strangely ambivalent way. On the one hand, he agrees with Cultural Studies that different audiences find different meanings in texts. [75] On the other hand, like all Critical Discourse Analysts, he tends to focus on what he perceives to be the intended reading of a given text, without using empirical data to support his views. Thus, the analysis of text reception in Fairclough is more of an interpretive affair. [76]

Van Dijk on the other hand is interested in the people involved with the text, focussing on the cognitive processes that happen during text production and reception. In his eyes, when reading a newspaper, people bring with them previous knowledge that helps them establish the meaning of the individual text. An understanding of the language used as well as a degree

---

[69] van Dijk (1991: 119), van Dijk (1995: 2), Fairclough (1995: 29) and van Dijk (1998 b: 26-27)
[70] Fairclough (1995: 30 and 57-58), van Dijk (1989 b: 209-213) and van Dijk (1991: 45-47 and 118-119)
[71] Fairclough (1995: 48-50)
[72] This idea is taken from Russian linguist Julia Kristeva, who defined intertextuality as "the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history" (Kristeva (1986: 39)).
[73] Fairclough (1992 b: 199-200)
[74] Shotter (1993: 84-85), Fairclough (1995: 48), Potter (1996: 78-79) and Fairclough (1992 a: 101-102)
[75] van Dijk (1991: 42), Fairclough (1995: 15-16) and Wodak (2002: 11-12)
[76] Fairclough (1995: 16)

of knowledge of the properties of media genres [77] and the structure of news discourse [78] are essential. [79] Equally, text comprehension is influenced by readers' views of the world and their attitudes towards the situations described. According to van Dijk, during the process of news consumption, readers subconsciously combine their previous knowledge with the new information received to form a 'situational model', a mental representation of the type of situation described. This model is taken to be the decisive factor influencing what meaning each reader finds in a given text. [80]

Similar processes are seen to be at work in text production. Just as readers interpret texts, journalists interpret social events and represent them according to models. Their models also determine the rules of newsgathering, such as the establishing of beats or the processing of source texts, as well as the writing of a news report. In fact, all rules guiding news production, from text schemata to news values, can ultimately be described in terms of models. [81]

The third dimension, that of socio-cultural practice, is more uniform again. Closely mirroring Ricoeur and Habermas, CDA looks not only the immediate framework of the communicative event, but also its economic, political and cultural context. For media analysts this means that the political economy and ownership structure of the media houses, the nature of the market in which they operate, the political situation in the country under investigation, and the cultural background of the journalists and the audience need to be studied before any significant findings can be made about the meaning of a certain media text. [82]

CDA' approach differs markedly from communication studies in that quantitative methods are largely rejected and researchers make no attempt to remain objective or uninvolved. Not unlike Geertz, they have repeatedly stated that social scientists cannot be neutral and should therefore openly formulate their socio-political goals. This is CDA's relevance for my work. Most scholars working in this field have the explicit aim of demystifying social processes that allow for injustice, inequality, abuse of power, misleading audiences, and so on. Moreover, CDA's rejection of a formulaic approach to media studies has enabled me to develop my own paradigm as a synthesis of the above outlined disciplines, while giving me clear guidance as to the appropriateness of individual choices. Thus, while anthropology gave me the analytical tools for my work and Cultural Studies laid out a path I could follow during my analyses,

---

[77] The famous panic that broke out after the radio airing of Orson Wells' *War of the Worlds* was due to many people mistaking this radio drama for a documentary because it made use of all the markers of the documentary genre. This is a clear example of how the genre influences the meaning of a text.

[78] The language of newspaper headlines, for example, is highly conventionalised, as is the structure of the reports as a whole. Without an understanding of these conventions headlines such as "Police night of madness" (Cape Argus (1st February 2002: 1)) would make no sense to the reader.

[79] van Dijk (1991: 114-119)

[80] van Dijk (1988 a: 21-26), van Dijk (1988 b: 107-110 and 141-150) and van Dijk (1998 b: 24-31)

[81] van Dijk (1988 a: 27-28), van Dijk (1988 b: 96-100 and 111-124) and Stocking & LaMarca (1990: 298-301)

[82] Fairclough (1995: 42-48 and 50-52) and Thompson (1990: 278-284)

CDA supplied me with the perspective from which I viewed my subject and hence a more or less clear concept of the problem at hand.

1.2 Methods

1.2.1 Information Sourcing

The aspect that was easiest to approach, but hardest to uncover was the historical reality of South Africa. The greatest problem to the researcher arises from the patchy documentation of certain parts of history, and the large-scale destruction of documents during and just after the end of apartheid. According to estimates by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the South African government destroyed 85% of all official documents, between 1960 and 1994. The sanitation of archives slowed substantially after the change to democracy, but small-scale destruction continued until November 1996. In the end, probably less than 5% of the original material was saved. [83]

I therefore had to rely largely on secondary sources to reconstruct the history of violence in South Africa. Institutions such as the TRC, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at the University of the Witwatersrand, and the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) as well as numerous individual authors, journalists and photographers have devoted much time and effort to what the TRC, citing Milan Kundera, called the "struggle of memory against forgetting" [84]. Most of my writing on South African history is based on their work.

Another field that I explored partly with the help of literature was that of newspaper production in general and the corporate culture of South African newspaper houses in particular. Many people assume that the news just happens. It is out there waiting to be found, 'gathered' as the English language misleadingly puts it. This view is rather naïve, though. At best we could say that events happen that subsequently get reported as news, but even this would be misleadingly simplistic. The news is a cultural artefact, produced according to culturally accepted ways of thinking, writing and composing. Every day, there are an infinite number of reportable facts, but only very few of them appear in the newspapers. Of the ones that do, not all aspects could possibly be reported, so they are trimmed down further to fit the mould of a news item. These processes of story selection and production are important in determining what messages enter the symbolic arena, and thus what view of the world is provided to readers. [85]

In order to find out how and why certain stories made their way into South African newspapers, I conducted an extensive literature review. Besides the works cited in the

---

[83] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 8, Para 1, 35, 58, 60, 64, 90, 94, 99, and 101 and Merrett (1994: 193-194)
[84] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 5, Para 51
[85] Hall (1973: 181), Fowler (1991: 10-11), Reah (1998: 4) and van Dijk (1989 a: 103-104)

literature list, I read a number of books on various subjects related to the study of media institutions and the production of newspapers that were of no direct use to my dissertation and have therefore not been listed. I also conducted a broad search of the Internet for subjects that might be of interest for my work. For example, I visited the websites of all major South African newspapers and studied the way they presented themselves to the outside world, and worked my way through a number of university websites looking at the work done by their communications and journalism departments. This gave me a broad base of knowledge on the subject of media in South Africa, which I could later draw on during my visit to the newspaper offices themselves.

1.2.2   Participant Observation

The present situation in South Africa was obviously easier to investigate than the its past, as I had the possibility of going there myself and to get to know the country and its culture(s). The method I chose to this end was that of participant observation. I moved to Cape Town, rented a flat in a white neighbourhood, and did what any normal South African does on any normal day – work, shop, go to the cinema and so on. My goal was to become a member of white South African society, to understand the culture I was studying from the inside.

At the same time, I tried to keep enough distance to observe the world around me from a researcher's perspective. This was a perspective I could not have shed even if I had wanted to, so reminding myself of it from time to time was my way of keeping it explicit in the resulting field notes and, of course, in the present paper. I wanted to avoid the pitfalls of traditional ethnography lamented by Clifford & Marcus:

> "The ethnographer's personal experiences, especially those of participation and empathy, are recognised as central to the research process, but they are firmly restrained by the impersonal standards of observation and "objective" distance. In classical ethnographies the voice of the anthropologist was always manifest, but the conventions of textual presentation and reading forbade too close a connection between authorial style and the reality represented." [86]

One more factor motivated me to remain an outsider: My work was not only meant to help me understand the world of white South Africans; it was also seen as a critique of this world. My ultimate aim was therefore to assess what I and many other whites in South Africa had experienced compared with what I could have seen. I tried to see as much as possible of the other side of life in South Africa, the life that 'my whites' were rarely exposed to. I visited Langa, one of Cape Town's townships, and Bo-Kaap, a neighbourhood within the bounds of Cape Town proper that is largely inhabited by coloured people of Muslim faith. I also spent

---

[86] Clifford & Marcus (1986: 13)

one day selling the *Big Issue*, a magazine in Cape Town sold by "socially excluded people" [87], in front of a supermarket. I frequently travelled by train or minibus taxi rather than by car and took long walks through the back streets of downtown Cape Town.

I repeated this approach in all other places I got to, be it big cities like Johannesburg (where I spent two months) and Durban (where I was for two weeks), smaller towns such as Bloemfontein and Kimberly (I stayed for a week in each) or villages like Cintsa East in the Eastern Cape and Springbok in the Northern Cape. In the process I made notes and took pictures of anything that seemed of importance to me. These field notes later served as a basis for reconstructing my own view of white South African life.

During my nine months in South Africa I certainly grappled with such problems as 'observer's paradox' and a feeling of insecurity as to whether I was actually achieving anything. Was I really a researcher or just a long-term holidaymaker who happened to talk to a few journalists along the way? Was what I was doing 'participant observation' as intended by anthropology? I was certainly observing South African life, but was I participating? Or was my active observing actually preventing me from taking part in every-day life? Did people really give me their true opinions or did they, despite my having told them that I was researching current affairs and political developments, somehow sense what I was after and told me what I wanted to hear? And what about the journalists? They knew my true subject, did they feel pestered or offended at my intrusion and I was just too blue-eyed to notice? As I explained above, I do not believe that these questions can be answered conclusively. All I can do is reflect on them and hope that my introspection will help me find an answer that I personally can live with. And so I watched and listened and interpreted, asked some new questions and listened again. And in the end, after the cacophony of voices and kaleidoscope of impressions had faded and I was back in Europe looking at 'my material' I started the interpretation process anew. [88]

1.2.3 Interviews

The next step beyond mere observation was to find people who could answer the questions I had and help me patch together an image of the world English speaking South Africans live in. First, I went looking in my immediate surroundings questioning neighbours and friends I had made. These people knew roughly why I was in South Africa, and volunteered to help me understand their fellow countrymen and formulate the interview questions that I would put to them. In the next step, I tested these questions during conversations with, for example, my friends' family members and friends. I still avoided and interview-like setting. Rather,

---

[87] Big Issue (Any Issue: Imprint)
[88] I double checked these results agin in a second visit to South Africa in January and February 2005.

whenever I met them, I dropped the occasional question and observed the reaction. The answers were neither taped nor written down immediately, because I did not want the people around me to feel that I was recording their every move. I found out fairly quickly that South Africans are weary of being watched. So, rather than making them uncomfortable, I opted for memory protocols, short notes of what had been said that I wrote whenever the opportunity arose, sometimes very shortly after the conversation if I was on my own for a moment, but generally later that same day. At home I transcribed them on my computer in order to have a searchable database of opinions, and colour coded some parts for further investigation. These, however, were still only sound bites, a random collection of statements that did not really amass to a comprehensive viewpoint.

This could only be found through interviews. Once my questionnaire (see Appendix A) was complete, I set out to find people who were willing to speak to me at length and let me pick their brains in partly structured, open-ended interviews. I must admit that this task was harder than I had anticipated because as soon as I told people what I was up to they generally became rather wary of my motives. That said, I should mention that there were a number of people who were more than helpful, very forthcoming and seemed almost eager to be able to share their views. They gave me the impression that they felt lost and overlooked in the New South Africa and despised the fact that, like a redundant piece of software or a week-old newspaper, no one was interested in them anymore.

Another problem I encountered was to find people of varying backgrounds. I was aware of the risk that if I only spoke to my friends in Cape Town I would get a skewed picture of South Africa. Thus, in order to avoid the pitfalls of familiarity I opted for distance. I asked people I barely knew, such as a researcher at Stellenbosch University and a neighbour I had only just met, if they could get me in touch with people who might be willing to speak to me. Their recommendations amounted to a list of 22 people, unfortunately still mostly in the Cape Town area. I contacted all of them variously by telephone or e-mail. If I did not hear back from them I wrote or called one more time and after that struck them from the list. In the end, this did not lead to the desired snowball effect of ever-greater interest in my work. Only nine people, five women and four men (as well as one lady's 11-year-old daughter), agreed to be interviewed, five of them in their own homes, the rest in a café or restaurant.

My interview partners did not know the real subject of my research, because in order to avoid influencing their answers, I told everyone that I was researching politics and current affairs in South Africa. The interviews were partly structured, but open-ended, because I wanted the results to reflect, as far as possible, the opinions of the people I spoke with rather than my views. After my bad experience with recording people who are not used to it I did not attempt to tape the interviews and instead opted for writing down their answers. This had the

disadvantage that it disrupted the flow of the conversation, but on the other hand enabled me to scribble down extra little details like remarks about gestures.

In general, I was quite happy with the outcome, but I did feel that my sample was neither big enough nor really representative of South Africa. Although it included men and women aged between their early 30s and mid-60s (my guess) I lacked younger people, people of lower socio-economic standing, and, obviously anyone other than Capetonians. In order to find their views, I decided to conduct street surveys in several South African cities. I revised my questions and compiled a nine-point questionnaire that called for basic yes or no answers, which could be further explained if necessary (see Appendix B). This approach was first tested during trips to Durban and Bloemfontein – with very bad results. In Durban I spent two hours standing at the beachfront and in all this time only managed to get ten people to stop and speak to me – including two couples and a pensioner accompanied by her son. I did manage to broaden my demographic base, though. In total I spoke with four women and six men, including an 83-year-old lady, a 19-year-old (female) student, a homeless man and a recent émigré who was only in the country to visit his father.

The results in Bloemfontein were even more disastrous. There, I strategically positioned myself at the entrance to a big, brand new shopping centre that to me was like a trip back to the apartheid years: All shoppers and most shop clerks were white while the cleaners were all black. I was really looking forward to this experience and enthusiastically approached a number of people – to no avail. I stood there being ignored or turned down for over half an hour before the first person, a disabled lady in her fifties, felt sorry enough to stop. Or was she just too slow to run? After six questions she excused herself and was gone. Still, the next half-hour proved more productive than the last with four more people, three women (two, of about 20 and 40, who came together and a teenager) and one man (a pensioner in his 70s), stopped and spoke with me.

Unfortunately after this first hour – I was going to stay for two hours as in Durban – my research in Bloemfontein was brought to an abrupt end. The next person to speak to me was a security guard who hauled me before the head of mall security. And as if that was not scary enough, the man turned out to be a massive Afrikaner, a good two metres tall and not much less in width, and was not the sort of person you wanted to be angry with you. When he shook my hand I felt as if he was trying to break my fingers, and when asked me, politely and in English, to stop pestering his customers and either shop or leave, I opted for the latter. I would have continued my survey on this seemingly safe side of the road, but the shops here were patronised only by blacks – oh yes, apartheid lives on in Bloemfontein!

In any case, after this experience I dropped all hopes of getting people to speak to me in interviews and continued with my initial approach of asking questions in informal

conversations, both with strangers and with people I knew, and later sketching the results down on a notepad. This worked – even in Bloemfontein where I had a great conversation with a man at the mall the next day – and therefore remained my main source of information that the chapter on South Africans' ideas about their country in general, and violence in particular, is based on.

Interviews were a much more appropriate method when it came to researching the ins and outs of news production. I visited a total of 17 newspaper offices in all major South African cities [89] and interviewed 35 active and retired journalists, six current or former managers or managing editors of a variety of newspaper houses (old and new), seven researchers from various universities and independent research institutions as well as spokespersons for the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the South African Union of Journalists, the ANC (including Pallo Jordan, who, after 1980, was the director of the ANC'S first internal mass propaganda campaign), the Office of the State President, the Ministry for Safety and Security, the Freedom Front and the apartheid government (Leon Mellet, the former director of information for internal media at the Bureau for Information). [90]

Interview subjects were first contacted by e-mail or telephone. If they agreed to speak to me, an appointment for a personal interview was set up. Several people did not reply to my requests or turned me down, unfortunately including the three journalists I contacted at the *Cape Times*, the editor of the *Cape Argus* and the people behind the contact e-mail at the *Daily Dispatch* and the *Eastern Province Herald*, which meant that modern perspectives from both the Western and Eastern Capes were missing. Most former employees of alternative newspapers were unavailable too, which weighed my knowledge heavily in favour of the mainstream press. But the wealth of material and the help I got from everyone else, including several former editors of the *Cape Times* and *Rand Daily Mail* as well as former contributors to the alternative press, including the editor of *Umafrika* and the news editor of *Grassroots*, meant that the missing voices did – at least in my opinion – not affect the overall quality of my data.

With the exception of one conversation, which took place in a café, all interviews were conducted in my contact's office or home. They followed the same pattern as those I had with ordinary South Africans. They were partly structured with open-ended questions. I had a list of questions that everyone was asked (see Appendix E), but those were a mere guideline for the conversation. Additional questions were asked where it was appropriate, and, if the interview veered off in a direction that no longer followed my questionnaire, but was still relevant for my research, I did not force the remaining questions on my interview partner, as

---

[89] For a complete list of all institutions I visited see Appendix C
[90] For a complete list of all people spoke with see Appendix D

this would have interrupted the flow of information. The interviews were recorded and later partly transcribed by myself, except my conversation with a former manager of the Argus Group, who wished not to be taped. In this case I took notes during the interview and supplemented them later with a memory protocol. I transcribed the language as I encountered it, with all pauses, repetitions and interruptions, but edited some of the quotes included in this paper in order to make them more readable and render the content more understandable. I realise that this kind of editing can and does distort the content as well, but I hope and believe that my intervention did not in fact alter the overall message intended by the interviewee.

1.2.4 Newspaper Analysis

An important part of my work was dedicated to the investigation of the manifest content of news reports, that is, the linguistic and visual elements used as basic carriers of meaning. This was meant to help me find what Iser has called "the code underlying the text" [91], the set of culturally salient rules that define exactly how violence is to be understood in the context of English language press reports in South Africa. My primary concern in this section was with the written aspects of the news reports, most importantly their language. Lexical choice, word or clause order and the grammatical style strongly influence the readers' understanding of the message and as such warranted close attention.

Another important element of any newspaper today is the photograph. Pictures have a special significance when it comes to conveying meaning to the public. Previous research has shown that more people look at the pictures in a newspaper than take the time read the articles and that photographs are the one feature most often remembered about a news report. [92] Pictures are also interesting to the researcher because, unlike language, they carry an air of objectivity. Looking at a photograph gives us a degree of certainty that the things portrayed really happened as we see them. [93] Such views are deceiving though. Far from being a "message without a code" [94], as Barthes once called them, news photographs are highly stylised means of communication, carefully constructed through the choice of equipment, angle, distance from the motif, details included, the moment chosen to photograph, the selection of a specific shot for publication, its size, position on the page and the accompanying text. The only reason we do not routinely notice the code at work is because we have internalised it to a point where it becomes transparent. [95]

---

[91] Iser (1978: 81)
[92] van Dijk (1988 a: 146), Bollig & Klees (1994: 13) and O'Dowd (1996: 1 and 24-25)
[93] Retief (2002: 69), Barthes, (1977 (1964): 44-45), Bollig & Klees (1994: 13) and Potter (1996: 97)
[94] Barthes (1983 (1961): 196)
[95] Edwards (1997: 222), MacLuhan (1964: 188-193), Hartley (1982: 181), Bignell (1997: 98-103), Corner (1980: 82), Tomaselli (1996: 61-65) and Potter (1996: 97)

That said, we should not forget that meaning is not inherent in texts or images, but rather negotiated in discourse. In order to find the meaning of a report, questions such as that about its broader context, the time span a subject was dealt with, the nature of the external referent, possible modes of text consumption and the integration of the audience in the process of reporting had to be explored. [96] Moreover, to show that the apparent mirror images of reality and seeming carriers of truth are really building blocks of one particular reality and windows onto just one of many truths, I had to take a closer look at the press reports as a whole, that is, at all linguistic and visual components used as basic carriers of meaning as they appeared together on the page. The positioning of an article within the newspaper, length and presentation of the report, the layout and composition of a page, the size and wording of the headline, the captions under the pictures and the use of colours are of equal importance for understanding the message that a newspaper is trying to communicate. Such factors give the reader clues on the relative importance of the individual elements as well as about the events reported, the people involved and the issues behind the reports. [97]

Special attention here was paid to the front page. Most South African newspapers are sold not by subscription, but in the street, either by newsagents or by vendors who stand at traffic lights and other strategic points in public places. Headlines and photographs that are anticipated to increase sales therefore tend to be quite large. "You've got to scream at people on the street corner," Tony Heard explained. [98] This has the effect that a large number of non-readers are exposed to the news every day. They read the headlines when a vendor knocks on their car window or see the front-page pictures while walking past a stall. Accordingly, the impact of these features on the public is in fact far greater than the sales figures would lead us to believe. Many people read parts of a paper without ever buying it. [99]

In fact, I always tried to keep in mind not only the readers, but all people involved with the text. Besides the "implied reader" [100] described above, which was defined by Iser as "a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him" [101], every text also contains at an expression of its producer's worldview. As a researcher, I have to know both, the producer and the target audience, to understand what meaning a given text is intended to communicate. [102] The media analysis was thus only possible after I had already begun interviewing journalists and managers and had to be conducted in close coordination with further interviews. However, the meaning of a text when it is read by a real person is

---

[96] Sepstrup (1981: 138), Lindkvist (1981: 27) and Shi-Xu (2003: 12)

[97] Jalbert (1983: 284), Kress & van Leeuwen (1998: 186-188), Iser (1978: 9-10 and 21), van Dijk (1989 a: 115) and Sepstrup (1981: 137)

[98] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002

[99] Develotte & Rechniewski (Unknown: 2), Ferguson (1998: 130) and O'Dowd (1996: 82)

[100] Iser (1978: 34)

[101] Iser (1978: 34)

[102] Hartley (1982: 87), Reah (1998: 35), Schudson (1991: 152) and Gans (1979: 238)

quite different from the meaning encoded by its author. The problem of understanding can therefore not be solved by an exclusive focus on the author. I had to keep my interview transcripts and field notes close at hand throughout the entire media analysis in order to remind me from what position the articles before me would be viewed. For the same reason, I frequently took my results back to the people whose ideas I was investigating to check that they still found themselves in my text.

But enough general information. What exactly did I study? During my media analysis I looked at over 200 issues of 19 newspapers. Five of those, *Natal on Saturday*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Tribune*, the *Sunday Independent* and the *Weekly Mail / Mail and Guardian*, were weeklies with a national reach and two, the *East Cape Weekend* and the *Saturday Independent* were regional weeklies (the latter in KwaZulu Natal).

Of the daily papers I studied, four were circulated in Gauteng: Johannesburg's three big dailies, the *Rand Daily Mail* (closed in 1985), *The Citizen*, and *The Star* with its weekend editions, the *Weekend Star* and the *Sunday Star* (closed in 1994), as well as the *Pretoria News*. In the Western Cape I focussed exclusively on Cape Town and its two newspapers, the *Cape Times* and *The Argus / Cape Argus*, along with the *Weekend Argus*, which is published both on Saturdays and Sundays. In the Eastern Cape I looked at the *Eastern Province Herald* from Port Elizabeth, and the *Daily Dispatch*, an East London-based morning daily. In KwaZulu Natal, I included three newspapers, one, *The Natal Witness*, from Pietermaritzburg and two from Durban: *The Natal Mercury / The Mercury* and the *Daily News*. In the Northern Cape I only included the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* in Kimberly. I could not find a single issue of the now-defunct *Friend* from Bloemfontein, so the Free State, along with Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West, is not represented in my survey. [103]

I also briefly looked at the *City Press*, a Johannesburg-based weekly, the *World* and its follow-ups, the *Post* and the *Sowetan*, as well as the *Daily Sun* (all Johannesburg morning dailies), and their weekend editions; the *Post* (Natal) and *Leader*, two papers aimed at KwaZulu Natal's Indian population; *Isolezwe*, a Zulu-language daily in KwaZulu Natal; *Umafrika*, a Zulu weekly and former alternative newspaper from Durban that was revived in 2002; a number of alternative papers from the 1980s and 1990s including the *Weekly Mail*, *New Nation*, *South* and *Vrye Weekblad*; the Afrikaans weekly *Rapport*; Cape Town's Afrikaans daily *Die Burger*; and Johannesburg's *Die Beeld* and *Die Transvaler* (both morning dailies). However, they were not included in my analysis. The first group is aimed mostly at a black readership, and, as my interviews have shown that they are seldom read by whites, therefore had no immediate relevance for my work. The same is true of the alternative press.

---

[103] For an overview of the ownership structure and circulation / readership figures in 2002 of the newspapers in my sample see Appendix F

These papers had grown out of the black population's discontent with the mainstream press' inadequate reporting of the struggle against apartheid, and with the exception of the *Weekly Mail* and *Vrye Weekblad* their readership was predominantly black. The third category is a different story altogether. The Afrikaans papers were generally quite similar to the English press in their use of symbols, although during the apartheid years they did convey a slightly different, generally more conservative worldview. Still I have chosen to disregard them in the present survey because, while they are read occasionally by English speakers, they are not an important source of information for them and therefore did not have much influence over their views and opinions.

The period of time under review was very long, so obviously I could not view, let alone analyse every edition of every newspaper. Instead, I opted for a mix of targeted and random sampling, in the hope that this would cover every eventuality. On the one hand, I analysed all newspapers available to me around a number of known incidents of violence, among others the Soweto Uprisings of 1976, the killing of Steve Biko in 1977, the ANC bombs at the SASOL oil-to-coal plant and the Pretoria air force headquarters, the shooting in Uitenhage in 1985, the Jeppe station necklacing in 1990, the Boipatong massacre in 1992, the vigilante attack on gang leader Rashaad Staggie in 1996, and a riot on Pretoria's trains in 2002. This was supposed to provide me with a guaranteed insight into the way violence was described in the press during the different periods under review. Moreover, I surveyed a few dates that were highly politically charged, such as the tenth anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings, the declaration of the partial and first national states of emergencies in the 1980s, the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 and the period before the first democratic elections in 1994. This was done to see how the newspapers dealt with such situations. On the other hand, in order to see what the news looked like on an ordinary day, I randomly chose and analysed a number of papers on a number of days between 1976 and 2002.

A problem I encountered was that of different editions. Most of the major newspaper in South Africa, such as *The Argus / Cape Argus* and *The Star*, publish more than one edition daily. Some produce up to four editions a day, more at times of rapid development, such as on the day of the Soweto Uprisings. [104] I have used all material I could find for any given day, but as, not all libraries stock every edition of every paper the choice was frequently made for me. Furthermore, the British Newspaper Library in London and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. received special overseas editions of some newspapers, which frequently differed considerably from the editions of the same newspaper published in South Africa. They were therefore of no use for my research. However, as I have consulted a number of

---

[104] Tyson (1990: 69)

different archives [105], I am confident that I have acquired a large enough cross-section to make representative statements on a newspaper's content on any given day.

2. Violence in South Africa – Some Insights

Violence plays a particularly important role for South African cultural identity. Many cultural units (for example tribes, peoples, ethnicities, social classes, and even the nation as a whole) have emerged after an act of violence, and the feeling persists that one's own group only exists due to this act. The colonial conquest, the Mfeqane, the Great Trek and the Battle of Blood River, the Boer War and the fight against apartheid each gave rise to a new social order. Accordingly, these violent incidents have come to be associated with positive feelings to many South Africans and violence has, beside its destructive powers, acquired the role of a creator of good things. [106] It is therefore of central importance for any study of South African culture to explain the violence that has shaped the country into what it is today. I will attempt to do so in the present chapter.

2.1   Some General Observations about Violence

Before turning my attention to the specific forms of violence common in South Africa, let me briefly touch upon the phenomenon of violence in general. At first look, the meaning of the term violence seems to be fairly clear. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, for example, defines it as

> "**1 a**: exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse (as in effecting illegal entry into a house)
>
> **b:** an instance of violent treatment or procedure
>
> **2:** injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation" [107]

However useful this definition might be to everyday language users, it is very simplistic and therefore of no use to the scientific study of violence. It accurately describes only active physical and psychological violence, that is, violence as a form of conduct. Structural violence on the other hand, which has been defined by Johan Galtung as "the violence (...) built into the structure (...) [which] shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" [108], violence as a condition so to speak, is ignored here.

---

[105] Namely the two above-mentioned libraries; the South African National Library in Cape Town; the libraries at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal (Durban Campus) and Witwatersrand; all the newspapers' available online archives; and a number of private collections.

[106] Vogelman & Lewis (1993: 4) and Thornton (2002: 43-44)

Thornton, however, points out that this is a popular misunderstanding because violence is by no means the origin of the new identity. It is merely a condition in society which makes it possible for people to reconsider their old identities thereby making room for a new identity building discourse. (Thornton (2002: 43-44))

[107] Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary, Search word 'violence'

[108] Galtung (1969: 171)

When describing the situation in South Africa, however, one should at least acknowledge this type of violence for apartheid is a clear example of a violent structure. The policy of racial separation was based on the oppression and exploitation of the majority of the people by a small minority. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech:

> "Violence is not being introduced into the South African situation *de novo* from the outside by those who are called terrorists or freedom fighters, depending on whether you are oppressed or an oppressor. The South African situation is violent already, and the primary violence is that of apartheid, the violence of forced population removals, of inferior education, of detention without trial, of migratory labour systems." [109]

Apartheid has given rise to huge differences in the rates of unnecessary death, disease and physical and social disability between blacks and whites. For example, between 1959 and 1989, black mine workers were 77% more likely to be killed in an accident than their white counterparts. [110] The probability of falling victim to crime, too, was influenced by skin colour. During 1984-86, a person classified as coloured was roughly ten times more likely to be murdered than a white South African. Blacks (in the official sense) were victimised 20 times more often. [111] Furthermore, there are clear indications that this violent meta-structure was the cause of the extremely high rate of interpersonal violence in South Africa. [112]

The importance of institutional violence should therefore not be underestimated. Still, I have chosen to not explicitly deal with either structural or psychological violence in the present dissertation. Both will, obviously, form part of the context for my research, but for reasons of space and relevance [113] my focus will be on physical violence. Hence, when I speak of violence I mean a violation of a person's physical integrity.

This field is still broad enough. And it maintains plenty of ambiguity. *Webster's Dictionary* duly refrains from explaining what constitutes "violent treatment" in individual instances. But this is exactly what many anthropologists working on the subject have been trying to do for decades. One of the central questions anthropology is trying to answer is where the border lies between violence and other forms of behaviour, that is, for the factors that make an action an act of violence. Is a light slap given in joking an act of violence? How about a bullet that fails to hit its target, a strike that misses, or, conversely, a harmless joke that has gone wrong and hurt someone? Are they examples of violence? According to Thornton "this is the genuinely

---

[109] Quoted in Mufson (1990: 82)
[110] Marks & Andersson (1990: 45)
[111] Marks & Andersson (1990: 56-57)
[112] Cock (1990: 67), Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 4) and Marks & Andersson (1990: 30-31)
[113] Tomaselli has pointed out that structural violence has penetrated life in South Africa to such a great extent that it was a permanent state of affairs. As such it did not make good material for news reporting which concentrates on events rather than conditions. (Tomaselli (1998: 14) and Tomaselli et al. (1987: 26))

anthropological question about violence since it asks, What is the nature and function of violence in the activity of being human." [114]

Many social scientists today have come to an agreement that violence does not constitute a static phenomenon and can therefore not be objectively defined. The term has got no absolute, ever-valid meaning; it is a prime example of an 'essentially contested concept', defined by Gallie as "concepts the proper use of which essentially involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users" [115]. We should therefore not confine ourselves to asking what shape violence takes in a certain context and why it occurs. The scientist has to take one step back and must ask him/herself why the phenomena they observe should be classified as violence in the first place. [116]

They should also keep in mind who has classified them as such. Was it the scientist who described certain actions as violence, or was it one of the parties involved? The relevant information about the classification of certain acts as violent can only be understood from an emic perspective, from an inside point view so to speak, for some acts may be seen as harmless by one group, but considered violent by another. Another problem arises with the realisation that the perpetrator's evaluation of a situation often differs considerably from that of the victim. We can find numerous examples for this in South Africa. When, for example, during the apartheid years, police were using tear gas to break-up a demonstration, they themselves did not have the impression of violently acting upon people. The demonstrators, on the other hand, felt very much attacked. [117]

As I have hopefully shown, violence cannot be defined purely descriptively. It has a normative element. The subjectively perceived legitimacy of an act is decisive for determining whether it is seen as violent. [118] In anthropology the concept of culture plays a central role for defining legitimacy. Thus, violence is not just an assault against a person's physical or emotional integrity. In order to qualify as violence, an act has to transgress culturally set boundaries of legitimacy. [119] The present dissertation follows a definition advanced by McKendrick & Hoffmann in seeing violence as

> "destructive harm ... including not only physical assaults that damage the body, but also ... the many techniques of inflicting harm by mental or emotional abuse. It is generally understood (...) as measured or exaggerated harm to individuals either not socially prescribed at all, or else beyond established limits, and is often socially

---

[114] Thornton (2002: 50)
[115] Gallie (1956: 169)
[116] Riches (1986: 1), Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 3) and Degenaar (1990: 70)
[117] van der Westhuizen (1982: 9-10) and Riches (1986: 4)
[118] Riches (1986: 3), Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 3) and Degenaar (1990: 72-74)
[119] Orywal et al. (1996: 13), Barfield (2003: 483) and Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 3)

defined to include processes that originate as authorised, measured force, but that go beyond the prescribed conditions and limits." [120]

However, finding the boundaries of legitimacy is particularly problematic in the South African context, because, as I have mentioned, the standards of what can be considered adequate in a given situation differ greatly. Whether an act is qualified as legitimate use of 'force' or as destructive 'violence' depends on the social position of the observer. This was especially true during the period of apartheid, but remains relevant even to this day.

Furthermore, in apartheid South Africa (cultural) legitimacy and (judicial) legality were far from the same. Much of the violence perpetrated by the agents of the state, was legal, but lacked support from the majority of the population and can thus be considered illegitimate. The ANC's armed struggle on the other hand was seen as a legitimate fight against an oppressive regime by most South Africans (if not by many whites), but was quite clearly illegal. Even today the gap between legitimacy and legality has not entirely been bridged. Many illegal acts, such as the death penalty, corporal punishment and revenge attacks on suspected criminals, enjoy a high degree of support from the population. [121]

The only possible solution to this problem is to differentiate between several kinds of legitimacy. Not only the legal level is relevant for classifying an act of violence as illegitimate. The socially accepted view of reality and the subjective impressions of the individual participants also come into play. The question of the legitimacy of a certain act may, therefore, in some cases really be answered differently by different people. [122] In this paper, I will therefore concentrate on acts that are seen as illegitimate by a substantial portion of the South African population. In dealing with them, I will try to take into account how the individual participants experienced a situation as well as checking the legitimacy of the act on a legal and social level.

Before I move on to take a closer look at the specific shape the violence has taken in South Africa, I should briefly pause to discuss the concept of political violence. Many authors make a distinction between violence of the criminal and political type, the former being free of ideological motivations while the latter is directed at the defence, disruption, or destruction of a normative order. However, as we will see in the following chapter, the division is not that easy to make. The term 'political violence' seems to be even more difficult to grasp than that of violence in general. As Tomaselli has pointed out, "like the term "terrorism," definitions of

---

[120] Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 3)
This definition is, according to the authors, derived from Walter (1969: 8 and 12). My own copy of Walter's text does not tie up with these quotes though. However, this makes the point of view expressed no less valid and I have therefore decided to make it my own in this dissertation.
[121] Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 3), The Big Issue (February 2002: 7) and Thornton (1990: 139-140)
I also found a few proponents of the death penalty among my interviewees.
[122] van der Westhuizen (1982: 9-10)

"political violence" tend to be normative, revealing more about the viewpoint of those who use them than about the phenomenon itself." [123]

So what exactly does the expression mean in the context of public discourse in South Africa? Tomaselli explains the apartheid viewpoint as follows:

> "Official South African (…) accounts of political violence assume that it is only used against the state. Violence used on behalf of the state is tacitly ignored, or seen in terms of "law and order"." [124]

Those who doubt the validity of such a statement coming from a Marxist-influenced English speaking scholar can turn to publications from the other side of the ideological spectrum. Afrikaans researcher T. J. van Heerden, for example, wrote in an article on *Ideological Violence*, published in 1982 by the pro-government University of South Africa in Pretoria:

> "The following acts are all viewed as forms of ideological violence.
>
> a) *Verbal abuse* (abusive language) towards the police, as symbols of the authority structure (…).
>
> b) *Written* smears and incitements in the form of posters, pamphlets, handbills, slogans on walls or other written material.
>
> c) *Noise* by shouting or singing whereby (…) the police are demoralized.
>
> d) *Attacks on individual policemen* (…), for example, abusive language, spitting and physical assault.
>
> e) *Attacks on police equipment*, vehicles and buildings.
>
> f) *Throwing of objects* (…).
>
> g) *Barricading* roads (…) to impede access of police vehicles and flow of ordinary traffic.
>
> h) *Destruction*, *damage* and *arson* (…)
>
> i) *Looting* of residences, shops and offices.
>
> j) Use of *explosives* and firearms." [125] (Italics in original.)

Most of these acts are explicitly described as directed against the state or its representatives and the rest constitute acts that, at the time of writing, were mostly perpetrated by opponents of the government. Moreover, a number of items are included that I would personally not describe as violence, such as "verbal abuse" or "spitting". It would appear then that any attack on the existing order in van Heerden's eyes constituted an act of ideological violence. State violence such as torture, on the other hand, is not listed, as if the state were incapable of ever committing acts of ideological violence.

---

[123] Tomaselli (1991 a: 22)
[124] Tomaselli (1991 a: 22)
[125] van Heerden (1982: 196-197)

This view was also reflected by the mainstream press. The prototypes of political violence in news reports were riots, unrest, and acts of 'terrorism'. The state's violent response to the uprising received a different label. Depending on the newspaper and the incident described, it could be anything from 'maintaining law and order' to 'suppressing the black population' or at times even 'police brutality', but never 'political violence'. In the present dissertation I will not accept this definition, even if the people and institutions under scrutiny did. In South Africa violence was committed for political reasons by numerous state agencies. And, as Claridge has pointed out, "when a state uses violence as a means of coercing society rather than defending it, it initiates an abuse of the 'monopoly of the legitimate use of force'" [126]. It becomes violent.

I have so far completely ignored one aspect that needs to be addressed in the discussion about political violence in South Africa: the fighting between different political groups in the townships. The apartheid government had quite consciously tried to de-politicise the struggle and accordingly did not include these in its definition of political violence. The liberation movements on the other hand knew of the political nature of their undertaking and of the political motives behind their opponents' onslaught and accordingly defined these fights as incidents of political violence. So did the people involved, for even if they themselves were not actively political, they felt that they were being targeted for political reasons. I fully agree with this assertion and will therefore include any violence that is justified using a political ideology, or is a means to a political end, in my definition of political violence.

I acknowledge that this definition has many disadvantages and leaves many questions open. What, for example, qualifies as a political goal or statement? And how do we deal with persons who pursue entirely non-political goals under the cover of other peoples' political actions? Such problems, however, are small compared with the shortfalls of van Heerden's definition and I will deal with them on a case-by-case basis. What is most important is that I include state violence in my analysis of political violence, treating it as equal to the violent resistance to government authority. I will, however, always keep in mind that in doing so I am extending the definition of political violence beyond that of the texts under scrutiny.

2.2   The History of South Africa, a History of Violence

Violence is a recurring theme in South African history books. It played a more than just marginal role in the local tribal societies, it was the key to colonisation, and it was perfected in modern times by the apartheid regime. It was also an important tool for the adversaries of the colonial government and the resistance movement against apartheid. Almost every aspect of

---

[126] Claridge (1996: 48)

modern South Africa can be linked to the violent conflicts of the past. [127] Apartheid in particular has had great influence on what the country is like today. In the following sub-chapters I will therefore provide a brief sketch of that era before moving on to look at the amount and character, of violence during the period under investigation.

2.2.1 The Birth of Modern South Africa

South Africa as we know it came into being in 1910 after centuries of armed conflict. After the second Boer war the English colonial rulers understood that the Afrikaners would never bow to them in fear. They gave up trying to suppress their aspirations to nationhood and instead adopted a strategy of cooperation. Great Britain did not merely annex the conquered Boer Republics, but first granted them limited self-government and, on 31st May 1910, all four colonies [128] at the Cape were fused together in an independent, federative state, the Union of South Africa. English and Dutch were granted the same status as official languages and every one of the new provinces could decide for itself what rights to grant the non-white population. [129] Louis Botha, an Afrikaner, was named the Union's first prime minister. When it came to writing a constitution for the new nation, the English made it their primary goal to secure peace among the white population. They dropped their liberal principles and gave in to the Afrikaners on many points – generally at the expense of the non-white South Africans. The former enemies had become equal partners while even the most loyal Africans lost most basic rights. The road to apartheid was clear. [130]

2.2.2 The Rise of Apartheid

Just after the founding of the Union, the Afrikaners, embittered about their defeat in the South African war and not satisfied with their standing in the new state, established the National Party (NP). During the first half of the 20th century, the party's main role was to stand up for the rights of the underprivileged Boers. They did so using a wide range of means, from newspapers (meant to shape and strengthen their readers' sense of cultural and national identity) to the guerrilla organisation 'Ossewa Brandwag' (O.B.) that fought the English speaking rulers by violent means. These more radical elements were eventually silenced in favour of a concerted effort to win the hearts and minds of white South Africans within the realm of mainstream politics. The big break-through came in 1948 when the NP won the parliamentary elections by a short margin. [131]

---

[127] Vogelman & Lewis (1993: 4) and Byrnes (1996: Introduction, p. 2)
[128] The formerly British Cape Colony and Natal and the formerly independent Boer Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.
[129] Voting rights were handled differently in the four former colonies. The Cape Province and Natal based their franchise on land ownership thus excluding blacks, who were not allowed to own property, but including coloureds and Indians. The Transvaal and the Orange Free State did not allow any non-whites to vote at all.
[130] Byrnes (1996: Introduction, p. 3 and The Formation of the Union of South Africa, p. 1)
[131] Heard (1991: 134), Hachten & Giffard (1984: 47) and Byrnes (1996: Introduction, p. 4)

The party's ascent to power under the leadership of D.F. Malan marked the beginning of a new era in South Africa: 40 years of narrow-mindedness, self-righteousness and racism combined with a new kind and previously unseen levels of violence. [132] One of the first apartheid laws, basically the basis for the entire ideology of apartheid, was the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. The new social order of racial separation and the related suppression of a large portion of the South African population were justified with the need to defend South Africa against an immanent communist takeover. [133] And despite the country's growing isolation from the non-communist west, this ideology of anti-communism was maintained throughout the entire apartheid period. [134] Numerous repressive laws as well as the atrocious acts of violence committed in the name of the state were justified not just by pointing at the 'swart gevaar' (black peril) in the shape of the black liberation movements, but also the 'rooi gevaar' (red peril), the supposed communist onslaught. [135]

The threat was not one of violence though. The anti-apartheid movements were strongly influenced by Ghandi's teachings and his teaching of passive resistance. Their motto was 'Civil Disobedience'. The African National Congress (ANC), the biggest and oldest party to rally for the rights of the black population, the Pan African Congress (PAC), an africanist organisation which had broken away from the ANC in 1959, and the South African Communist Party (SACP) met inhumane working conditions with strikes, rulers' arrogance with boycotts, and the unjust laws with demonstrations. The 1950s were not an era of violence, but the years of the Freedom Charter and the Defiance Campaign. [136]

The government, however, saw the Freedom Charter as "instigated by the Stalinist communists" [137] and passive resistance as a dangerous attack on the state, and fought the protesters by violent means. The situation came to a head in 1952 when police opened fire on a prayer meeting in East London. This sparked a riot that quickly spread to Port Elizabeth and Kimberly. [138] This was the excuse the government had been waiting for to crush the passive resistance once and for all. Parliament passed a number of new repressive laws and banned all organisers of the campaign, including the leadership of the ANC. Hundreds of activists were arrested and, during the notorious 'treason trial' of 1956-1961, 156 people of all colours and creeds were tried for, and found innocent of, high treason. [139]

---

[132] Byrnes (1996: Introduction, p. 4) and Joyce (1990: 13)
[133] Coleman (1990: 1-2) and de Klerk (1997: 10)
[134] Carver (1994: 13) and de Klerk (1997: 12-14)
[135] *The United Nations World Campaign Against Apartheid* (Unknown: 7), Butchart et al. (1998: 3), Rauch (1993: 2), Posel (1990: 168), and Coleman (1990: 1-2)
[136] Frontline Interviews (Unknown a: 14), Mandela (1964: 2-3), Sparks (1990 a: 237), and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 30-31)
[137] Murray (1961: 10)
[138] Bureau for Information (1986: 4-5), du Preez (1982: 210), Virmani (1991: 16-17 and 56-57) and Joyce (1990: 22-23)
[139] Hagemann (2001: 85-87), Mandela (1995: 232-238 and 303-308), Joyce (1990: 17 and 52) and Virmani (1991: 17 and 56-57)

2.2.3 The 1960s: The Lighting of the Fuse

In 1958, H.F. Verwoerd was elected prime minister. His time in office was dominated by the rigorous enacting of 'separate development' (a euphemism for apartheid). Verwoerd's big goal was to separate every aspect of South African life along what he called 'national'[140] lines, which really meant along the lines of language and, ultimately, skin colour.[141] F.W. de Klerk explained this strategy in the NP's submission to the TRC:

> "How could we defend ourselves against expansionist international communism and terrorism and yet make all South Africans free? The solution that we came up with was "separate development". We thought that we could solve the complex problems that confronted us by giving each of the ten distinguishable Black South African nations self-government and independence within the core areas they traditionally occupied."[142]

And so it came that division of the country into white areas, which took-up 87% of the country even though only 20% of the population was officially classified as white, and black 'traditional' tribal areas (also misleadingly known as 'homelands') that were established on the remaining 13% of the territory was written into law.[143] In 1970 all blacks were to lose citizenship of ('white') South Africa and officially become citizens of one of the 10 homelands. In fact, between 1976 and 1981 only four homelands – Boputhatswana, Venda, Ciskei and Transkei – took this step. Still, a total of 26 million people lost their South African nationality. From then on, they were merely guests in the areas outside the Bantustans who were tolerated while they were of use to whites (by providing cheap labour) and deported when they were no longer needed.[144]

During the early 1960s the liberation movements intensified their efforts to bring down apartheid by means of mass protest. The policy of separate development and the much-hated pass laws[145] associated with it were the most common cause for demonstrations. The ANC's protest campaign was meant to reach its peak on 31st March 1960, but it never came to that.

---

[140] The idea of separate 'nations' inhabiting South Africa was frequently voiced throughout the apartheid years. Rhoodie, for example, explained in his propaganda work *The Paper Curtain*: "The basic situation in South Africa is that different nations, Black nations differing from each other, and a White nation have been forced together in one country through an act of war – the Anglo-Boer War – and British colonial rule." (Rhoodie (1969: 128)) Such talk served mainly one purpose: to give a semblance of rationality to the policy of 'divide and rule' thus justifying the continued suppression of the black population in the name of, as Rhoodie so eloquently put it, not "committing cultural genocide". (Rhoodie (1969: 129))

[141] Laurence (1979: 55), Tomaselli (1996: 70) and Hellmann (1972: 15-16)

[142] de Klerk (Unknown: 4)

[143] Dedial (1995: 2), Coetzee (1972: 141-142), Leatt et al. (1986: 122-123) and Silke (1997: Part 1, p. 2)

[144] Silke (1997: Part 1, p. 2), Kane-Berman (1991: 75), North (1986: 35-36) and Campbell (1987: 175)

[145] They were based on a law issued in the Cape Colony in 1760 which forced all slaves to carry a pass when they were unaccompanied by their owners. The Population Registration Act ('Pass Laws') of 1950 extended this to all black males. But the passes were more than just a means of identification. Persons classified as black were not allowed to move freely in South Africa (particularly not in the white areas) and the reference books listed all areas the holder was permitted to enter. Blacks had to be able to present their pass to any policeman requesting it. Persons, who could not show their pass or were found in an area their pass was not endorsed for, risked arrest and/or deportation to the homelands. Between the passing of the Population Registration Act and the abolition of passes in 1985 this happened 17 million times! (Reeves (1960: 4), Byrnes (1996: The PAC and Sharpeville, p. 1), and *The History of Apartheid* (Unknown: 1))

The PAC called upon its supporters to leave their passes at home on 21st March and to go to their local police station to offer themselves for arrest. However, in several townships, instead of arresting demonstrators, the police started randomly firing into the crowd. In the most infamous of these incidents, which became known worldwide as the Sharpeville Massacre, 69 people lost their lives and over 180 were injured. Of the 185 shots that hit a human target, 155 had entered the bodies from behind. [146] This unnecessary show of force gave rise to a wave of demonstrations that often ended in more violence. The government reacted on 24th March 1960 by declaring a state of emergency in 122 of the 265 South African districts. It would last for 156 days, during which 18,303 people (18,079 of them black) were arrested and the ANC, the PAC, and the SACP were declared 'unlawful organisations'. [147]

In the face of such massive government repression, the resistance movements began to doubt their strategy. Most of the protest campaigns' organisers had been arrested and charged with high treason, and the police reacted as vigorously as ever to offences against the racist laws. The Sharpeville Massacre and the events afterwards had shown to the opponents of apartheid that neither the police nor the government could be convinced peacefully to change their ways, and that non-violent protest would not gain them any sympathy from the white minority, either. [148]

So, in June 1961 a group of ANC members around Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, and Govan Mbeki decided to launch a violent campaign against the oppressors. During a secret meeting they founded Umkhonto we Sizwe (Speer of the Nation), known as MK. [149] Speaking on the ANC's underground radio station Radio Freedom, Walter Sisulu explained: "In the face of violence, men struggling for freedom have to meet violence with violence." [150] MK's principles were clear from the beginning. They would restrict their activity to sabotage of strategic government installations. No humans were to be harmed under any circumstances, not even the members of the apartheid state's police and army. [151]

The PAC, too, created an armed wing, Poqo (the Xhosa word for 'pure', 'alone'), and a group of white opponents of apartheid formed a militant organisation called African Resistance Movement (ARM). Unlike MK, these two groups were not opposed to violence against people whom they considered to be representatives of the system. [152] They had started their

---

[146] Pogrund (1990: 133), Reeves (1966: 3), Byrnes (1996: The PAC and Sharpeville, p. 1) and *The History of Apartheid* (Unknown: 1)

[147] Mortimer (Unknown: 12), Rantete (1998: 117) and du Preez (1982: 214)

[148] Sparks (1990 a: 237 and 269) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 30-31)

[149] Mandela (1995: 325), Mortimer (Unknown: 13) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 31-32)
MK broke away from the ANC and cut all links to it. They did this in order to prevent the ANC from being classified as a terrorist organisation. Beside, Chief Albert Luthuli, the ANC president, was strictly opposed to violence. MK only officially became the ANC's armed wing after his death. (Mandela (1964: 8) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 32-33))

[150] Quoted in Rantete (1998: 117)

[151] Frontline Interviews (Unknown a: 12) and ANC (1996 a: 62)

[152] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1960, Pogrund (1990: 212-213), Sparks (1990 a: 244) and ANC (1996 a: 61)

attacks during the first half of 1961 with a number of smaller hits. A broad campaign was planned for 1962, but their struggle was over before it started. [153] Poqo went down when its leader Robert Sobukwe was arrested and sent to prison. ARM carried out a number of successful bombings, but soon their leaders, too, were arrested. John Harris, one of the bombers, was sentenced to death and hanged the same year. [154]

MK's strategy was different. They took their time and thoroughly planned their campaign. They began their armed struggle with a series of bombings in Johannesburg, Durban, and Port Elizabeth, on 16th December 1961. At the same time the fighters distributed thousands of leaflets with the new MK manifesto:

> "The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom." [155]

The explosions happened on a symbolic day, the 'Day of the Covenant'. On 16th December 1838, the Boers had defeated the Zulu army under king Dingane in the Battle of Blood River. In choosing this day for their attack, MK aimed straight for the heart of apartheid's ideological structure: the Afrikaners' national pride. [156]

Pretoria could not leave this declaration of war unanswered. A countrywide search for all known Umkhonto fighters was initiated, which would soon prove successful. The first catch was the most spectacular one. On 5th August 1962, not even one year after the first bombings, Nelson Mandela was arrested in Natal. [157] The remaining leaders were apprehended another year later on a farm in Rivonia near Johannesburg. In 1964, in the legendary 'Rivonia Trial', they were all sentenced to life imprisonment. [158] This greatly dampened the struggle to bring down apartheid. The ANC's and the PAC's influence on the South African population waned. The black population's will to resist was broken. [159]

2.2.4 The 1970s: The End of Peace and Quiet

After a decade of quiet in the townships, the government under Prime Minister B.J. Vorster felt they were in a very safe position. The liberation movements had disappeared from public view, and South Africa's black population seemed apathetic; it was almost as if they had lost any drive to fight. Time had come for the people in power to secure this pleasing state of affairs for all eternity. In unison with the NP and the Broederbond, a secret Afrikaner

---

[153] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1960, Sibeko (1976: 8), and Sparks (1990 a: 246)
[154] Byrnes (1996: The ANC and the PAC Turn to Violence, p. 1) and TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1960
[155] ANC (1961: 1) and Mandela (1995: 338-339)
[156] Sparks (1990 a: 244), Mandela (1995: 339) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 33)
[157] Mandela (1995: 372) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 34)
[158] Mortimer (Unknown: 13), Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 38), and Sibeko (1976: 8)
[159] ANC (1996 a: 62), du Preez (1982: 217), and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 38)

association, Vorster made the decision to get blacks to permanently accept white rule. The system of 'Bantu Education', in particular, was to be redesigned to this end. [160]

In 1974, the Minister of Bantu Education, Michael C. Botha, announced that Afrikaans would from then on be used on an equal basis with English as a medium of instruction in all government-run schools for blacks. This decision was met with strong resistance from pupils and parents. In Soweto, kids began boycotting classes. Soon, others across the country followed. The protest grew stronger with time. From May until the beginning of June 1976 small protest marches were held where the kids tried to inform the public of their views. These demonstrations frequently led to violent encounters with the police. [161]

Still, nobody expected what was to come on 16th June. In the morning, thousands of school kids [162] assembled peacefully in the streets of Soweto with the intention of marching to Orlando West Stadium. They were chanting slogans, giving the black power salute and carried placards that read "Down with Afrikaans" or "If we must do Afrikaans, Vorster must do Zulu!". [163] Eyewitnesses said they were excited and happy, [164] but the Cillie commission that was later set-up to investigate the events claimed that "the marchers appeared to be in an aggressive mood" [165]. This assertion was shared by the police who tried to get the children to turn around using their standard methods of crowd control: They marched in with dogs and guns and confronted the pupils in front of Orlando West Junior Secondary School hoping they would be impressed by the open display of strength and dissipate quickly and quietly. How wrong they were!

What happened next is still unclear. The policemen claimed to have called upon the masses to disperse. In reaction the students had begun throwing stones at their vehicles. Some of the officers later said that they had responded with tear gas, others mentioned warning shots. Only when none of these measures worked, so the police claimed, did they start shooting at the demonstrators. The students and other witnesses, however, reported that the police had started shooting without warning. [166] The truth will most likely remain unknown. One thing is sure, though. Chaos did not erupt until the first child, thirteen-year-old Hector Petersen, was killed by a hale of bullets. [167]

---

[160] Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 80) and Hopkins & Grange (2001: 75-77)

[161] Hopkins & Grange (2001: 77-79 and 83-85), SAIRR (1978: 3-7) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 80-81)

[162] No one can really say how many people participated in the march. The Race Relations Survey for 1976 estimates that 10,000 kids were present in Orlando West. (SAIRR (1977: 57)) Hirson talks of 15,000 (Hirson (1979: 181)), a number that is confirmed by Hopkins & Grange (2001: 93) and Lodge (1983: 328). Kane-Berman even reckons that 20,000 kids protested that day. (Kane-Berman (1979: 1)). Byrnes on the other hand is of the opinion that merely a few hundred pupils took to the streets (Byrnes (1996: Soweto 1976, p. 1).

[163] Quoted in Kane-Berman (1979: 1), Brink et al. (2001: 52) and North (1986: 42)

[164] See for example the accounts of Dan Moyane and Solly Mpshe quoted in Brink et al. (2001: 59-60 and 63) and Jan Tugwa in Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 c: 2)

[165] Cillie Commission, Vol. 2, p. 4 quoted in Brink et al. (2001: 55)

[166] Brewer (1986: 77-78), Cillie Commission, Vol. 2, p. 4-6 quoted in Brink et al. (2001: 56-57 and 94), Lodge (1983: 328), Mail & Guardian (14th June 1996 b: 1), The Star (16th June 1976 e: 1) and Kane-Berman (1979: 1)

[167] Magubane & Lee (1979: 132), Brewer (1986: 78), SAIRR (1978: 3-7) and Kane-Berman (1979: 1)

The police had expected their heavy-handed approach to have the same effect as in Sharpeville. It did not. The students did not flee, but began attacking the symbols of white power: administrative buildings, schools, bottle stores (shops that held a license for selling alcohol to blacks), beer halls, police cars, and even the policemen themselves. Two officials of the West Rand Board were beaten to death. The demonstration quickly grew into a fully fledged riot. The police intervened in the usual manner and tried to quell the unrest with violence. The number of victims was never clearly established. According to officials 25 people lost their lives and 200 were injured. Others placed the death toll nearer 100. [168]

Throughout 1976 the unrest spread to the other townships and even some rural areas. The individual incidents generally followed the same basic pattern as the initial uprising in Soweto. The result was generally the same, too: great losses on the part of the protesters, no losses on the side of the police. [169] Again, there is disagreement about the exact number of victims. Police files show that between June 1976 and February 1977 a total of 575 people, including 134 children under eighteen, were killed. Policemen were responsible for 451 deaths. [170] Many people feel that even these numbers are grossly underestimated though. On 1st May 1977, the Institute of Race Relations published a list of casualties collected from alternative sources with a total of 618 names. Kane-Berman re-examined their calculations and found a shortfall of at least another 43, making the total 661. [171] Ellis & Sechaba are of the opinion that even this figure is too low. 700 deaths and a minimum of 4,000 injured persons, they say, are more reasonable numbers. Besides, the authors point out, around 6,000 were arrested. Most of the victims were under 20 years of age. [172]

The police eventually succeeded in getting the unrest under control, but life in South Africa would never be the same again. Whites had been violently awoken from their dream of peace and prosperity and black people had rediscovered their fighting spirit. [173] As Percy Qoboza, the editor of the *World*, told an English journalist in August 1976: "The days of the good Kaffir and obedient Bantus belong to the ox-wagon era which is never going to return." [174]

For a large number of young activists the road back to a normal life was closed after the events of 1976. They were wanted by the police or were subject to frequent random arrests, most schools were closed, and the kids had aged years within a few months. Most of them soon left South Africa to join the ANC's fighters in exile. By the middle of 1977 roughly 4,000 youngsters had been recruited into Umkhonto we Sizwe's camps in Angola. They

---

[168] Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 81), Brink et al. (2001: 58-91), Kane-Berman (1979: 2), SAIRR (1977: 57) and Hirson (1979: 182)
[169] TRC (22nd July 1996: 4), Hopkins & Grange (2001: 191-192), Kane-Berman (1979: 26-36) and North (1986: 42-43)
[170] Byrnes (1996: Soweto 1976, p. 1), Merrett (1994: 104) and Hachten (1984: 4)
[171] Kane-Berman (1979: 27)
[172] Kane-Berman (1979: 7) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 82)
[173] Malan (1990: 78), Tutu (1999: 9), Waldmeir (1997: 23), Franks (1987: 179) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 83)
[174] Quoted in Sanders (2000: 180-181)

expected to return to South Africa within a few months fully trained and armed with Kalashnikovs, ready to start the revolution they longed for. The majority, however, would not see their home country again for at least a decade. [175]

2.2.5   The 1980s: Violence, Reform, and Checkmate

Pieter Willem Botha's election as Prime Minister in 1978 marked the beginning of a new era of violence in South Africa. He brought the military establishment, which he had built up and nurtured during his time as Minister of Defence (1966-1978) into politics with him. The new men in power paid less attention to day-to-day politics than to the country's internal and external defence structures, which soon earned them the name 'securocrats'. [176] Their main preoccupation was to fend off the 'total onslaught', an imagined communist attack in which the country's black population and liberal politicians across the world were believed to take part, but which was thought to be ultimately directed from Moscow. The attack was believed to be happening at all levels of public life, "ideological, military, economic, social, psychological, cultural, political and diplomatic" [177]. The defence therefore had to take these institutions into account as well. It was out of this belief that 'total strategy' [178], was born. Slowly, laws were enacted and a huge bureaucratic machinery was created, which brought every aspect of life in South Africa under the influence of the military. [179]

Ironically, the 1980s were not only a decade of massive militarization and violence, but also a time of reforms. In order to appease the international community, domestic economists, and the opponents of apartheid, P.W. Botha began loosening or even abandoning some apartheid laws. However, the changes were mainly cosmetic. Botha did away with 'petty apartheid', such as the racial segregation of public life as well as the prohibition on marriages across the colour line, and, under pressure from economists, he also liberalised the labour laws. Even the much hated pass laws were finally abolished. [180] However, the homeland policy was not changed, South African citizenship was not restored to those who had lost it and blacks were still not given a voice in politics. [181]

---

[175] ANC (1996 a: 65), Mufson (1990: 18), Kane-Berman (1979: 144) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 84)

[176] Henderson (1990 a: 2), Stiff (2001: 76-77 and 78-86), Sparks (1990 a: 309), and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 91-93)

[177] Republic of South Africa, 1973, *White Paper on Defence and Armament Production*, p. 1, quoted in Teer Tomaselli (1992: 52)

[178] The term was coined by the French military strategist André Beaufre who had served as a general in his country's struggle in Algeria. In his *Introduction à la stratégie* he wrote: "Au sommet des stratégies, immédiatement subordinée au gouvernement – donc à la politique – règne la «stratégie totale» chargée de concevoir la conduite de la guerre totale. Son rôle est de définir la mission porpre et la combinaison des diverses strategies générales, politique, économique, diplomatique et militaire." (Beaufre (1985: 24-25); Trans.: At the top of the pyramid of different forms of strategy, under immediate control of to the government – thus of polititcs – stands total strategy, whose task is to plan the conduct of the total war. Its role is to define the mission itself as well as the appropriate combination elements from the general areas of strategy, political, economic, diplomatic, and military. (My translation))

[179] Mortimer (Unknown: 5), Frederikse (1987: 210-211), Cock (1990: 47), Sparks (1990 a: 356), de Klerk (Unknown: 7), Campbell (1987: 176), de Kock & Gordin (1998: 89), Swilling & Phillips (1989: 135-136) and Henderson (1990 a: 2-3)

[180] Silke (1997: Part 2, p. 2), Magubane (1989: 102), Byrnes (1996: The Contradictions of Apartheid, p. 3), Henderson (1990 a: 3), Sparks (1990 a: 315-317), and Dedial (1995: 4)

[181] Hansson (1990: 40-41) and Harrison (1981: 274)

Botha's followers fiercely disputed this, pointing at the constitutional reforms of 1983. From then on, blacks could elect so-called 'community councils' that were responsible for the administration of black townships. [182] Coloureds and Indians were even given their own chambers in parliament. This, however, was a token gesture rather than an act of political empowerment. During separate sessions they were only allowed to decide matters pertaining to their own population groups, while the white chamber's decisions were binding for every South African. In joint sessions whites held 178 seats compared with 85 coloureds and 45 Indians and thus retained an absolute majority at all times. [183]

Accordingly, black voters were neither interested in the parliamentary elections nor in the elections of community councillors. In Soweto a mere 5% of the electorate went to the polls. In Port Elizabeth the figure was 11%, in the Vaal Triangle 15%, in Durban 19%, and on the East Rand 20%. And in the parliamentary elections of 1984 only 30% of coloureds and 20% of Indians went to vote. [184] The extra-parliamentary resistance to apartheid on the other hand was as fierce as ever. Botha's feared 'total war' was soon to become bloody reality in South Africa's townships. [185]

The great revolt started on 3rd September 1984, five days after the election of the coloured and Indian chambers of Parliament. On 2nd September, during the demolition of a squatter camp in Bophalong, a policeman shot the captain of the local football team. The next morning a group of enraged township residents took revenge by setting fire to several administrative buildings and killing three of the community councillors. At the same time in Sebokeng, another group set out on a peaceful march to the township's administrative office to hand in a petition against the latest rent increase. They were unaware of the ongoing violence. They got about half way before they were stopped by the police, who, in the belief that they were facing more rioters, opened fire. [186] From then on chaos reigned in the townships of the Vaal Triangle. Within a few days, 31 people were killed. Soon, the unrest spread and a wave of destruction rolled through South Africa. [187]

The revolts would turn into a revolution, which would go on for more than three years and cost more than 3,000 lives. The 'comrades', young street fighters claiming to be followers of the ANC, (see chapter 2.3.5 for more details) drove the police out of the townships and began patrolling the streets. They set up 'People's Courts' to deal with criminals and collaborators of

---

[182] The community councils were pseudo-administrative bodies created by the apartheid government in 1983 to give blacks the impression that they finally had the right to decide their own matters. In truth, the councils were mere puppets of the central government, staffed mainly with opportunists seeking wealth and power. The township population hated them for supporting the apartheid state and because they tended to show off their fortune, living in large houses and driving big cars. They also used the limited power they had to tyrannise others. (Sparks (1990 a: 266))

[183] Dedial (1995: 4) and Sparks (1990 a: 319)

[184] Byrnes (1996: Limited Reforms, p. 1) and Sparks (1990 a: 332)

[185] Hansson (1990: 40), Dedial (1995: 4) and Sparks (1990 a: 319)

[186] Sparks (1990 a: 330 and 335-337), Magubane (1989: 105) and Dedial (1995: 5)

[187] Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 1), Rantete (1985: 38-40) and ANC (1996 a: 73)

the racist regime. The community councils were dismantled and replaced by the residents' street committees. New civic and church organisations were formed from these grassroots structures, which cooperated closely in their efforts to rid the townships of white rule. In 1983 they jointly founded the United Democratic Front (UDF), a nation-wide anti-apartheid organisation closely affiliated with the ANC. Following Oliver Tambo's call to make the country "ungovernable" [188], they organised strikes, boycotts and attacks on white businesses and the administrative institutions of the apartheid state. [189]

Under pressure from the new recruits of the Soweto generation, the ANC also revised its policy on violence. While before, only acts of sabotage were officially approved, the fighters now no longer worried about the loss of human lives. At first, only members of the security forces became a target. Then the farmers in the border regions were added to the target list because they had joined civil defence units set up by the army. And finally bombings where carried out in places where even civilians were at risk of being killed. The new tactics also called for the fighting to be taken out of the townships and to increasingly carry them out in the white parts of the country. [190] The fighters were hoping to shake up the white population and to make them aware of the war going on in their own country. In the final months of 1985, the ANC distributed a flyer calling to "Take the Struggle to the White Areas" [191].

The next logical step would have been an unrestrained terror campaign against all whites, but despite repeated calls to that end the ANC's leadership did not take it. Their enemies were not ordinary white South Africans, but "the racist army, police, death squads, agents and stooges in our midst." [192] Unfortunately, the ANC was not the only resistance movement in South Africa. Oliver Tambo had little control over many young fighters and could not prevent them from mounting a number of attacks that were aimed solely at white civilians. [193]

In reaction to these developments as well as South Africa's growing international isolation, President Botha approved the full implementation of the 'total strategy'. As white South Africans had the whole world against them, they could now act as the securocrats had always wanted and try to root out the communist threat by any method at their disposal. The South African air force was sent out to bomb supposed ANC military bases in Harare, Gaborone and Lusaka. [194] In South Africa itself, a state of emergency was declared on 20th July 1985 in 36

---

[188] Radio Freedom (1985). See also ANC (1985: 1)

[189] Simpson et al. (1991: 2), Seekings (2000: 223-225), Mortimer (Unknown: 17), Magubane (1989: 105-106), Sparks (1990 a: 338-339), and Thornton (1990: 132-133)

[190] Radio Freedom (1984 b)

[191] ANC (1985: 1)

[192] ANC (1985: 1)

[193] Tony Heard in an interview with the author, 17th May 2002, ANC (1996 a: 82), Manning (1987: 92) and Sparks (1990 a: 247-248)

[194] Only the Gaborone target was really an ANC base, and even here, only five of the twelve victims were ANC members. None of them were MK fighters. The Harare bombs hit an empty building, and in Lusaka the South African pilots raided a UN camp for refugees from Angola and Namibia. (ANC (1996 a: 80), Pauw (1991: 206), Burnett (Unknown: 10) and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 2, Paras 440-451)

districts and more than 5,000 soldiers were sent into the townships to quell the unrest. A total of about 30,000 people (around 3,000 of them women and children), more than during the entire time since the Sharpeville massacre taken together, were arrested. [195] On 12th June 1986 the state of emergency was extended to cover the entire country and the emergency legislation was upgraded. Public gatherings were prohibited, several organisations were declared unlawful, and the press restrictions were tightened substantially. [196]

However, the government's view of the situation had changed since the early 80s, and so had its security strategy. By the late 1980s, the government relied more and more on covert and informal tools of repression such as death squads and "a counter-revolutionary guerrilla force which is employed according to guerrilla tactics to annihilate revolutionary guerrillas" [197]. This role was assigned to various vigilante groups that received increased support from the government and anti-ANC organisations such as Inkatha. The aim of this new strategy was no longer to isolate the people from the instigators of the 'total onslaught', but to regain control over the townships by killing opponents of apartheid and sowing fear among the extra-parliamentary opposition while at the same time wooing the rest of the black population. [198]

And so it came that in the midst of a large national crisis, many townships roads were paved, a sewage system was constructed and new houses were built. All together the government initiated a total of 1,800 building and renovation projects in townships across the country. [199]

The image of the SADF, too, was given a makeover. Military personnel and equipment were used to build recreational facilities and soldiers were employed in schools and clinics in the townships. This upgrading drive was accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign aimed both at advertising the status quo and at discrediting the liberation movements. [200]

On the other hand, those townships considered being the liberation movements' strongholds became subject to a full-blown military offensive. 34 areas, including all townships in the Vaal Triangle, Atterdidgeville, the townships of Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth as well as the squatter camp Crossroads were entirely locked off from the outside world, buildings were searched, and many residents were arrested. Langa, one of Uitenhage's townships, was razed to the ground. [201] One year after the declaration of the second state of emergency, 97 townships were occupied by the military. By the end of 1987 calm was at least partly restored

---

[195] Byrnes (1996: Limited Reforms, p. 2) and Sparks (1990 a: 356)
According to Leon Mellet about 12,000 people were arrested during the first night of the state of emergency, a swoop that was only possible because there was a 24-hour delay between the official publication of the state of emergency in the Government Gazette and the public declaration, during which the general population was completely in the dark about the real situation. (Interview with the author, 26th June 2002)
[196] Mortimer (Unknown: 38), Nathan (1989: 69) and ANC (1996 a: 73 and 105)
[197] Quoted in The Caprivi Trainees (1997: 6)
[198] Swilling & Phillips (1989: 143-147), de Kock & Gordin (1998: 92-93), Haysom (1989 a: 2-3) and The Caprivi Trainees (1997: 6-8)
[199] Malan (Unknown: 15), ANC (1996 b: 13) and van Heerden (1982: 200-201)
[200] Teer Tomaselli (1992: 59) and Swilling & Phillips (1989: 144)
[201] Sparks (1990 a: 357)

in South Africa's black areas, but below the surface the uprising continued. In February 1988 the UDF was banned, but quickly re-emerged in the guise of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), ready to organise more boycotts, strikes and protest marches. No matter what the government did, it could not achieve its aims; the black population's resistance against apartheid would not be broken. [202]

Still, nobody expected the end of white minority rule to be only a few years away. The first step was taken thousands of kilometres from Pretoria, in Moscow. Gorbachev's Perestroika and the swift end of Soviet communism robbed the securocrats of their enemy. As Allister Sparks put it, "for the new ideologists of Pretoria the Gorbachev revolution poses a crisis no less severe than the death of Satan would to Christianity." [203] If the 'total onslaught' is over, who needs a 'total strategy'? Botha tried to revive Afrikaner nationalism by pointing to the dangers that black empowerment would have for white survival in Africa even after the fall of communism, but few South Africans seemed to listen anymore. In September 1989, after a stroke, Botha threw in the towel and retired from the presidency. [204]

2.2.6 The 1990s: The Decade of (Violent) Change

His successor Frederik Willem de Klerk was really not the open-minded reformer he is hailed as today. He was the head of the NP's Transvaal branch, one of the nationalists' most conservative wings. Within the NP he had always stood on the side of verkramptes (Afrikaans for 'conservative'). In 1976 he had firmly backed the policy of teaching black children in Afrikaans. In 1986 he was present at a meeting where a list of "politically sensitive people" [205] was tabled and its "shortening" [206] was discussed – a fact which he denied in front of the TRC. He knew about 'Operation Marion', which involved the training of paramilitary forces linked to Inkatha, in order to fight the UDF more effectively. [207] De Klerk was no more moderate than Botha; he just had a different leadership style. He ended the rule of the military and handed the country's administration back to the civilian authorities. [208]

He was aware of the stalemate between a government that could not be ousted by force and a popular movement that could not be crushed. He knew that he had to initiate talks with the black population if he wanted to end the violence. First he went looking for so-called 'moderate' black leaders, but he soon had to learn that the ANC was the only organisation whose credibility would not be threatened by negotiations. So the talks were taken up again

---

[202] Seekings (2000: 248) and Sparks (1990 a: 358)
[203] Sparks (1990 a: 363)
[204] Silke (1997: Part 3, p. 1), Hagemann (2001: 100), Dedial (1995: 5), and Sparks (1990 a: 363-367)
[205] Quoted in Stiff (2001: 86)
[206] Quoted in Stiff (2001: 86)
[207] Stiff (2001: 179)
[208] Dedial (1995: 6), Dispatch Online (27th February 1999: 2), Henderson (1991: 3-4) Sparks (1990 a: 367 and 370), and Silke (1997: Part 3, p. 2)

behind closed doors. [209] But de Klerk needed something to calm the black population. The negotiations had to be made official. This is why, in October 1989, de Klerk surprised the world by releasing nine ANC leaders, including Walter Sisulu, from prison. Then, on 2nd February 1990, he took the last decisive step towards the end of apartheid by unbanning the ANC, the PAC, the SACP, and 58 other political groups and announcing the release of all remaining political prisoners. On 11th February 1990, after 27 years in prison, 71-year-old Nelson Mandela was finally set free. [210]

Most white people expected the worst from these supposed anti-white terrorists. But much to their surprise, no massacres followed their release. Blacks did not go on a wild rampage; they did not attack their former oppressors, and did not attempt to get compensation for the decades of oppression by robbing whites of their possessions. [211] Instead, the ANC accepted de Klerk's offer of negotiations. On 6th August 1990, it ended its armed struggle and returned to where it had left off 40 years earlier: national politics. [212]

However, majority rule was really not de Klerk's aim. His plan was more like a revamped version of Verwoerd's separate development: Independent of their numbers, every population group should be given equal say in political matters, so that no one would be able to dominate the others. Not surprisingly, this plan never had a chance of being implemented. Once they sensed the chance of true political empowerment, the black population was not willing to settle for anything less. De Klerk should therefore be seen as a victim rather than the architect of reforms. Like a skier who set off an avalanche, all he could do, was try to not get pulled under by the force he had unleashed. Controlling it was soon out of the question. [213]

However, the NP did not give in without a fight. Even after the unbanning of the ANC, covert operations against the enemies of white rule did not stop. According to the South African defence ministry, during the fiscal year 1991/92 alone more than 21.5 million Rand was spent on secret operations. A substantial part of this money was probably used to incite violence among the black population. The state supported various warlords, vigilante groups and Inkatha, who in return protected government installations or killed people who were valuable to the ANC in the negotiations. [214]

However, death did not only come to activists. It seemed like a black skin in general was a qualifying characteristic. Between the end of August and the end of September 1990 alone,

---

[209] Sparks (1990 a: 369), Hansson (1990: 55-56) and Frontline Interviews (Unknown b: 2)

[210] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Para 3, Sparks (1990 a: 369), Louw (1993 a: 11), Byrnes (1996: Dismantling Apartheid, p. 1) and Rantete (1998: 158)

[211] Pilger (1998: 2) and The Economist (1997: 22)

[212] ANC (1996 a: 86)

[213] Sparks (1990 a: 370-371), TRC (15th September 1997: Prof. S. Terreblanche, 2), Virmani (1991: 23-25), Merrett (1994: 193) and Rantete (1998: 156)

[214] Merrett (1994: 189-191), Pogrund (2000: 348-349), Virmani (1991: 24) and ANC (1996 b: 25-26)

700 people lost their lives in the civil wars in the townships. [215] Observers pointed out that the violence always increased when another step towards a democratic order was imminent. During the months following Nelson Mandela's release from prison, around 460 people died and in September 1991, just before the signing of the National Peace Accord, about 280 were killed. [216] On the other hand the violence receded noticeably whenever the NP would have been put at a disadvantage by it, for example after the publication of the 'Inkathagate' scandal (see chapter 2.3.7). [217]

However, the high levels of violence in South Africa after 1990 cannot be sufficiently explained just by the nationalists' attempt to destabilise the country. What other things have contributed to the situation? The causes of the violence lay, paradoxically, both in the apartheid system and in its demise. [218] Apartheid's biggest contribution to the problem was the increasing militarization of life in South Africa, which began shortly after the NP's rise to power. [219] Violence had been omnipresent in the lives of (black) South Africans [220] under apartheid. Both its opponents and its proponents, considered it a legitimate means for gaining and maintaining power, for pursuing one's interests, and for solving conflicts. [221] So in a way the violence in the 1990s just followed the normal trends. It would have increased even without the end of apartheid. As Simpson & Rauch put it: "De Klerk's reform initiatives of February 1990 simply threw open the doors on a tide already on the move." [222]

This leads us right to the next reason for the sad development of violence: the end of white minority rule did in fact contribute to the heightened levels of violence albeit not as its former supporters claimed. The control mechanisms were slowly perishing, but were not replaced by an effective new order. The government simply lost control. Warlords, aggressive political groupings such as the IFP or the right wing Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), as well as ordinary criminals took advantage of this legal vacuum. [223] The impoverished population, too, saw in the demise of the old system a chance of finally expressing their discontent. And as the normal democratic channels were still closed to them, they did so in the only way they knew they could: through violence. Accordingly, new centres of violence appeared in the black residential areas, for example around the townships' taxi stands. [224]

---

[215] ANC (1996 a: 86)

[216] Simpson & Rauch (1993: 5) and Carver (1994: 8)

[217] Simpson (1993: 3), Simpson & Rauch (1993: 5-8), and Everatt (1993: 5)

[218] Simpson & Rauch (1991: 7) and Vogelman (1990 a: 1)

[219] *National Crime Prevention Strategy* (1996: 4)

[220] However, one should not, like the European media have frequently done, consider violence during the apartheid years as a purely black phenomenon. Whites were involved in political violence both passively by allowing others to be violent, and actively in their role as defenders of the system, that is as policemen, soldiers and secret service agents, or as right wing terrorists. White civilians were also making use of violence in their everyday lives. South African men got into fights and beat their women, children or employees no less frequently than men anywhere else in the world.

[221] Simpson (1993: 1), Simpson et al. (1991: 2), and Vogelman (1990 b: 102)

[222] Simpson & Rauch (1991: 1-2)

[223] Carver (1994: 1), TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Para 11-15, Simpson (1993: 2) and Simpson & Rauch (1991: 1 and 6-7)

[224] Hudson (1996: 114) and Simpson & Rauch (1993: 7)

The situation was aggravated by the fact that many members of the police, the military and the different secret service units, militias and paramilitary groups did not identify with the new state and therefore made no attempt to help the authorities restore calm. On the contrary, many were wishing for a return of apartheid and were hoping that the talks between the ANC and the NP would still fail. For this reason, and, of course, in order to make a profit they also actively participated in offences. [225]

Despite all obstacles, the negotiations produced a positive result and the first non-racial elections were set to be held on 26th April 1994. To the surprise of most observers, neither violence nor a boycott spoiled South Africa's first non-racial election. The voting even had to be extended until 29th April to accommodate the more than 22 million voters who stood in queues in front of one of 9,000 polling stations, sometimes waiting for hours to take their chance to choose their country's government for the first time in their lives. As expected, the ANC won a landslide victory taking 62.6% of the votes or 252 of 400 parliamentary seats. The NP was supported by 20.4% of voters, the IFP managed 10.5% and seven other parties [226] won at least one seat in Parliament. Nelson Mandela was elected president by unanimous decision. [227]

Although the power vacuum was finally filled after his taking office on 10th May 1994, the violence in South Africa did not come to an end. It did, however, change its character. Most acts of violence were no longer an expression of a political opinion. [228] In the new South Africa, violence has become what it is in any other country: an ordinary, apolitical crime. [229]

2.3   The Character of Violence in South Africa

Creating an appropriate classificatory system for the different forms of violence in South Africa has proved to be quite difficult. Some categories, such as that of 'unrest', describe such a large field that, unless further qualified, they do not mean much. Other terms seem relatively clear, but can only be applied to specific phenomena if the ideological and cultural background of the person who is using them is known. The violence of the opponents of the apartheid regime, for example, was classified as terrorism by the South African government while the liberation movements themselves saw their struggle as a guerrilla war. [230] A similar pair of terms is that of 'riot', as the way the government saw the black population's struggle, and 'uprising', as the people themselves classified their fight. Many terms overlap forming a

---

[225] McCarthy (1998: The SAPS, p. 1)
[226] The biggest among them was the Freedom Front, a right-wing coalition, who obtained 2.2% of votes (9 seats in Parliament), followed by the liberal Democratic Party at 1.7% of votes (7 seats), the PAC at 1.2% of votes (5 seats) and the African Christian Democratic Party who won 2 seats. (Byrnes (1996: Freedom Front, p. 1-3))
[227] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, Appendix A: National Chronology, p. 34 and Byrnes (1996: "Irreversible Progress" Toward Democracy, p. 3-4)
[228] McCarthy (1998: Introduction, p. 1)
[229] Rauch (1993: 2)
[230] Cock (1990: 45) and Malan (Unknown: 9)

chain of interlocked word fields rather than a row of clearly separable individual concepts. This problem arose for example in relation to 'vigilantes', 'death squads' and the 'third force'. This does not mean that the phenomenon of violence in South Africa cannot in some way be described systematically. It can, and I have done so in the present chapter. My terminology is, however, not as unambiguous as would generally be expected in science, and the individual concepts are by no means clear-cut. On the contrary, I will try to emphasise the contradictions and the overlap between them in order to show just how complex and multi-faceted the violence in South Africa is and just how much the individual definitions depend on the point of view of the observer. The weakness of my approach is a loss of precision in my own definitions, but I have chosen to accept this in order to remain true to my view that reality in South Africa is not one but many, even within the scientific context. [231]

2.3.1 Maintaining Power a All Cost – Government Sanctioned Police Violence

Exerting violence is an integral part of normal police work. However, the SAP's 'law and order policing' involved brutality that by far exceeded the levels of violence required for maintaining order. They would clearly fall into the category defined by Claridge as state terrorism: The "systematic threat or use of violence (…) with the intention of communicating a political message to a group larger than the victim group by generating fear and so altering the behaviour of the larger group". [232]

Certainly, a large section of the black population suffered violence at the hands of state agents. Torture, extra-legal executions of opponents and bombings were all standard features in the apartheid state's repertoire of violence. Even the civilian population was not safe. The South African security forces [233] often displayed sadistic pleasure when they were breaking up protest marches. [234] In a random survey conducted in 1985 by the *Eastern Province Herald*, one third of all township residents questioned said that they had been assaulted by policemen or soldiers. [235]

In the present sub-chapter I want do give an overview of all methods used by the apartheid state in its war on the country's population in order to show just how far the NP was prepared to go in order to hold on to power and briefly reflect upon the changes in the violent state structure after the transition to democracy.

---

[231] Sayer (1984: 51)
[232] Claridge (1996: 50)
[233] This term is frequently used in the South African context to describe both the police and the military who were deployed in the townships to quell popular unrest. It is by no means unproblematic, for it insinuates that these two institutions were forces working towards greater security for the population. As the previous Chapter has shown, this was certainly not the case. Still, I have chosen to use the term in the present dissertation, mainly for reasons of brevity and for lack of an alternative. I do, however, caution the reader to not be misled by the positive connotations of the word security, but rather to see the apartheid police and army for what they were: brutal forces engaged in the ruthless oppression of their own people. (See Cock (1989: 7-8) for a further critical evaluation of the term.)
[234] Rauch & Storey (1998: 8 and 19) and Sparks (1990 a: 219)
[235] Eastern Province Herald, 13th November 1985, quoted in Nathan (1989: 74)

a)   'Legal Police Killings'

The term 'legal police killings' is one of many euphemisms that the apartheid system created for hiding its own cruelty. This seemingly neutral expression is a disguise for the often cold-blooded murder of numerous opponents of apartheid in the name of law and order. But unlike the secret death squads described in chapter 2.3.2 the killer cops operated in the open and were protected from prosecution by South African law. Members of the SAP were allowed to use lethal force in order to protect persons or property, to prevent an offender's escape from arrest, or to disperse riotous or otherwise dangerous crowds. The taking of human lives was justified by pointing at the victims' behaviour. The killer was relieved of any responsibility for his/her actions. [236]

The prototype of a legal police killing in South Africa is probably the Sharpeville Massacre: White policemen open fire on a group of unarmed black protesters for no apparent reason, frequently killing dozens by shooting them in the back as they ran away. Generally, the incidents were not even investigated, but if there was an inquest, the police generally claimed that the protesters had been a rowdy mob threatening their safety. They were always cleared of any wrongdoing, despite compelling evidence that their stories were false and that they had in fact intended to inflict maximum loss of life. The scenario was re-enacted so often in the following decades that soon no one wondered how they had come to happen: The Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, the slaughtering of hundreds of black youths during the student protest in 1976/77, the Mamelodi Killings and the Queenstown Shootings in November 1985, the Shooting at Uitenhage in March 1985, the Winterveld Killings in March 1986, the Sebokeng Massacre in March 1990, are just a few examples of riot control SAP style. [237] And the number of casualties was frightening. Between July 1985 and June 1986 alone, 1,113 people were killed by police in so-called 'unrest incidents'. [238]

b)   The Kitskonstabels

During the 1980s, many of the ordinary police units were withdrawn from the townships. They were replaced by the military, by vigilantes, and by the so-called kitskonstabels (the Afrikaans word for 'instant policemen'), thugs recruited from among unemployed blacks who had not joined in the struggle against apartheid. Many also had close ties to Inkatha and felt more loyal to the party leaders than the people they were meant to serve. One of the former recruits testified to this to the TRC:

> "As they were police, they knew very well that they have to work under the
> instructions of the IFP, for example killing people who were UDF members. (...)

---

[236] Cock (1990: 61) and Henderson (1990 a: 2)
[237] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1985 and 1986
[238] Theissen (1992: 52) and Hansson (1990: 30)

[T]hey were not taking instructions from police ... they were taking instructions directly from the IFP." [239]

In 1986, a total of 16,000 of these 'municipal policemen' were sent into the crisis-struck areas after a mere six to eight weeks' training. [240] As expected, they did nothing to curb the violence in the townships. On the contrary, they launched their own campaign of terror and substantially heightened the level of fear and violence in the townships. [241] As the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) put it:

"From the beginning they used excessive violence. Their brutality created an atmosphere of fear that was aimed not only at activists but at intimidating entire communities. The behaviour of the new police is characterized by an arrogant disregard for the law." [242]

Between February 1987 and 1989, 49 township residents died at their hands and by February 1988 they had been served with five Supreme Court interdicts restraining them from unlawful conduct. The CIIR documented numerous accounts of men, women, and children who were beaten, shot and tortured for 'crimes' such as walking down the road while the kitskonstabels were on patrol. [243]

The kitskonstabels did not limit themselves to small-time attacks, though. The Trust Feed Massacre of December 1988, for example, was the work of IFP-supporting municipal policemen. Along with a unit of white policemen, several black units stormed a memorial service in a church near New Hanover. Eleven people, two of them children under eighteen, whose only crime had been to pray for the victims of police violence, lost their lives during the incident. [244] Brian Mitchell, one of the policemen involved later explained: "We attacked the UDF because we regarded them as the enemy and Inkatha as an ally." [245]

The aim of these random acts of violence, namely to instil fear among the township population, was quickly attained. The people grew more and more weary and soon only left their homes whenever they absolutely had to and only stayed outside as long as necessary. Attending public gatherings, particularly protest marches against apartheid, had become a hazard to life and limb; therefore, demonstrations grew less and less frequent. As an Eastern Cape policeman explained in an interview: "... now everyone is afraid of going to jail without any reason, no one is causing trouble." [246]

---

[239] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 3, Para 126
[240] Sparks (1990 a: 356), Fine & Hansson (1990: 209), TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 3, Para 120-122 and ANC (1996 a: 5)
[241] Tomaselli (1991 a: 23), CCIR, 1988, *Now Everyone is Afraid: The Changing Face of Policing in South Africa*, quoted in Cock (1990: 54) and Haysom (1989 a: 11)
[242] CCIR, 1988, *Now Everyone is Afraid: The Changing Face of Policing in South Africa*, quoted in Cock (1990: 53)
[243] Cock (1990: 53), Fine & Hansson (1990: 209-210) and TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 3, Para 127
[244] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1988, Stiff (2001: 190-193) and Merrett (1994: 141-142)
[245] Quoted in Pauw (1993: 4)
[246] Quoted in Cock (1990: 54)

c)   Torture

In apartheid South Africa torture was a standard feature of police work. No political trial passed without accusations of torture being raised against the police or prison personnel. Politicians to this day maintain that they did not condone the use of violence against detainees and that they did not know about what was going on behind the closed doors of prisons and police stations. Such claims of ignorance would be unacceptable as an excuse even if they were true. But they ring increasingly hollow in the light of the facts uncovered by the TRC and the statements made at various commissions and trials by former police officers. [247] Former Vlakplaas commander Eugene de Kock, for example wrote in his book:

> "When legislation was passed that allowed for detention without trial, another step was taken in the development of death squads. This particular piece of legislation led to a kind of subculture among the security police. We began to believe we were supermen who could behave ruthlessly in the name of patriotism and state security. The state had made torture legitimate." [248]

This testimony shows that torture was not the work of rogue elements who had acted without the consent of their superiors. It serves as a powerful indictment of the apartheid state as a whole. We can only guess how common torture really was during the apartheid years, for no systematic documentation exists. There are several indicators, though, that draw a chilling picture. In 1982, the Detainees' Parents Support Committee published a survey documenting the cases of 175 detainees, 83% of whom had been tortured. [249] A few years later, a study by the Department of Psychology of the University of Cape Town revealed that 85% of prisoners questioned had been tortured. [250] In a similar study in Johannesburg 72% of former inmates stated that they had been tortured and 97% of those showed actual signs of physical abuse. [251] According to the SAIIR, in 1987 a total of 1,030 prisoners were admitted to hospital with injuries they had sustained while in jail. [252]

The most common methods of torture were beating and kicking, sleep deprivation, and stubbing cigarettes out on the victims' skin. Equally popular were different forms of electric shock treatment or suffocation. Less frequent, but by no means an exception was suspending prisoners in mid-air, often hanging head first out of a window, or forcing them to remain standing in the same place, frequently on a pile of bricks, to hold a position, such as an imaginary chair, or to make them crouch with their arms spread for hours. They were often

---

[247] Sparks (1990 a: 222), Tutu (1999: 94), TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 3, Para 67 and de Kock & Gordin (1998: 98)
[248] de Kock & Gordin (1998: 97)
[249] Quoted in Pauw (1991: 100)
[250] Foster, Don et al., 1987, *Detention and Torture in South Africa: Psychological, Legal and Historical Studies*. Cape Town: David Philip, figures quoted in Cock (1990: 63) and de Kock & Gordin (1998: 279)
[251] Study published in *The Star*, 8th April 1987, and *New Nation*, 9th April 1987, quoted in Theissen (1992: 52)
[252] South African Institute for Race Relations (1988: 570)

completely naked and blindfolded. Sometimes the policemen let insects crawl over their victims' bodies to make it harder for them to remain still. And these were only the less horrific methods. Researchers also documented incidents of prisoners having burning matchsticks inserted under their finger- and toenails, being cut with a knife, having their finger- or toenails crushed with bricks, having petrol poured over their body and being set alight or having their face scrubbed with a hard brush. [253]

Even very elaborate methods of torture soon became so widespread that they were given proper names. For example, there was the 'helicopter', where a prisoner's hands and feet were tied behind his back with a wooden stick inserted between the ties. He/she was then hung from the ceiling by a rope attached to the stick. While up there, policemen kept whipping them with sjamboks making them spin in the air. There also was the 'submarine' during which the victim was forced down under water until he nearly drowned or when, alternatively, a wet bag was pulled over his head until he was close to suffocating. The 'telephone' was popular, too. This was the name for the practice of attaching wires to the victim's nipples or genitals and repeatedly sending electrical current through the lines. [254]

Since the end of apartheid the use of torture as a means of extracting information from a suspect is no longer officially sanctioned. However, it seems to be a habit that is hard to break for some policemen – both black and white. During 1996, Amnesty International documented a number of cases of torture and ill treatment of criminal suspects and homeless people and throughout the year torture equipment was seized under court order from several police stations across the county. [255]" In total, more than 5,300 complaints of assault were logged against the police in 1997. [256] Since then the situation has improved substantially. During the first ten months of 1998, the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) received only 13 reports of torture in police custody and another 103 complaints of assault or attempted murder. [257] The methods reported have remained largely the same: beatings, suffocation, electric shocks and cigarette burns. [258]

d)   Death in Detention

During the apartheid years it was frighteningly common for jailed freedom fighters to die in prison. Even the government could not deny the magnitude of the problem. During a speech in May 1976 the Minister of Police declared that 92 people had died in detention during the year 1975. [259] For 1976 he owned up to 117 deaths and by 1977 the number had climbed to

---

[253] Brewer (1986: 114), Harrison (1981: 221), Malan (1990: 286), Pauw (1991: 101) and Sparks (1990 a: 222)
[254] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 3, Para 78, Sparks (1990 a: 222), Tutu (1999: 109-110) and Brewer (1986: 114)
[255] Amnesty International (1997: 3)
[256] Human Rights Watch (1998: 2)
[257] Amnesty International (1999 a: 2)
[258] Hamber (1997 a: 3), Amnesty International (1999 a: 3) and Amnesty International (1999 b: 1)
[259] SAIRR (1977: 122)

128 awaiting trial prisoners. [260] In 1985 the SAIIR documented the deaths of 24 unsentenced and 194 sentenced prisoners. In 1986 the numbers reached 105 for unsentenced and 151 for sentenced prisoners. [261] The situation was a little better for people held in custody without a charge having been laid against them. Exact numbers are impossible to come by, as no one kept a systematic record of deaths in detention. The most comprehensive account can be found in the final report of the TRC. Scattered throughout the document's seven volumes, I found the names of 89 people who died in police custody between 1960 and 1994. [262] But even the commission said that the real number is probably much higher.

Their killing followed a frighteningly regular pattern: They were more often than not arrested without reason and held over some time in a police station or a jail where they were questioned about their supposed terrorist activities. During interrogations they were frequently subjected to severe torture. If they did not survive this ordeal, the policemen fabricated a story to make the murder appear like an accident or a suicide. The police's storytellers were not very inventive though, using a few tales over and over again, barely changing the details. If a person had died from gunshot wounds, the authorities generally claimed that they had tried to escape or that they had attacked the officers who had to shoot in self-defence. The others had either supposedly hanged themselves with their shoe laces or clothing, tripped and fell as they were trying to escape, or slipped and fell in the shower. Some even supposedly leapt out of windows. Their bodies were manipulated according to the declared cause of death. [263]

The end of apartheid brought the end of such frightening practices; it did by no means put an end to deaths in detention, though. An SAPS report released in 1997 indicated that between January 1994 and June 1996 a total of 497 people had died in detention or as a result of police action. These numbers are questionable, though. The independent Human Rights Committee reported 379 deaths in detention during 1994 alone. [264] Under mounting pressure from human rights advocates, the new government revised the curriculum for new police trainees to focus more on detainees' rights and improved the police's internal control mechanisms. The number of deaths has gone down steadily since. In November 1998 the ICD was investigating the cases of 187 suspects who were shot by policemen during arrest in the first nine months of the year. Some of these were most certainly genuine attempts to stop criminals from getting away or cases of self-defence, but the ICD and numerous human rights watchdogs still expressed concern about the ongoing culture of lawlessness in the SAPS. [265]

---

[260] SAIRR (1979: 76-77)
[261] SAIRR (1988: 570)
[262] This figure does not include the cases of people who simply disappeared after having been arrested and the one of a man who's status at the time of death was not entirely clear (he might have been a prisoner rather than a detainee).
[263] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 3, Para 80, Harrison (1981: 222-223) and 119 and SAIRR (1977: 121-127)
[264] Bruce (1997: 1) and US Department of State (1997: 2)
[265] Bruce (1997: 1-2) and Amnesty International (1999 a: 2-4)

2.3.2 Death squads

As the war of liberation in South Africa intensified during the 1970s, numerous secret services, such as the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB), one of the SADF's most notorious hit squads, and the counter-insurgency unit at Vlakplaas, began executing opponents of apartheid whenever they could not be silenced legally. The number of government-sponsored killers is still unknown, but they were certainly more numerous than former officials like to admit. And most of the time they operated not without the knowledge of the Cabinet, as President de Klerk and his ministers later claimed, nor with tacit approval from apartheid's politicians as some apologists try to make us believe, but with an official government mandate. [266]

During the 1980s in particular, murdering anti-apartheid activists was an effective tool in the regime's struggle to maintain power. Among the victims were prominent personalities like the ANC's lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, his wife Victoria and David Webster, a Professor of anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand, as well as less known activists, such as Eric Mntonga, the director of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA), Sicelo Dhlomo, a member of the Detainee's Parents Support Committee (DPSC), who was murdered in 1988 along with ten other anti-apartheid activists and the 'Cradock Four'. [267] Eugene de Kock, the last leader of Vlakplaas, even implicated South African death squads in the murder of the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme in January 1986. [268]

The killers did not just target individuals, though. Large-scale attacks on anti-apartheid organisations were not uncommon either. On 14th March 1982, the ANC's offices in London were severely damaged in an explosion and on 7th May 1987, the secret service planted a bomb in the headquarters of the ANC-friendly Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). On 1st September 1987, Khotso House in Johannesburg, a building which housed anti-apartheid organisations like Black Sash and the South African Council of Churches (SACC), exploded and in October of the same year the offices of the South African Bishops Conference (SACBC) in Khanya House burned out completely after an arson attack. [269]

In their operations, the death squads used a wide range of methods. Mines were popular, most commonly in the form of booby-trapped household items that exploded upon use. [270] In other situations of activists were simply poisoned or shot, often by so-called 'askaris', captured ANC activists who had been talked or forced into switching sides. [271] They often left false clues at the site of the murder, so that police, who were unaware of their existence, suspected

---

[266] Pauw (1991: 145-191), Pauw (1992: 2-3), Tutu (1999: 194-195), TRC Report, Vol 5, Chap 6, Para 97-100, Mail & Guardian (25th October 1996: 2) and de Kock & Gordin (1998: 18-23)
[267] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1985, Stiff (2001: 248-249), Theissen (1992: 43) and Cock (1990: 59-60)
[268] de Kock & Gordin (1998: 23) and CNN Interactive (1996: 2)
[269] Merrett (1994: 111 and 133), TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1987, TRC Report, Vol 5, Chap 1, Para 100, de Kock & Gordin (1998: 83-86 and 143-145) and ANC (1996 a: 10)
[270] du Preez (1982: 220-221)
[271] de Kock & Gordin (1998: 106-107) and Pauw (1991: 14)

people who were in no way related to the government, for example burglars or enemies of the victim from the ranks of opponents of apartheid. [272] Other victims just disappeared without anyone knowing what had happened to them. In order to cover up the killing, the murderers generally burned the bodies. [273] While relatively easy at home, killing anti-apartheid activists outside South Africa was a more difficult task. The government did have killers who operated internationally, but their job was risky and they were used only occasionally. The preferred means for eliminating expatriate opponents were letter bombs. [274]

No one knows exactly how many people died at the hands of the government-sponsored killers. According to ANC estimates, between 1974 and 1989 the South African death squads took the lives of around 100 people. Another 200 survived attacks. [275] In his study of Apartheid's Death Squads Jacques Pauw even talks of as many as 225 opponents of apartheid who were executed by Vlakplaas men alone. [276]

For years the government denied the existence of death squads and, despite large amounts of circumstantial evidence, no one could prove that they were real. Proof was finally produced on 20th October 1989, when, only hours before he was to be executed for murder, Butana Almond Nofemela signed an affidavit stating, among other things, the following:

> "In 1981, I was appointed a member of the Security Branch's assassination squad, and I served under Captain Johannes Dirk Coetzee (…).
>
> Some time during late 1981 I was briefed by Brigadier Schoon and Captain Coetzee to eliminate a certain Durban attorney, Griffiths Mxenge. (…)
>
> I was involved in approximately eight other assassinations during my stint in the assassination squad, and also numerous kidnappings." [277]

On 17th November 1989 *Vrye Weekblad* published a long interview with Captain Coetzee, in which he confirmed Nofomela's allegations and explained the reasoning behind the death squad operations: "There are people who want to take the country and who must be killed. (…) Let the bastards burn at the stake." [278]

2.3.3   The Military Occupation of the Townships

Resistance against apartheid increased substantially in the 1980s and on 6th October 1984 President Botha responded by dispatching army units into the townships to, as Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok put it, aid in "controlling the unrest" [279]. As often before,

---

[272] Pauw (1993: 3), de Kock & Gordin (1998: 18), TRC (17th September 1997: Vrye Weekblad, 3) and Cock (1990: 59)
[273] Everatt (1993: 3), Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 115), Tutu (1999: 95-97) and Cock (1990: 60-70)
[274] Cock (1990: 59) and Pauw (1991: 204)
[275] ANC (1996 a: 5)
[276] Pauw (1991: 225)
[277] Affidavit signed by Almond Nofemela (19th October 1989) quoted in Pauw (1991: 22-23). See also Steytler (1990: 109)
[278] Vrye Weekblad, 17th November 1989, quoted in and translated by Steytler (1990: 112)
[279] Cape Argus, 6th October 1984, quoted in Nathan (1989: 68)

Soweto and the townships of the Eastern Cape were the first to be hit, and from October 1984 soldiers patrolled the streets alongside the riot police. [280]

On 23rd October 1984 the military presence was upgraded with the launch of 'Operation Palmiet' ('Bullrush'). At 2 a.m. 7,000 policemen and soldiers occupied Sebokeng and completely sealed it off from outside contact. The police conducted a house-to-house search protected by soldiers armed with R1 rifles lining the streets at 10-metre intervals. 354 people were arrested. A similar scenario was repeated during the next few days in Boipatong and Sharpeville. By the beginning of the following year, most of the country's townships were under military occupation. According to the Minister of Defence, by the middle of 1985 the government had a total of 35,372 soldiers deployed in 96 black areas within South Africa. Most of them were conscripts, often on 24-hour standby. [281] The psychological stress this caused these poorly prepared young men should not be underestimated. It has been amply documented in literature [282] and was confirmed by my South African informers. Fear, feelings of powerlessness and even self-hatred were voiced on several occasions. [283]

Such emotional strain certainly played a role in the soldiers' violent behaviour towards the local population, for, despite the government's repeated claims that they were deployed for the protection of black civilians and the restoration of law and order, they treated the locals like enemies. One inhabitant of Crossroads described his people's relationship with the occupying army as one of predator and prey: "Today's army is lions. They hate a person. If one of the police or army come towards you, you are so scared. You know that the first thing they may do is beat you up and then shoot you." [284]

While rapes of township women or random attacks on passers-by were not unheard of, young black men were the security forces' favourite targets. The DPSC reported that soldiers frequently picked-up children for no apparent reason and held them in military vehicles or remote rural areas for several hours. Many of the young victims told stories of beatings or torture in detention. [285] In February 1986 the Minister of Law and Order finally admitted in parliament that 500 complaints had been logged against the security forces. However, only one policeman had been convicted. [286]

By 1987 the mass uprising against apartheid had been seriously weakened and the soldiers began to withdraw from the townships. The role of putting down the revolt was now increasingly given to so-called 'conservative' blacks, municipal policemen and vigilantes. [287]

---

[280] Nathan (1989: 68)
[281] Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 1), ANC (1996 b: 12), Nathan (1989: 67-68 and 70) and Cock (1990: 50-51)
[282] See for example Sandler in Cock & Nathan (1989: 79-89) for an account of conscripts' experiences in the townships.
[283] Conversations in Johannesburg in July and August 2002 and Prague in April 2004
[284] Quoted in Cock (1990: 51) and Nathan (1989: 67)
[285] Radio Freedom (1984 a), Nathan (1989: 75) and Cock (1990: 51)
[286] Nathan (1989: 76)
[287] Haysom (1990: 71) and Nathan (1989: 67)

2.3.4 Terrorism or Guerrilla War? – The Liberation Movements' Fight Against Apartheid

Even today there is no consent on how to classify the liberation movements' fight against the apartheid regime. Depending on the perspective from which the phenomenon is analysed, the evaluation of it changes and so does the apparent character of the acts. The government in Pretoria along with a large portion of South Africa's white population perceived the anti-apartheid activists' actions – correctly – as an attack against their political order. They took the status quo to be just (and justified) and therefore classified any attempt (violent ones in particular) of changing it as an act of terrorism. [288]

On the other side stood the ANC and its allies who felt that they were fighting a "people's war" [289], a guerrilla war against illegitimate oppression. As today's deputy president and one time ANC fighter Jacob Zuma put it: "We are fighting a war of liberation against the apartheid regime and against colonialism of a very special type." [290] The freedom fighters saw the status quo – equally correctly – as unjust (and unjustified) and took their fight to be a defence against this injustice. Accordingly, they called their struggle a 'guerrilla war', a term which carries a positive connotation in this context.

The NP always claimed that the ANC was waging a campaign of terror against South Africa's white civilians while hiding behind innocent black bystanders. [291] The liberation movements on the other hand frequently emphasised that they only targetted civilians when they cooperated actively with the military. As for the township population, the ANC did not take them to be bystanders, but considered them an integral part of its own organisational structure. Seen this way, the fighters were not hiding from anyone, especially not behind the civilian population. To them it was the South African state that was inflicting terror on South Africa's innocent black population and opponents of apartheid of all walks of life. The figures tend to support this latter view. At the height of the ANC's struggle against apartheid during the late 1980s, their attacks claimed an average of 40 victims per year (1986-1989), compared to almost 1,000 victims yearly due to police action. [292]

Such mutual finger pointing is not uncommon in political struggles. Ever since the French Revolution, people have been quick to call political opponents 'terrorists'. [293] But why has the argument about the appropriate label for the liberation movements' fight at times been carried out with so much passion? In my opinion it is due to the fact that the terms under discussion do not merely refer to an independent extra-linguistic reality, but instead shape reality itself.

---

[288] van Heerden (1982: 200)
[289] ANC (1996 a: 113-114)
[290] Cock (1990: 45)
[291] Bureau for Information (1986: 21-22)
[292] ANC (1996 a: 113-114) and Marks & Andersson (1990: 29)
[293] Quoted in Walter (1969: 4)

This is not to mean that the real world phenomena actually change; they do not. However, they appear different to the outside observer. By constantly labelling the ANC in a negative way as 'terrorists' and 'communists' "committed to the violent overthrow of the present system of government for the purpose of seizing total power for itself" [294] the government achieved what Bell citing Davis and Walton calls "closure" [295]: Their psychological exclusion from mainstream society and the denial of legitimacy of any of their actions. The dispute in South Africa was thus not about linguistic details. Rather, both parties sought to determine the character of their fight with the help of language. At the centre of the argument stood the legitimacy of one's own actions. [296]

I personally agree with the ANC's point of view that the black population was unjustly suppressed and that the South African state used terror as a means of sustaining white power. As such I doubt the legitimacy of the government and its views. At the same time, though, I believe that the liberation movements' use of violence in the struggle for justice sometimes crossed the boundary of legitimacy and appropriateness. They clearly left South Africa's white population in a state of terror. I will therefore choose sides in this argument only tentatively, and leave the reader to decide whether the acts of violence described in the following chapter constitute terrorist attacks or battles in the fight for freedom and justice. This lack of clarity might make the individual acts less tangible, but this is a setback I accept knowingly. I am also aware that any attempt at remaining neutral is damned to failure, but I will at least try to keep both positions in mind.

a)   Bombings

Bombs were an important tool in the liberation movements' armed struggle against apartheid, because they enabled fighters to inflict a lot of damage without too great a risk of getting caught. [297] The saboteurs were particularly active in 1962 and 1963. During the first three months of 1963 alone the SAP registered around 300 cases of sabotage. [298] The number of attacks dropped substantially after the leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo were arrested, but when the black population's resistance against apartheid picked up again after the Soweto Uprisings, the number of bombings increased as well. [299] According to Mortimer, 170 bombings were carried out between October 1976 and October 1983. Between 1977 and 1984 a total of 83 people lost their lives during these attacks. [300]

---

[294] Bureau for Information (1986: 1)
[295] Bell (1991: 195)
[296] Fowler (1991: 3), Schlesinger (1991: 11), Pakendorf (1987: 263) and du Toit (1990: 97 and 106)
[297] ANC (1996 a: 61-62) and Cock (1990: 55)
[298] du Preez (1982: 216)
[299] ANC (1996 a: 65)
[300] Mortimer (Unknown: 20-24)

When the liberation movements intensified their efforts to bring down apartheid in the 1980s, the number of bombings increased substantially. For the period September 1984 to August 1985 the police noted 92 cases of 'sabotage', most of which consisted of bombings. The following year that number rose to 101. During the following years the trend remained unbroken. Between September 1985 and August 1989 a total of 1,013 acts of sabotage were carried out successfully in South Africa. The number of victims also rose substantially as MK no longer tried to prevent the loss of human life and activists who were not committed to the same ethical standards as the ANC took-up arms against apartheid. Between 1984 and 1987 acts of sabotage took the lives of 134 people. [301]

b)   Mines

When the ANC first took up arms in the 1960s, they avoided the use of mines because, unlike bombs, mines clearly target humans. However, when in the 1970s, the liberation movements enlarged their range of targets to include supporters of the system, they began using mines which were valued for their destructive impact. [302]

Limpet mines were the most widely used variety. From November 1985 until the end of the armed struggle in February 1991, 487 limpet mines exploded throughout the country, killing 22 people and injuring 373. [303] Limpet mines were also the weapons of choice of rogue freedom fighters who targeted civilians. Incidents included limpet mine explosions in a restaurant, a sports club, a gaming hall, and an art gallery. [304]

Anti-tank mines, too, were increasingly buried in the rural areas along South Africa's northern border. There, MK targeted border patrol vehicles as well as local farmers whose self-defence units were integrated with the military's security system. The government provided them with arms, including automatic weapons that could otherwise be legally carried only by the members of the armed forces. Therefore, the ANC did not treat them as civilians, but considered them to be 'hard', military targets. 57 mines exploded on farms between November 1985 and February 1991. 25 people lost their lives and 76 were injured. [305]

As far as anti-personnel mines are concerned, it would seem reasonable to believe the ANC's claim that they were never used during the struggle. In 1980, before the organisation extended its struggle to include soft targets, the ANC declared its adherence to the Geneva Conventions, which explicitly prohibit the use of land mines. I have found no credible evidence that they ever broke this commitment. [306]

---

[301] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1985 and Mortimer (Unknown: 21-24)
[302] ANC (1996 a: 78)
[303] de Klerk (Unknown: 9)
[304] Cock (1990: 65)
[305] ANC (1996 a: 9 and 78-80), de Klerk (Unknown: 9), Manning (1987: 92) and TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1 – 1985
[306] ANC (1997 a: 5 and 17)

c)   'Civil Disobedience' and 'Public Violence' – A Brief Explanation

In the South African context, the expression 'civil disobedience' is used to describe any form of more or less widespread civilian resistance against certain laws or conditions associated with apartheid. Throughout history it took many shapes, such as consumer boycotts, strikes or demonstrations. Civil disobedience itself is not a form of violence. The organisers did, however, at times use violent means to enforce their campaigns (see chapter 2.3.5 for more details) [307]. Even if the disobedience campaign itself was peaceful, on occasion, it led to violence. Peaceful demonstrations, strikes, and rallies, generally turned violent when the police stepped in. The result was so-called incidents of public violence, such as the massacres described above or the riots and unrest that I will now attempt to explain. [308]

d)   Unrest / Onrus

The term unrest covers a wide variety of real-world phenomena. Thus, without further qualification, it really means nothing. However, if it is investigated as a part of the whole word field of popular resistance, unrest is an interesting concept. First and foremost, unrest is never a private affair. In order for something to qualify as unrest, it has to happen in public. Furthermore, unrest is never about individual persons; it always involves groups of people. Similarly, although the word unrest is always used in the singular form, it never denotes a single act. Unrest can therefore not be committed. It comprises a number of acts that are temporally related and have a common cause or background. Unrest frequently has a political background, although this is not a necessary prerequisite for the classification of an incident as unrest. Unrest can be the result of a planned campaign, but generally it arises spontaneously. Unrest is necessarily opposed to order and therefore, even if it was planned ahead, it always contains an element of chaos. Bearing all this in mind, du Preez defined the term 'unrest' as "acts of violence and disorder, often unorganised, in character, carried out by various groups of persons, contrary to the concept of law and order" [309].

Unrest can take many different shapes: violent protest marches or demonstrations, uprisings, rebellions or revolts, riots, and series of loosely connected acts of destruction, plundering, or public violence against persons. While all kinds of unrest mentioned above have happened in South Africa in the recent past, the range of acts of violence committed in the process was generally limited. While random assaults on people and general looting did take place, demonstrators commonly followed the ANC's call and limited themselves to attacking government targets. During the apartheid years these were policemen, soldiers, community

---

[307] Mortimer (Unknown: 17) and Sparks (1990 a: 340-41)
[308] van Heerden (1982: 198)
[309] du Preez (1982: 221)

councillors and suspected collaborators as well as government installations and the property of those considered to be traitors of the blacks' cause. [310]

Finally, I should add a note of caution. As with so many other words, the term unrest is ideologically biased in the South African context. As will become clear later, it was introduced to serve the apartheid government's agenda of discrediting the popular uprising against oppression. It did so by sub-consciously appealing to people's like of order. South Africa's white population saw themselves as distinctly different from blacks in their respect for peace and calm. Accordingly, when referring to un-'rest', that is, the absence of calm, the authorities and the mainstream media implied that they were describing actions taken by the black population, thus confirming people's negative stereotypes.

e)   From Riot to Revolution

Webster's Dictionary defines a riot as "a disturbance consisting of wild and turbulent conduct of a large number of persons, as a mob; uproar; tumult." [311] Thus, riots or uprisings, a term frequently used in South Africa to describe the same incidents from a different perspective, are a particularly violent kind of unrest. But what exactly sets a riot apart from other kinds of unrest? Webster's leave this question unanswered. In my opinion the term 'riot' is, much like that of violence, un-definable. It is an impression, a feeling, a fear. One thing is sure, though: Unlike similar terms the word 'riot' clearly carries a negative connotation. As such, it gives those who label an act as a riot, the power to pass a value judgement on the people involved in it. What happened in Soweto on 16th June 1976 has often been called the 'Soweto Riots' by opponents of revolutionary change. [312] Unlike the alternatives 'uprising' or 'protest', this label serves to obscure the historical context (one does not riot for or against something) of the events and makes it easy not to mention the fact that the initial violence that had sparked the event had been perpetrated by the police, for, despite Jon Qwelane's observation that "it was very difficult to tell who was actually rioting, the pupils or the police" [313], by definition policemen on duty do not riot.

Moreover, the term 'riot' makes its referent appear as a geographically and temporally limited event. By calling what happened in South Africa in 1976 a series of 'riots', the government indicated that each was a local affair that would be over in a few days. This, however, is a gross misrepresentation of the situation. It may have started as a fairly locally restricted demonstration, but it soon grew into a nationwide protest. It was a symptom of a larger political development, which took place on a national level. The more appropriate label is

---

[310] Radio Freedom (1985), du Preez (1982: 221-222) and Rauch & Storey (1998: 3)
[311] Walker Read (1998: 1086)
[312] See for example The Star (16th June 1976 (several editions): 1), Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 b: 1) and The Argus (16th June 1976 (several editions): 1)
[313] Quoted in Hopkins & Grange (2001: 101)

therefore the name by which the events became internationally known: the Soweto Uprisings. This term also indicates that this was a large-scale revolt against an oppressive system. [314]

Many observers go even further and describe the violence that shook South African townships during the apartheid years as the visible symptom of an ongoing civil or revolutionary war. While this is certainly not appropriate for describing the situation during the 1960s and 1970s, during the 1980s and the early 1990s the townships of the big cities did indeed resemble battlefields. [315] But were the bodies in the streets really victims of a war? I cannot come to a conclusive answer; I will therefore let the involved parties speak for themselves.

The ANC has frequently described its fight against apartheid as a 'people's war'. The concept was explained in detail in the publication *The African Communist*: "By people's war we mean a war in which the liberation army becomes rooted amongst the people who progressively participate actively in the armed struggle (...)." [316] Mortimer, in the SADF submission to the TRC, agrees that there was in fact a

> "revolutionary war in South Africa [that] lasted for more than forty years, but it escalated during the period 1980-1990. The main role players were on the one hand the ANC (MK), and to a lesser degree the PAC (APLA), assisted by several mass democratic organisations and on the other hand the South African Government." [317]

Brigadier Hermanus Stadler, on the other hand, declared during the two trials of ANC fighters in the 1980s:

> "The ANC cannot be regarded as being at war with the South African government. (...) South Africa was at war with Angola, but inside South Africa only acts of terror took place. (...) There is a definite difference between terror and war." [318]

f)   Urban Terrorists / Guerrillas

Urban terrorism took an important place in black resistance during the 1980s. The term covers all individual acts of violence committed in the cities that were part of the greater effort to rid the townships of white control. The South African street fighters modelled their tactics on those of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) of Northern Ireland. Their targets were the white oppressors' police and army, along with traitors and collaborators from the townships. Their weapons of choice were hand grenades, AK-47 assault rifles, bombs and mines. [319]

As the conflict in the townships intensified, the number of attacks on the security forces increased. According to official statistics, a total of 238 armed attacks on policemen were

---

[314] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 6, Para 107 and Cock (1990: 61)
[315] Cock (1989: 1-2)
[316] Quoted without reference to the original source in Mortimer (Unknown: 15)
[317] Mortimer (Unknown: 11)
[318] Cock in Hofmann & McKendrick (1990: 46)
[319] du Preez (1982: 219)

carried out during the first ten months of 1988 alone, compared with 234 in the whole of 1987, 230 in 1986, 136 in 1985 and 44 in 1984. During a four-year span the number of attacks on members of the security forces rose by 640% (from 3.6 per month in 1984 to 23.4 per month in 1988). Although, by attacking the police, the street fighters meant to ultimately strike the white government, skin colour was not a factor that influenced whether one became a target. The main determinant was a person's attitude towards the NP regime. Accordingly, black kitskonstabels were frequently among those killed. [320]

2.3.5 The 'Comrades'

During the 1980s township residents, for the first time in decades, became more organised in their struggle against apartheid. The political part was taken by community organisations led by older township residents, while the military side was almost entirely in the hand of the township youths. These 'comrades' were organised in paramilitary units and were secretly instructed in the techniques of revolutionary warfare by MK fighters who slipped into the townships at night. Soon, the young fighters emerged as the liberation movements' storm troops in the townships. They were in charge of developing the military strategy, oversaw specific action, watched over strikes, and made sure that boycotts were observed. They were also called out whenever military intervention was needed. In Crossroads, the comrades erected huge metal shields to protect stone- and petrol-bomb-throwers from police fire. In Alexandra, they dug 'tank traps', trenches about a metre deep, to stop police vehicles from entering the township. In other places they strung barbed wire across the street at the height of a person standing in an armoured vehicle. [321]

Although the comrades considered themselves to be representatives of the ANC, they were not really a part of the Congress' organisational structure. They mainly unemployed young men from the townships who, during their search for an alternative to apartheid, eventually came across the only organisation that had been fighting for black empowerment for any length of time and was still alive inside South Africa. [322] The comrades were different from previous generations of ANC activists, though. Most of them were young fighters of the so-called 'Soweto generation'. They had experienced the government's violence first-hand at a very young age and thus took it to be a legitimate means for attaining one's political aims. [323]

Because of their positive attitude toward the use of violence and their limited loyalty to the principles and the leaders of the ANC, the comrades were ambiguous figures. On one hand, their contribution was vital for the people's revolt of the 1980s. On the other hand, their

---

[320] Cock (1990: 64)
[321] Sparks (1990 a: 339) and Nathan (1989: 72)
[322] Sparks (1990 a: 263)
[323] Cock (1990: 56)

methods were questionable and their targets were not always thoughtfully selected. All too often their wrath was directed toward ordinary people who merely tried to maintain a little bit of normality in an otherwise insane world. Shopping in a white-owned store, for example, was a risky undertaking during the consumer boycott of the 1980s, as was the consumption of alcohol. Large cars and modern hairstyles, too, were forbidden, for in the comrades' eyes, they constituted attempts at imitating the European bourgeoisie. [324]

To ensure their orders were followed, the comrades set up checkpoints at bus stops and along the roads entering the townships where they searched commuters' cars and bags for goods from white stores and smell their breath for alcohol. The punishment for shoppers who broke the consumer boycotts was severe, as was that for workers who did not adhere to strikes, students who attended classes during school boycotts or anyone who did not follow the, at times outrageous, demands of the comrades. People who had violated consumer boycotts were forced to eat their purchases, including soap and cleaners. Those who smelled of alcohol were given the 'omo treatment', named after the cleaner that was forced down their throats until they began vomiting and women with permed hair had their heads shaved. [325]

In many townships the comrades set up so-called 'People's Courts', makeshift tribunals used to try criminals and suspected collaborators. More than mere courts, they generally acted as plaintiff, judge and hangman, and verdicts were generally carried out on the spot. While they probably did help to reduce crime in the townships, the comrades often committed cruel acts of violence against those convicted of political offences. Convicted spies and collaborators were often tortured and at times even sentenced to death and shot, burned or stoned. [326]

2.3.6 'Necklacings' / Burning People Alive

During the mid-1980s a new phenomenon emerged in the townships of South Africa: 'Necklacings' – the act of placing a tyre filled with petrol around a person's neck and setting it alight. The practice rose to fame because of its use in the grassroots struggle against apartheid and it is frequently equated with township justice as passed by the 'People's Courts', but Ball has convincingly argued that

> "the phenomenon does not simply belong in the political arena, it is a punishment used also against criminals, rapists, murderers, *shebeen* owners, other ethnic groups, witches and wizards." [327] (Italics in original.)

Out of a random 65 burnings between 1984 and 1993 that she investigated, 39 had happened following witchcraft accusations, five were so-called 'muti murders' [328], four were murders

---

[324] Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 346-347) and Mathiane (1989: 44-47)
[325] Manning (1987: 92-93), Mathiane (1989: 44-47), Sparks (1990 a: 340-41) and Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 356-357)
[326] Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 342), Cock (1990: 56) and Mortimer (Unknown: 17)
[327] Ball (1994: 4)

without any known motive and two were punishment for criminal conduct. The remaining 15, that is only 23%, were politically motivated. [329]

Also, despite what the apartheid government tried to make people believe [330], necklacings were neither invented nor officially sanctioned by the ANC. However, unlike many civics and parties such as AZAPO, who explicitly condemned the use of the necklace, the ANC felt a certain ambivalence towards it. Some individual ANC-members, among them high-ranking personalities such as Chris Hani [331] and Winnie Mandela [332], did speak-out in favour of necklacing enemies, but the organisation's official leadership, including Oliver Tambo, strongly opposed such methods. [333] However, after looking at the evidence presented before the TRC, I no longer doubt that angry individuals during the 1980s and 90s frequently made use of the necklace to rid themselves of political opponents and to purge the townships of traitors – at times with the tacit approval of the ANC. [334]

How many people died in this gruesome manner is unclear. According to Cock, between 1984 and 1987 around 400 people were killed by the necklace method and another 200 were burned alive. [335] The Institute of Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria even claimed that as many as 672 people were burnt to death between the beginning of 1984 and June 1987 and that "approximately half" [336] of these were necklaced. [337] In his submission to the TRC South Africa's former President F.W. de Klerk claims that, in total 541 people died of the necklace between 1st September 1984, and 31st March 1993, and 36 were injured but survived the attacks. [338] The police statistics show 406 necklace murders for the time between September 1984 and December 1989, as well as 28 people injured by, but survived the necklace. Furthermore, the records show 395 cases of people being burned alive without a necklace and 150 survived attempts to kill people by burning them. [339]

These numbers only refer to the apartheid years, though. The necklace was by no means put out of service in 1994. However, finding modern figures has proven impossible. The SAPS does not list necklacing separately in its statistics and a search on the police website came up empty. Similarly, research institutes seem to have lost interest in the phenomenon.

---

[328] A term used in South Africa to denote the killing of a person in order to obtain their body parts as raw materials for muti, tonics believed to help attain wealth, protect a person in battle or cure a number of illnesses.

[329] Ball (1994: 4-16)

[330] See for example Malan (Unknown: 10) and de Klerk (1997: 5-6)

[331] Chris Hani's most famous statement in favour of the necklace was made during an interview which appeared in the ANC's underground magazine Sechaba in December 1986. (Sechaba (1986: 15-18))

[332] Winnie Mandela's infamous statement – "With our boxes of matches and our necklaces we shall liberate this country" – was made during a funeral rally in Soweto on 13th April 1986 (quoted in Ball (1994: 3))

[333] ANC (1997 a: 10), Frederikse (1987: 219), Cock (1990: 65) and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 4, Para 97

[334] ANC (1997 a: 11-12), de Klerk (1997: 5-6), Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 371), Frederikse (1987: 219), Cock (1990: 65), Ball (1994: 4) and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 4, Paras 67, 229, 255, 265 and 278

[335] Cock (1990: 65)

[336] Quoted in Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 371)

[337] Ball (1994: 4) and Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 371)

[338] de Klerk (Unknown: 7)

[339] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1985 and Mortimer (Unknown: 18)

2.3.7 Moderate, but Only on the Surface: Inkatha

Inkatha ka Zulu was founded in 1928 by the Zulu king Solomon kaDinuzulu as a cultural movement meant to preserve Zulu traditions in the face of westernisation. It was revived in 1975 as Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe, the National Cultural Liberation Movement, by Mangosuthu Buthelezi. From the beginning, Buthelezi and his movement were ambivalent figures in the South African power play. On the one hand, Buthelezi portrayed Inkatha as the only legal liberation movement and himself as a friend of the ANC. [340]

On the other hand, his appointment as ruler of the homeland KwaZulu in 1976 drove a wedge between him and the Congress. What to him was merely a way of obtaining a degree of power, to them represented a despicable act of treason. The final blow came in 1980, when Oliver Tambo announced from Zambia that Buthelezi had "emerged on the side of the enemy against the people" [341]. After this humiliation, Buthelezi decided that, if he did not have the liberation movements behind him (or below him, as his critics say), he would improve his own position by taking a clear stand against them. [342]

He founded vigilante groups throughout the country that consisted mainly of disenchanted migrant workers. The insular character of the hostels they lived in had prevented them from integrating with the surrounding communities and their squalid living conditions [343] were a perfect breeding ground for violence. They had first clashed with township youths in 1976 when they refused to take part in boycotts and protests. In the 1980s Buthelezi organised them like the old Zulu impis, in an attempt to inspire them to fight non-Zulus with the same fierceness as Shaka's armies had done. [344]

The party who profited most from this split among the black population was the regime in Pretoria. Apart from reducing the overall level of resistance to apartheid, the emergence of a black party that was interested in maintaining the political status quo allowed the government to finally outsource the messy business of fighting anti-apartheid activists in the townships. Inkatha was from now on hailed as a 'moderate' black organisation worthy of support. [345]

The two parties' cooperation went a lot further than the politicians admitted publicly. Both sides vehemently denied it, but there was no doubt that they had combined forces in the violent onslaught against the township population. [346] The first incidents happened as early as 1976, when journalists from the *Rand Daily Mail* and *The Star* saw policemen drive hostel

---

[340] Stiff (2001: 156), van Niekerk & Ludman (1999: 28 and 128) and Brewer (1986: 254-255)

[341] Quoted in Stiff (2001: 157)

[342] Sparks (1990 a: 275) and Ellis & Sechaba (1992: 114)

[343] According to Marks & Andersson, in 1989 the state-owned hostels in Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu near Cape Town officially housed 82,565 people in 25,701 beds. In Langa the ratio of people to working toilets is officially estimated at 133:1, that of people to taps at 117:1. Unofficial estimates put the rates even higher. (Marks & Andersson (1990: 46))

[344] Tomaselli (1991 a: 23), Kane-Berman (1979: 131), Theissen (1992: 30), Sparks (1990 a: 275), Marinovich & Silva (2000: 86) and *Talking about "Tribe". Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis* (Unknown: 1-2)

[345] Brewer (1986: 351-352 and 386), Aitchison (1989: 472-473) and ANC (1996 b: 14)

[346] North (1986: 49) and Sanders (2000: 176)

dwellers around Soweto, and others overheard them instructing hostel residents to stop destroying buildings belonging to the West Rand Administration Board and "fight people only" [347] or to eat well so they could "kill on full stomachs" [348]. [349]

During the riots of the 1980s, it became quite normal for Inkatha to support the police in their fight against opponents of apartheid. In return, the police adopted a hands-off approach to their attacks on the township population. [350] For example in 1987 over 734 UDF supporters were arrested under the emergency regulations with the stated aim of reducing violence in the townships. They were accused of being responsible for at least 62 unrest related deaths. On the other hand, of the several hundred Inkatha members accused of at least 125 killings in 1987 not a single one was detained. [351]

The end of apartheid did not, as might have been expected, put an end to Inkatha's violent behaviour. On the contrary, just as the ANC laid down its arms, Buthelezi's followers tried to establish themselves as a political force with even greater brutality. In July 1990 Inkatha entered national politics in the shape of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) whose members soon made political activism in the townships a risky undertaking. Inkatha followers frequently attacked ANC marches and funerals, as well as church services and night vigils in the townships around Johannesburg and Pretoria. [352]

It all began on 22nd July 1990 when Inkatha followers descended on Sebokeng after a rally, killing 27 people. From there the violence spread to the surrounding areas of the Reef. The main focus of hostilities was a small area south of Germiston known as Katorus (Katlehong, Thokoza, Vosloorus) which, at one stage, accounted for about half of all violent incidents reported in South Africa. [353] The police were repeatedly accused of openly cooperating with Inkatha's murder squads and of supplying them with arms and intelligence. [354]

The ANC's suspicions about a secret alliance between the apartheid government and the IFP were finally confirmed in July 1991, when the *Weekly Mail* uncovered what was soon to become known as the 'Inkathagate' scandal: Under the framework of 'Operation Marion', the government had channelled substantial amounts of money and arms to Buthelezi's men with the expressed aim to mobilise people of "Zulu culture" [355] in order to "neutralise" [356] the UDF. This strategy included non-military means such as the funding of an IFP-aligned trade

---

[347] Rand Daily Mail, 26th August 1976, *Stop Raid, Police Warned*, quoted in Sanders (2000: 176) and Pogrund (2000: 273)
[348] The Star, 26th August 1976, *Soweto Gangs Run Wild*, quoted in Sanders (2000: 176)
[349] Mail & Guardian (14th June 1996 a: 2) and Kane-Berman (1979: 131)
[350] SAIRR (1978: 131), TRC (22nd July 1996: 3-4), Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 115), Cock (1990: 52), Kane-Berman (1979: 131) and Magubane & Lee (1979: 134)
[351] Aitchison (1989: 471), Haysom (1990: 77) and Marks & Andersson (1990: 55)
[352] Hudson (1996: 115), Marks & Andersson (1990: 54) and Tomaselli (1991 a: 23)
[353] Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 115-117) and Hudson (1996: 108-109)
[354] Shaw (1997: 2), Everatt (1993: 4-5), Carver (1994: 10), Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 118-119), Waldmeir (1997: 206) and TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1990 & Appendix A: National Chronology, p. 32 and Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 580-598
[355] Liebenberg Report quoted in Stiff (2001: 177)
[356] Liebenberg Report quoted in Stiff (2001: 177)

union, the United Workers' Association of South Africa (UWASA), to counter the influence of COSATU. More important was the military support, though. In 1986, 200 Inkatha fighters were taken to the Caprivi Strip and trained in techniques of anti-revolutionary combat by former Renamo instructors from the SADF. When they returned to South Africa, they either joined the KwaZulu Police or set-up paramilitary units known as Self Protection Units (SPUs). [357] During the following years, they spun what the Goldstone Commission in its final report called "a horrible network of criminal activity" [358], which included the kidnapping and murder of prominent members of the ANC, the UDF and COSATU, often along with their families, and sowing fear in the townships through random acts of violence, all in an attempt to bring the process of political change to a halt. [359]

These revelations may have damaged both parties' reputations, but they did not end their cooperation. In 1997 the *Mail & Guardian* uncovered that, between September 1993 and the eve of the elections in April 1994, the KwaZulu government under Chief Minister Buthelezi had paid millions of Rands to a number of white policemen and Vlakplaas operatives to train a reserve of 8,000 paramilitary fighters. [360] They seem to have done their work well. In the run up to the elections, as many as 300 people were murdered in KwaZulu Natal every month. Since then, violence between supporters of the IFP and the ANC has steadily declined, partly due to the peace efforts made by Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi and partly due to the battle weariness of both parties. By 1999 the death toll had fallen to about 10% of the pre-1994 level. However, the old ANC-IFP rift was still very visible before the 1999 elections when about 100 people were killed and injured in the province. Fortunately, by 2004 violence was no longer an issue. But by the time it ended, the low-level civil war between Inkatha and the ANC had claimed more than 20,000 lives. [361]

2.3.8   Fighting Violence with Violence: Vigilantes

The general definition of vigilante as "a body of men self-organised for the maintenance of order and the administration of summary justice in communities where regular authority is lacking or inefficient" [362] does not satisfactorily explain their role in the history of violence in South Africa. In fact, when analysing any aspect of South African society, one always has to keep in mind that South Africa is really not one society, but many. While the divisions are numerous, the most profound split is between the old, white ruled apartheid state and the new democratic nation. The different realities in the two South African states necessarily brought

---

[357] Johnston (1996: 86), Tomaselli (1991 b: 40-41 and 43), Hudson (1996: 117), Stiff (2001: 181-184) and The Caprivi Trainees (1997: 4-5 and 15)
[358] Quoted in de Kock & Gordin (1998: 244) and Carver (1994: 10)
[359] The Caprivi Trainees (1997: 18-19 and 22-25), de Kock & Gordin (1998: 235-242) and ANC (1997 a: 13)
[360] Electronic Mail & Guardian (7th March 1997: 1)
[361] van Niekerk & Ludman (1999: 26, 129 and 133-134) and Sunday Times (18th October 2000: 2)
[362] Walker Read (1998: 1400)

with them entirely different kinds of violence. And while in some cases this split is clearly visible in the vocabulary, in others, the old words simply acquired a new meaning. One of those was the term 'vigilante'.

As Johannesburg human rights lawyer Nicholas Haysom explained, before the 1994 elections,

> "the term "vigilantes" connotes violent, organised and conservative groupings operating within black communities, which although they receive no official recognition are politically directed in the sense that they act to neutralise individuals and groupings opposed to the apartheid state and institutions." [363]

From 1985 on, gangs such as the A-Team, AmaAfrika, Mabangalala, Amandoda, Patakis and The Eagles began attacking prominent personalities from the ranks of the UDF and other anti-apartheid organisations. The majority of their members were migrant labourers living in the township hostels. In most cases they actively supported Inkatha. [364] Others were township residents who for some reason had ill feelings towards the comrades. For them, becoming a member of a vigilante group was a chance at revenge. [365]

The apartheid government was repeatedly accused of supporting the vigilantes in an attempt to privatise the mechanisms of oppression. [366] Officials always denied support of, let alone cooperation with, the vigilantes, but the two sides obviously worked hand in hand. The vigilantes lent substantial support to the government in its fight against the liberation movements in areas that were inaccessible to the police, such as Crossroads, KwaNobuhle or Queenstown. In return they were protected or supported by the police and were generally allowed to use the resources of the township councils or of the homeland governments. [367]

The government's black surrogates soon posed a greater threat to the people than the security forces. During the late 1980s, an average of 162 people were killed in vigilante attacks every month. 90% of all people who were killed in the political violence during that decade died at the hands of vigilantes. In reaction, the comrades set-up so-called 'Self-Defence Units' (SDUs) to protect the township population, which soon started a veritable war between them and the vigilantes. Pietermaritzburg and the surrounding regions were particularly hard hit. By March 1989, over 1,200 people had been killed in vigilante violence or counter-vigilante attacks in the Pietermaritzburg area. [368]

After 1994 these pro-apartheid vigilantes were disbanded, but soon a new kind of vigilante emerged in the townships. These new vigilantes are experiencing massive growth in areas

---

[363] Haysom (1989 a: 3)

[364] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1985, Marks & Andersson (1990: 54), Haysom (1989 a: 4), Aitchison (1989: 457) and Cock (1990: 54)

[365] Marks & Andersson (1990: 52-53), Haysom (1990: 74) and Carver (1994: 6)

[366] Carver (1994: 6), ANC (1996 b: 14), Marks & Andersson (1990: 54), Everatt (Unknown: 5), and Haysom (1989 a: 1-3)

[367] Haysom (1989 a: 4), Haysom (1989 b: 189-191) and Cock (1990: 52)

[368] Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 115-116), Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 39), Haysom (1989 a: 1 and 9) and Haysom (1990: 63 and 75-76)

where the local population is fed-up with the police who, in their eyes, do nothing to curb the rampant crime. Similar to the street committees and people's courts of the 1980s, the vigilantes of the 1990s have grown out of peoples' need to lead a normal life, free of fear and violence. [369]

> "It's real justice," Chester Mpotulo, a street justice committee member in Lower Crossroads (Cape Town) told *The Big Issue*, "because the police are corrupt and often collude with criminals. If we hand over a criminal to the police, tomorrow he is back and will commit more acts of terror. But if the mob takes over, criminals and rapists will be gone, six foot down, forever." [370]

Unfortunately, the parallels between the community structures of the 1980s and today's defenders of law and order are not limited to the reasons for their emergence. They also evolved along similar lines. At first, they really attracted law-abiding citizens who wanted to fight crime in their direct surroundings in a transparent and fair manner. These honourable principles were soon abandoned though. First, the methods of punishment became more severe, with people resorting more and more often to violence. Then, the democratic structure of the movements was abandoned and the pseudo-legal proceedings of old were dropped. Suspects were no longer notified of charges brought against them and were deprived of their chance to defend themselves. The sentences were carried out as soon as possible. This soon led to the final step, namely the abandoning of mild sentences. Instead, suspects were brutally attacked without warning and often executed on the spot. [371]

2.3.9 Tsotsis

The so-called tsotsis were youth gangs active in South Africa's black areas during the 1970s. They were purely a township phenomenon, independent of any other youth organisations in other areas and at other times. [372]

Unlike the comrades and vigilantes of the 1980s, the tsotsis were not motivated by politics. They were mere criminals not unlike those in the American inner cities. Their activities greatly resembled those of the black youth gangs of the United States and the gangs that have emerged in recent decades in the poor areas, especially in Cape Town: robbery, (non-political) murder, rape and the sale of narcotics and, while it was still illegal for blacks, of alcohol. Some people, mainly government supporters, also claimed that tsotsis had dominated the Soweto uprisings [373] or committed acts of 'terrorism' otherwise generally ascribed to black

---

[369] Simpson (1996: 1), Botha (2001: 2), Pimstone (1998: 1), Shaw (1997: 10) and Simpson (1996: 1-2)
[370] The Big Issue (February 2002: 7)
[371] McCarthy (1998: A Study of the Causes of Violence in the Post-Apartheid Era: 1-2) and The Economist (12th October 1996: 21)
[372] Henderson (1990 b: 3) and Cloete (1982: 63)
[373] See for example articles in The Star (17th June 1976 e: 1) and The Rand Daily Mail (18th June 1976 a: 2)

freedom fighters. While it is true that tsotsis probably took the opportunity for looting during riots in the townships, the allegation of major involvement was not confirmed by observers and has to be dismissed as ideologically motivated. [374]

2.3.10 Warlords

In South Africa the term 'warlord' does not describe the leader of a paramilitary or terrorist organisation, as is often the case elsewhere. South African warlords were the heads of criminal gangs that emerged during the 1980s among the disenfranchised township youths. They were involved in organised crime, such as drug smuggling and the sale of illegal firearms, and often fought other warlords and their gangs for power and territory. [375] Unlike the tsotsis, they were also active in politics. Only very rarely did warlords opt to support the ANC, because neither power nor financial profits could be gained from such cooperation. They generally aligned themselves either with the apartheid government or Inkatha. In return their followers were not arrested by the police and were, in some cases, even supplied with weapons, money and other materials by the state. [376]

2.3.11 The 'Third Force'

Although the kinds of violence described so far have been very different in character, they have had one thing in common: The perpetrators and their aims were known and the factors that caused the violence were relatively clear. This would change during the period of transition. Increasingly, acts of violence seemed devoid of reason as neither their background nor the motives could be explained. Even the agents remained largely unknown, and they were simply called the 'third force'. [377] And as so often, we do not even know how many people died at their hands. According to figures given by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service these random attacks claimed nearly 11,000 lives between 1990 and 1994. [378] The ANC even talks of 12,000 victims. [379]

Three different kinds of violence were commonly associated with this sad chapter in South African history. First, there were massacres: Large groups of unidentified black men would roam the townships killing whomever they came upon. As Everatt has put it

> "in classic Renamo style, blind terror has been unleashed against the black population. (...) Six people a day are murdered as they travel to or from work, as they drink in taverns or beer halls, as they walk down the street or as they sleep in their beds." [380]

---

[374] Kane-Berman (1979: 125), Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 163) and Cloete (1982: 63)
[375] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 3, Para 98 and Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 679
[376] Haysom (1989 b: 197), Shaw (2002: 14), Haysom (1990: 77-78), Haysom (1989 a: 4), TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 679, and Henderson (1990 b: 3)
[377] ANC (1996 b: 25) and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Para 11 and 16
[378] Henderson (1994: 4), ANC (1996 b: 25), and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Para 16
[379] ANC (1997 a: 34)
[380] Everatt (1993: 5)

Beer halls, shopping centres and funeral marches were particularly common targets. [381] In the Transvaal alone, 944 people died in such massacres between 1990 and 1992. [382]

South Africa's trains and train stations also increasingly became the scene of violence during the early 1990s. The killing of passengers soon reached such a frightening regularity that it was even awarded its own name. The perpetrators were mainly large groups (up to 300 people) of unidentified men armed with knives, guns and metal bars. Sometimes they would board trains and start randomly stabbing, shooting or hacking at passengers before throwing them off the moving train. At other times they stood on the platforms unloading automatic weapons at incoming trains, or they were on the train themselves shooting at the waiting passengers in a station. [383] According to the TRC's final report, at least 572 people died in more than 600 attacks on trains between 1990 and 1993. [384]

The third phenomenon to reach fame in South Africa during the early 1990s were the so-called 'taxi wars' that erupted after the privatisation of the transport sector. The original argument was about the right to use certain taxi stands. [385] The conflict escalated in 1991 when taxi drivers began conquering and defending territory by force. In some areas the issue gained a political dimension with some drivers supporting the ANC and others fighting for Inkatha. Then the township population got involved to defend the ANC drivers while the hostel residents stood behind Inkatha's taxis. But then the character of the conflict changed. More and more often the attacks seemed random and senseless. Unidentified assailants fired shots at taxis or threw hand grenades into the crowds waiting at taxi stands for no apparent reason. Most victims were not politically active and their only crime had been to want to ride in a taxi. This new intensified war cost 200 lives in 1992 alone. [386]

Some observers believed that this was an attempt by Inkatha to maintain its position as a third force between the ANC and the NP even after the old animosities began to fade. [387] Others took it to be white racists who wanted to prove that blacks were unable to rule a country. Yet other people thought that the third force was really the apartheid government in disguise, and finally, there was a fourth group who believed the third force to be the result of a cooperation of all the above-mentioned actors. [388]

The government vehemently denied the existence of a third force and rejected claims of police cooperation with Inkatha or right-wingers. However, in 1993 a commission of inquiry under

---

[381] Henderson (1990 b: 4), Hudson (1996: 114), Theissen (1992: 39) and Hamber (1997 a: 3)
[382] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 548
[383] Electronic Mail & Guardian (29th November 1996 b: 1), Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 119) and ABCNEWS.com (6th August 1998: 1)
[384] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, Appendix A: National Chronology, p. 29
[385] Hudson (1996: 114)
[386] Nustad (1999: 6), Hudson (1996: 114), TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1991, and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 665-669
[387] Simpson (1993: 3), Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 116-117) and Everatt (1993: 5)
[388] Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 116), Everatt (1993: 4), Henderson (1991: 3) and Simpson (1993: 3)

the chairmanship of Judge Richard Goldstone found ample proof of the existence of the third force, and showed that the violence had been the result of years of close cooperation between Inkatha, the police, the army and the secret services, and that more recently right-wing groups had also been involved. [389] One party's name, however, was cleared. Despite confirming that high government officials had known about the illegal dealings, the Commission did not find the NP collectively guilty of involvement in the third force violence. [390]

2.3.12 Visible and Still Non-Existent: 'Black-on-Black Violence'

The concept of 'black-on-black violence' is interesting to the student of South African society because it contains a paradox that is present in many apartheid terms, but is rarely this easily exposed. It clearly illustrates the white way of thinking along racial lines and the apartheid discourse while not saying anything about its supposed referent, the violence among the black population. The term can be easily defined and illustrated using examples from South African history, thus creating the impression that it simply reflects reality. As we have seen in the previous chapters, bloody conflicts erupted during the 1980s between the members of black groups with different political programmes and different goals. The Eastern Cape became the scene of numerous fights between members of the UDF and followers of the Black Consciousness movement Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) while in Natal the conflict between the UDF and Inkatha led to increased violence. [391]

And yet, despite overwhelming evidence for the existence of a specifically black kind of violence, I agree with researchers who see the term 'black-on-black violence' as a product of the apartheid government's propaganda machinery and feel it should be rejected. [392] While it is true that the majority of violence in South African police statistics [393] is perpetrated by black people against other blacks, it does not, as the term implies, happen because the people involved are black. If this were the case, it would have to cover all forms of violence involving blacks. However, black policemen, government officials and foreigners do not qualify as potential participants. The image of violent blacks depends on their participation in extra-parliamentary politics in South Africa. This undermines the validity of the concept. [394]

So why was the term 'black-on-black violence' created? On the one hand, the expression is meant to establish in the minds of the white population ideas of untamed primitives murdering

---

[389] Henderson (1994: 3), Berkeley (1996: 4), Shaw (1996 b: 2), and Carver (1994: 9 and 13)
Byrnes, quoting Judge Goldstone's report, says that these groups "waged a war" against the ANC. (1996: Government Response, p. 1-2)
[390] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Para 17
[391] Mathiane (1989: 73-77), Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 111-113), Sparks (1990 a: 356-257) and Manning (1987: 93-94)
[392] See for example Segal (1991: 20) and Tomaselli (1991 a: 22)
[393] In this respect the statistics probably do reflect reality, although they certainly underestimate violence among the white population. Violence among white South Africans is more private and less lethal, the most common forms being pub brawls and domestic violence, which rarely get reported to the officials.
[394] Haysom (1990: 75) and Simpson (1993: 2)

each other in blind fury. References to such images came in handy whenever the representatives of white South Africa needed to play a trump card during the talks with the ANC or when facing the world public. If they needed to convince people that blacks should not be allowed to rule South Africa, all it took was to say 'black-on-black violence' for everyone to think of wild murdering Africans. [395] This strategy seems to have worked. In one of my interviews a man explained to me:

> "Do you know why the term 'black-on-black violence' was created? The media only ever reported the violence by the government, the police and the army, in the townships. This created a wrong picture; everybody thought it was all their fault. So they decided to show people that it's not just whites that are violent. The worst are the blacks who commit violence against their own kind. This is what 'black-on-black violence' means: It shows people that it's not just whites that are bad. The blacks prey on their own." [396]

This statement clearly shows the government's rationale, giving people a well-known bogeyman in the shape of the wild African, thus completely absolving the proponents of the status quo from their responsibility for the killings. This plan seems to have worked, for even repeated accusations that the men leading the lynch mobs were disguised whites wearing surprisingly well-polished army boots seems to have done no harm to its endurance. [397]

Which brings us to the second cause for the creation of the concept of 'black-on-black' violence. It helped to separate things that, according to logic, would belong together: Supporters of apartheid murdering its opponents, regardless of skin colour. This contributes to the obscuring of the common background shared by the different kinds of violence making it less tangible and distracting from the government's involvement. [398]

2.3.13 The Role of the White Right-Wing

There have been violent right-wingers among the Afrikaners since the founding of the Union of South Africa. However, more centrally organised groups that pursued a pre-planned long-term campaign of violence against the civilian population were not founded until the 1980s. When it became clear that the end of white rule was at hand, organisations such as the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and Orde Boerevolk [399] stepped-up their activities. [400]

---

[395] de Kock & Gordin (1998: 100), Manning (1987: 153), Simpson (1993: 2), Haysom (1989 b: 190) and Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 120)
[396] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004
[397] Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 118-119) Everatt (1993: 4), Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161), Segal (1991: 20), and Rauch (1993: 4)
[398] Simpson (1993: 2), Haysom (1989 b: 190), Marks & Andersson (1990: 54), Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 115) and Teer Tomaselli (1992: 220)
[399] Doubts have been voiced about the authenticity of Orde Boerevolk, though. After their emigration to Britain, two former members claimed that the organisation was in fact a front for the Department of Military Intelligence, set up to derail the negotiation process in order for South Africa to return to white rule. (ANC (1996 b: 26) and Merrett (1994: 192))
[400] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Paras 303 and 309 and Carver (1994: 1)

During the second half of 1990, militant right-wingers were implicated in 14 bombings and at least 45 assaults that cost the lives of 26 people and injured 138. Chris Hani, the prominent leader of the SACP, was among the victims of this onslaught. Not only political activists were targeted, though. The majority of victims were in fact civilians. For example, in July 1990, a group of right-wing extremists ambushed a bus near KwaMashu near Durban killing seven passengers and injuring a further 27. [401] In 1991, among other incidents, right-wing farmers blocked several roads in Pretoria randomly attacking people, and, in a more openly political incident, a group of extremists stormed an NP assembly in Ventersdorp killing three people and injuring more than 50. [402]

Bombs were also frequently used in the right-wing fight against change. For example, in March 1990 a mosque in Nelspruit was blown up, and in May 1990 a bomb severely damaged Melrose House, the site where the Anglo-Boer War Treaty had been signed. Only a month later, the NP's offices in Auckland Park, Johannesburg and Roodepoort were targeted. The following two months saw attacks on the home and the business of Clive Gilbert, a member of the liberal Democratic Party, on a Jewish centre in Johannesburg, on the homes of an NP town councillor and of a member of the Kagiso Residents Organisation in Krugersdorp as well as the offices of the alternative newspaper *Vrye Weekblad*. In August 1990, a bomb damaged the offices of COSATU in Pretoria, and in September another bomb exploded outside the offices of the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld*. In 1991, the right-wingers blew up a high school in Pretoria, a courthouse in Sabie, COSATU House and a number of post offices. In 1992, Lowveld High School in Nelspruit, several more post offices and a power station were destroyed in a series of blasts, and in September 1993 a shopping centre in Bronkhorstspruit was destroyed. [403] I have only mentioned the most striking blasts; many more happened during the early 1990s. It is, however, difficult to reconstruct the full extent of the right-wing attacks because frequently neither the groups who had officially claimed responsibility for the attacks nor the convicted perpetrators' ideological background were noted in the police statistics. The same is true of the exact number of victims, so the true impact of the right-wing bombings will probably remain unknown. [404]

After a military coup in BophuthaTswana in 1994 the AWB sent troops, supposedly to protect the local population from the ANC's communist criminals. However, when they arrived, the right-wingers apparently changed their mind and began shooting at the people they had

[401] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, Appendix A: National Chronology, p. 30, TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 771, Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 95), Theissen (1992: 25), Byrnes (1996: "Irreversible Progress" Toward Democracy, p. 2) and Carver (1994: 11)
[402] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 6, Para 770
[403] Note that none of these attacks were labelled 'white violence', let alone 'white-on-white violence'.
[404] Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 77-79), Stiff (2001: 516-518), Mortimer (Unknown: 30) and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Paras 349-361

initially come to guard. They rode through the streets of Mmabatho mowing-down passers-by. The BophuthaTswana defence force soon arrived and fought back. The result of this day of attempted cooperation between a tyrannical homeland leader and a white paramilitary outfit was a total of 53 deaths – three of them were white attackers, the remaining 50 were black civilians who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. [405]

The militant right wing has calmed down substantially since 1994. They are by no means a spent force, though. For example on 30th October 2002, a group calling itself the Boeremag ('Farmers' Force') set off nine bombs in Soweto and one in Bronkhorstspruit, killing one person. [406]

2.3.14 Farm Attacks – Political Violence, Crime or Non-Existent?

Symptomatic of the political zeitgeist after 1994 was the emergence of a new category of violence, the so-called 'farm attacks'. In many ways it is not unlike the apartheid term of 'black-on-black violence', seemingly neutral, while being highly ideological below the surface. Rather than describing an existing referent in extra-linguistic reality, it in fact created the phenomenon it stands for, and in doing so imposes on language users a racialised view of reality. A 'farm attack' is not just any kind of violence that happens on commercial farms, but rather a very narrow sort that can basically be defined as an attack against white farm owners by black outsiders. The conservative grouping Action: Stop farm attacks, for example, explained in a memorandum in 2000:

> "Farm attacks, in this context, refer to essentially criminally inclined attacks on the farming community, irrespective of the motives. (…) Cases related to domestic violence, drunkenness or the "normal" interaction between people, do not warrant attention in this regard and have been excluded." [407]

The authors then embark on a five-page pseudo-ethno-historical explanation of the differences between what is variously called the 'Bantu', 'African', or 'Black' view of the role of land and that of the Europeans. [408]

'Farm attacks' are thus seen as a symptom of an underlying clash of civilisations exacerbated by the anti-apartheid struggle's "hatred against the Afrikaner or farmer" [409]. As such they are believed to constitute a politically / ethnically motivated and organised attack on the Afrikaner people as a whole, a campaign to force whites off their land in order to prepare for Zimbabwe-style land grabs. [410] This view was reinforced by the fact that the term was only coined after

---

[405] Hugo (1997: 3-4), Stiff (2001: 558-566) and Waldmeir (1997: 245)
[406] Sunday Times (10th November 2002: 1) and Sunday Argus (10th November 2002: 2)
[407] Action: Stop farm attacks (2000: 2)
[408] Action: Stop farm attacks (2000: 3-7)
[409] Action: Stop farm attacks (2000: 8)
[410] Sunday Times (2nd July 2000: 1), The Economist (11th October 2003: 50), Action: Stop farm attacks (2000: 8), Freedom Front (2001: 2) and Colonel Uys, General Secretary of the Freedom Front, in an interview with the author, 23rd July 2002

the end of apartheid, thus creating the impression that the attacks themselves were a new phenomenon. This, in fact is not the case. As we have seen in chapter 2.3.4 b, during the 1980s, the government began to integrate farms into the military defence system of the country, a role that the farmers took-up happily. This made them prime targets for ANC attacks, which in turn heightened their fear of, and hatred for, the liberation movements, and by extension the black population in general. The stage for conflict between white farmers and poor blacks was therefore set long before Nelson Mandela's release from prison. [411]

Something has changed about the nature of attacks on farms, though. The majority are no longer motivated by military or political aims. With very few exceptions those actions commonly described as 'farm attacks' constitute incidents of armed robbery no different from those experienced by city and township dwellers on a daily basis. The victims are not chosen, as the term implies, because they are farmers, but because their homes are remote and often ill-protected, and they have relatively valuable assets. Just like the illicit businesses in the townships and informal settlements, they make a prime target for criminals out to make a quick buck. [412] Of the 3,544 farm attacks recorded in 1998-2001 the government's Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks identified 2,644 cases with a clear motive. Of those, 89.3% were robberies, 7.1% were cases of intimidation (such as crops being burnt), 1.6% were labour related disputes and only 2.0% had a racial or political motive. [413]

Clearly, farm attacks are not clearly directed at whites. Moreover, they are a lot less common and less lethal than is widely assumed. According to the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks, 147 people were killed on South Africa's farms in 2001. This amounts to a total of 0.69% of all murders in South Africa. Rapes during farm attacks, another sore point in the white community, should also be put into perspective. In 2001, about 12.3% of female victims of farm attacks were raped, but rapes during farm attacks constituted only about 0.13% of all recorded rapes. Moreover, 71% of all rape victims during farm attacks were black. [414]

2.3.15 Criminal violence with no political background

Crime in general and criminal violence in particular has moved to the centre of public attention in South Africa since the 1994 election. This has created the impression that it was an entirely new phenomenon. This, however, is not true; crime has been rampant in South Africa for decades and the townships were especially hard hit. For example, for the period November 1975 to October 1976 police statistics showed a total of 1,149 murders in Soweto alone, which means that residents were being killed at a rate of more than three per day.

---

[411] Magubane (1989: 98 and 123-124) and Shaw (1996 a: 1)
[412] The Economist (11th October 2003: 50) and Sunday Times (2nd July 2000: 1)
[413] Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks (2003: 419)
[414] Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks (2003: 418), Shaw (2002: 50) and Retief (2002: 214)

Official statistics also registered 509 armed robberies there between August and October 1976. [415] Crime rates went up as the years passed and the socio-economical situation of the black population deteriorated. During the decade between 1980 and 1990, the number of 'serious offences' rose by 22% in the police statistics and 'less serious' ones were up by 17%. Reports of murder increased by 32%, rape by 24%, and burglary by 31%. [416]

Lack of education, unemployment, alcoholism, and frustration with the political situation drove people into the arms of crime. Gangs, too, played a role in perpetuating violence, particularly in the coloured areas of Cape Town where they had been active since the 1940s. They were involved in the sale of illegal liquor, drugs and stolen goods, money lending, extortion, illegal gambling, and prostitution. Rapes and robberies were also common among gang members as were street battles with other gangs. Many gangs also had links to the powerful prison gangs that control most aspects of life in South Africa's jails, a fact that contributed to the perpetuation of the cycle of violence in gang warfare. [417]

During the time of transition crime increased further as the state's grip on the townships loosened. This is not to mean that township dwellers were intrinsically violent and it took an occupying army of white policemen to keep them in check. On the contrary, apartheid is largely to blame for rendering violent solutions to conflict acceptable to a large portion of the South African population. [418] Many township youths had grown up with violence; they had witnessed the conflicts of the 1980s, and the police brutality and the countless massacres of the early 1990s. Often they were forced to take sides or join a gang for protection. Today, these "children of violence" [419] act in the only manner they know – violently. [420] Accordingly, although the murder rate fell by 7% between 1990 and 1994 as political violence declined, assault was up 18%, rape 42% and robbery 40%.

The situation was further exacerbated because the police were not trained or equipped for ordinary police work. The SAP spent their time in the black areas harassing the population and – in the case of many local policemen – using their powers to line their pockets. And while crime in white areas was fought vigorously, this fight was not carried out by the same means as it is in a democratic state, but simply by using the repressive laws of apartheid. Moreover, as the SAP's official historian confirmed, crime was only of secondary importance

---

[415] Kane-Berman (1979: 55) and Shaw (2002: 1)

[416] Shaw (1996 c: 158-159), Hamber (1997 a: 1), Schönteich & Louw (2001: 1-2) and Cloete (1982: 63)

[417] Gastrow (1998: Earlier Manifestations of Organised Criminal Groups, p. 1-4), Schärf (1990: 236) and interviews with a former gang leader and John Jansen, Deputy Director of Pollsmoor Prison, in Pollsmoor Prison (19th June 2002) and Ryland Fisher (23rd April 2002) in Cape Town

[418] Hamber (1997 b: 9), Hudson (1996: 114), Rauch & Storey (1998: 7), Cock (1990: 66), Schönteich & Louw (2001: 6) and head warder of Pollsmoor Prison in an interview with the author, 19th June 2002

[419] Chuenyane, M., 1989, *'Children of Violence' Will Grow Up Violent*, In: *The Star*, 5th September 1989, quoted in Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 32)

[420] Vogelman & Lewis (1993: 4), Vogelmann & Simpson (1990: 3), Scheper-Hughes (Unknown: 3), Simpson (1993: 1) and head warder of Pollsmoor Prison in an interview with the author, 19th June 2002

to the police. Only 10% of the personnel were dedicated to fighting it, the remaining 90% had the task of maintaining the status quo. And that in itself at times involved grave transgressions of the law as well as collusion with wanted criminals. All together this facilitated the establishment of a subculture of violence in the townships. [421]

The retreat of politics from violence and its subsequent replacing with apolitical crime caused a number of secondary changes. During the apartheid years, violence happened mainly in the public and semi-public (such as prisons) spheres. Most acts of violence were committed in the streets. This has changed in recent years. Since 1994, the violence has retreated almost entirely from the public sphere. The most common scenes of violence are now in the semi-public (for example in the workplace) and private spheres (for example in the victim's home) – with one exception: car hijackings. [422] In 33.8% of cases of assault and in 27.9% of rapes reported to the SAPS in 1998, the attacker was a relative of the victim. [423] In more than half of all murders of women in 1994, the male partner was the perpetrator. And in an unofficial study on marital rape, 43% of the respondents admitted to having been raped by their male partners. [424] In fact, the majority of assaults (1998: 54%) and of rapes and sexual assaults (68%) now happen in and around the victim's home. [425]

This development also had an influence on the groups of people commonly victimised. The victims of the political violence during the 1960s to 1980s had mainly been politically active young men such as freedom fighters, policemen, and soldiers. The criminal violence of the 1990s on the other hand had entirely different targets. [426] The victims were no longer chosen for belonging to a certain political or social group, but according to the promised success of the criminal act. They were more than ever weak and defenceless people such as women, children and the elderly. [427] According to the Minister of Law and Order, the number of rapes of young girls increased by 23% between late 1989 and late 1990. Assaults against children under 14 increased by nearly 55% and those against people over 50 by 44.5%. [428] In 2000, 21,438 cases of rape or attempted rape of children were reported to the police. According to the Child Protection Unit of the SAPS, a child is molested every 25 minutes in South Africa. Interpol statistics show that in 2002 South Africa had the highest incidence of rape and rape-homicide in the world; the rape-homicide figure of 17 per 1,000 of the population is 12 times higher than in the USA and 40 times higher than in the Scandinavian countries. [429]

---

[421] Shaw (1996 b: 3-4), Rauch & Storey (1998: 3), Gastrow (1998: 1), Pauw (1991: 65) and Simpson (1993: 4)
[422] Simpson (1998: 10) and Simpson et al. (1991: 1)
[423] SAPS (Unknown a: 1)
[424] Byrnes (1996: Penal Code, p. 2)
[425] SAPS (Unknown a: 1)
[426] Shaw (1996 b: 1), The Economist (15th July 1995: 1) and Hennop (1999: 1)
[427] Rauch (1993: 3), Schurink (1998: 1), Simpson (1996: 2) and CSVR (1999: 16)
[428] Simpson et al. (1991: 3)
[429] The Big Issue (February 2002: 16)

Much could be said about the actual acts of criminal violence perpetrated in the new South Africa, but most of it would, from a cultural scientific point of view, be banal. I could describe the murders and robberies and list the bloody details of the assaults or I could analyse the crime statistics, but that would not be a meaningful contribution to this dissertation, for, like so many official documents in South Africa, they do not really say anything about reality. I would, however, like to illustrate the problem with determining the actual level of violence in South Africa, so in the next chapter I will briefly analyse the sources available to the researcher today.

2.4   A Quantitative Analysis of Violence in South Africa

It is impossible for us to know today the extent of violence during the apartheid years. We remember certain individual violent outbreaks that claimed large numbers of victims, but the majority of incidents have slipped from memory. The NP government did keep crime statistics. These, however, did not reflect accurately what happened in the country. [430]

Firstly, the majority of violent crimes were never reported to the officials. Black victims in particular would not have turned to the officials for help, because they were often the perpetrators of the violence. Furthermore, people who did go to the SAP were at risk of becoming the target for retribution by militant blacks who did not tolerate any collaboration with the oppressors. [431] Whites, too, tended to only report certain crimes. Domestic violence, for example, was not generally brought to the authorities' attention. It was widely considered to be a private affair of no concern to the police. Some people even thought it to be normal for men to beat their wives or girlfriends. [432]

Secondly, only a small portion of reported crimes made the statistics. Reports from blacks were often neither filed nor investigated. Instead they simply disappeared in some dark corner of the police station. [433] Also, crimes against the black population were frequently withheld from the records when the perpetrators were working with the police and, of course, if the perpetrators were policemen themselves. [434] Furthermore, none of the crimes reported in the Bantustans appeared in the South African crime statistics, because the government in Pretoria considered these to be separate territories. [435]

Finally, we should not forget that violence and crime are not synonymous terms. Under apartheid, white employers viewed violence as a legitimate tool for handling black employees. Farm hands, domestic staff, and mine workers were frequently subjected to severe brutality

---

[430] Aitchison (1989: 469), Shaw (1996 a: 1), Marks & Andersson (1990: 55) and Ehlers (1998: 2)
[431] Rauch (1993: 3), Legett (2002: 1-2), Hudson (1996: 115), Shaw (2002: 2) and Theissen (1992: 49)
[432] Legett (2002: 3) and CSVR (2001: 7-9)
[433] Shaw (1997: 2), Schönteich & Louw (2001: 2) and McCarthy (1998: A History of Violence, p. 1)
[434] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 8, Para 1 & 60 and Aitchison (1989: 470)
[435] Schönteich & Louw (2001: 2), Shaw (1996 c: 158) and Shaw (2002: 2)

and mistreatment such as the withholding of food or humiliating medical exams, not to mention death and injury due to negligence on the part of mining companies and farmers. These cases also rarely made the courts. [436]

A more realistic picture of the violence during apartheid could be obtained from studying alternative sources, such as the files stashed away in police and secret service archives, as well as notes taken by military personnel and the prison administration. Unfortunately, these are no longer complete. The destruction of records described in chapter 1.2.1 has done a lot to obscure the extent of violence during the apartheid years. [437] But even if all relevant documents had survived, exact figures could still not be given. Even at the time the acts of violence were committed, reports of the number of victims differ greatly. Thornton has illustrated this point using the number of victims of the shooting at Uitenhage. According to the residents of Uitenhage's two townships, Langa and KwaNobuhle, 43 died in the massacre. The commemorative plaque erected at the site lists only 29 names. The Kannemeyer Commission, which convened to investigate the events of 21st March 1985, stated that the number of victims did not exceed 20. And the numbers given in media reports at the time ranged from 19 to 43. [438]

Despite the limited reliability of any numbers given in relation to violence in South Africa, there is no doubt that the overall levels of violence were high between 1960 and 1990. It was a widespread phenomenon even during the early decades of apartheid and reached endemic levels in the 1980s, when both the government and the liberation movements greatly increased their efforts to win the political conflict using violent means. According to Manganyi & du Toit, the fights between the police and black protesters claimed 2,987 victims between the beginning of the unrest in September 1984 and 31st December 1987, alone. As a comparison, according to the same authors, in the violent outbursts of 1976/77 only 575 people were killed and the number of violent deaths that occurred during the state of emergency in 1960 was so small it was not listed separately in the statistics. [439]

Violence during the apartheid years was not always committed for political reasons. Purely criminal violence was just as rife, especially in the poorly policed townships. Quoting police statistics of these years, van der Westhuizen gives the following numbers for "murder and related crimes of violence": 1973/74: 18,228; 1974/75: 19,238; 1975/76: 19,174; 1976/77: 20,173; 1977/78: 18,655. [440] The number of robberies recorded in the official statistics grew

---

[436] Marks & Andersson (1990: 41-42 and 58), Pogrund (2000: 360) and Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 26-27)
See Marks & Andersson in Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 41-47) for an assessment of the situation in South Africa's mines during the apartheid years, and Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town (1991: Section 2) for a detailed account of brutality on farms pre-1991 and Human Rights Watch (2001) about the situation today.
[437] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 8, Para 1 and 60
[438] Thornton (1990: 131 and 133) and Thloloe (1998: 2)
[439] Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 1-2)
[440] van der Westhuizen (1982: 20)

from 36,474 in 1973/74 to 43,718 in 1977/78. [441] Rape, too, did not only emerge in the 1990s, as is often said, but was a huge problem during the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1973 and 1977 an average of 15,500 rapes were reported to the police every year. This number grew to 16,000 between 1980 and 1990. [442] However, when it comes to rape, these figures should be looked at with caution. According to calculations by the National Institute of Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO), the actual number or rapes was much higher even then. In their opinion only one in 20 rapes is reported to the police, which means that about 380,000 women were raped in South Africa every year – this is equivalent to an average of 1,000 per day. [443]

During the 1980s, the central government lost complete control of wide areas of the country. According to the SADF's submission to the TRC, between September 1984 and August 1989, roughly 48,000 cases of 'unrest and rioting' were recorded in South Africa. [444] The exact number of victims is, as always, disputed. Cock says 3,500 died as a result of the political violence between 1984 and the early months of 1989. [445] The Race Relations Survey 1987/88 of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), on the other hand, talks of 3,400 victims for the time span September 1984 to September 1988 alone. [446]

During the time of transition, the dividing line between crime and politics became increasingly blurred as violence exploded in all statistics, official or otherwise. The police recorded around 22,000 deaths nationwide between September 1989 and December 1991. [447] KwaZulu and Natal as well as the PWV area were particularly hard hit, as supporters of the ANC and the IFP were fighting bloody street battles there. Officials estimated that 12,000 civilians along with 2,000 soldiers were involved in the conflicts. [448] According to the ANC, between July 1990 and the end of 1993, more than 12,000 people were killed and at least 20,000 injured. This means that such attacks claimed more than ten victims every day. [449] Byrnes gives lower numbers for 1993, stating that 4,300 people had died as a result of politically motivated fighting. [450] This corresponds to the numbers given by the Human Rights Commission who assume an average of 366 deaths per month. During the early months of 1994, and in particular during the run up to the election, the level of violence increased again. In April 1994 three times as many people were killed than during the

---

[441] van der Westhuizen (1982: 30)
[442] van der Westhuizen (1982: 22) and Vogelman (1990 b: 96)
[443] Vogelman (1990 b: 96), Robertson (1998: 1) and Vogelman & Lewis (1993: 2)
[444] Mortimer (Unknown: 28)
[445] Cock (1990: 44)
[446] SAIRR (1988: 2)
[447] Byrnes (1996: Crime and Violence, p. 1)
[448] Johnston (1996: 78-79) and Byrnes (1996: Crime and Violence, p. 1)
[449] ANC (1996 b: 26)
[450] Byrnes (1996: Government Response, p. 2)

previous months. [451] The TRC finally estimated that a total of 14,000 South Africans had died in politically motivated violence between 1990 and the presidential elections in April 1994. [452]

Criminal violence, too, rose to unseen levels. According to Simpson, during 1992 an average of 77 South Africans were murdered, 68 raped and 775 assaulted every day. 219 were robbed, 201 had their cars stolen and 709 had their houses burgled. [453] Between 1990 and 1994, assault was up 18%, rape 42%, robbery 40%, vehicle theft 34% and housebreaks 20%. [454] In 1992, South Africa had one of the highest crime rates in the world. [455]

The election did not put an end to the bloodshed. On the contrary, the violence increased further. According to Schönteich & Louw, the rate of total crime recorded in official statistics increased by 15% and that of violent crime by 22% between 1994 and 1999 (see fig. 1). [456]
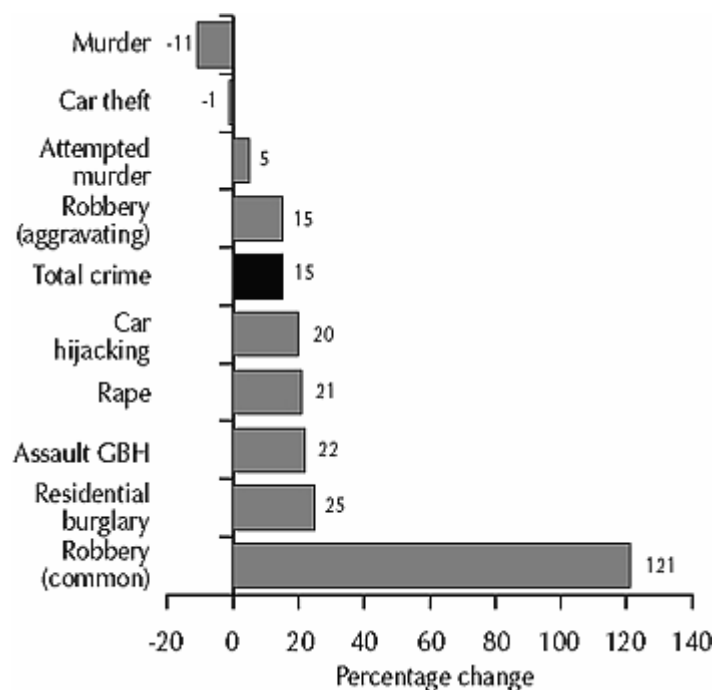
Figure 1: Percentage change in selected crimes recorded between 1994 and 1999 (Source: Schönteich & Louw (2001: 4))

It is quite likely that these figures still do not reflect the true extent of violent crime in South Africa, for the old problems of underreporting and poor recording persist to this day. [457] A study conducted by the HSRC in 1997 concluded that only 73% of crimes are reported to the police. [458] A number of violent offences, such as assault, domestic violence and, most

---

[451] Carver (1994: 4)

[452] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 7, Para 7

[453] Simpson (1993: 3)

[454] Shaw (1997: 2)

[455] Byrnes (1996: Crime and Violence, p. 1)

[456] Schönteich & Louw (2001: 4)

[457] Electronic Mail & Guardian (22nd September 1997: 1), Schönteich & Louw (2001: 24-26), Legett (2002: 1-2), Shaw (2002: 43) and Louw (1998: 1)

[458] Pimstone (1998: 2)

importantly, sexual assault are notoriously underreported. The SAPS itself admit that they are probably told only about one in 35 rapes. [459]

Another problem with the statistics lies in the lack of what observers have termed an 'information culture' in South Africa. According to a committee instituted by the Minister of Safety and Security in 1997 to study the reliability of crime statistics, data entry into the police database is patchy, due to inadequate training, lack of manpower, and technical problems with an unnecessarily complicated system. [460] Furthermore, the police are still not particularly open to reports from citizens. A study conducted in Johannesburg in 1999 showed that 14 out of 15 women who went to report a rape were turned down. [461] This is aggravated by the fact that the police still do not record all crimes reported to them. The data is added to the statistics as it pleases the person in charge of putting them in. Some of them are recorded, some are not. [462] And the police still do not record their own crimes. The number of acts of violence committed by policemen either in the line of duty or while they were not on official business is thus hard to guess. [463]

We can be fairly confident though that the discrepancy between the police statistics and reality is much smaller today than it was before 1994. An increase of violence in the statistics should therefore not uncritically be equated to an increase in the actual level of violence. [464] While there is no doubt that after the end of apartheid violence increased not merely on paper, many researchers agree that the statistically documented explosion of violence did not happen in reality. The incidence of violence simply grew along the same lines as the years before. [465]

But even without a massive increase of violence, South Africa is now at the top of the world's murder league. In 1994, 69.5 out of every 100,000 South Africans were murdered, compared with an international average of 5.5. [466] In 1995, the police registered approximately 21,000 crime-related deaths; twice as many as deaths in motor vehicle accidents. 57 out of 100,000 people were killed in South Africa that year, making the murder rate six times that of the United States. And a screening of hospital records – a source much closer to the truth than crime statistics – showed that in 1996, around 2,500 people were treated every day for bullet wounds, stabbing wounds, and injuries sustained in physical attacks or fist fights. [467]

Yet, not all is bad news in South Africa. According to the SAPS and a number of outside observers, the incidence of violent crime peeked during the mid-1990s and has been falling

---

[459] Bollen et al. (1999 a: 1) and Schurink (1998: 1-2)
[460] Schönteich & Louw (2001: 26)
[461] Sunday Times (4th July 1999: 1)
[462] Electronic Mail & Guardian (22nd September 1997: 1)
[463] Electronic Mail & Guardian (23rd May 1997: 1)
[464] Pimstone (1998: 2), Legett (2002: 1-2) and Mail & Guardian (6th December 1995: 1)
[465] Shaw (1997: 3), McCarthy (1998: A History of Violence, p. 1), Shaw (2002: 16) and Pimstone (1998: 2)
[466] SAPS (2003 a: 1) and Mutume (1998: 1)
[467] McCarthy (1998: A History of Violence, p. 1), Shaw (1996 a: 2), Shaw (1996 c: 159) and Shaw (1997: 3)

since 1996. [468] For example, the incidence of common assault fell by 2% between 1996 and 1997, that of burglary by 0.9%, that of indecent assault by 1%, that of murder by 5%, that of robbery by 0.6%, that of attempted murder by 1.9% and that of explosive acts by a striking 39.5%. [469] This trend was confirmed by Human Rights Watch in 1998. [470] Unfortunately, rape was up a startling 28.9% between 1994 and 1997. [471] And, although less people were killed every year, in 1998, South Africa still registered a frightening 18,000 murders. [472]

In July 2000 the Minister of Safety and Security placed a moratorium on the release of police crime statistics, in order to investigate "concerns regarding the integrity and reliability of certain crime statistics used for operational planning" [473]. This, however, does not mean that no information was available. A report by the Crime Information Analysis Centre of the SAPS published in 2001 showed a continually falling murder rate with 33.3 reported cases per 100,000 of the population for the time period between January and September 2001. And while other violent crimes showed no such decline, no substantial increase could be observed either. [474] In 2003, the SAPS released the newly revised crime statistics. In this document the 2001 figures were corrected upward to 47.5 per 100,000 and the numbers for 2002 were recorded as 47.8 per 100,000. [475] Whatever the case, it is probably safe to assume that the crime rate in South Africa, and along with it the incidence of violence, is no longer rising. Both have finally evened out at a fairly high level. [476]

3. Anti-Communism, Nationalism and Liberalism: Political Discourses in South Africa

Before turning my attention to the newspapers' reporting on violence, I must further examine one last aspect of South Africa's extra-medial reality: the political discourses the reporting drew on. When dealing with the media, the researcher has to keep in mind at all times that they are not moving on the level of reality, but on a superordinate plane. The study of the media is not the study of reality. Nor is it a look at mirror images of the world. Like maps, media reports are culturally constructed artefacts. They are in one way or another similar to reality, but they must under no circumstance be equated to it. [477] The author's concept of reality is an important factor shaping the report at every step of the way, from the choice of

---

[468] Electronic Mail & Guardian (22nd September 1997: 1), Schönteich & Louw (1999: 1) and Legett (2002: 2)
[469] SAPS (1997: a-c, e-f and h-k)
[470] Human Rights Watch (1998: 2)
[471] SAPS (1997: d, g and l)
[472] McCarthy (1998: Introduction, p. 1) and Mutume (1998: 1)
[473] Tshwete (2001: 1)
[474] CIAC (2001 b: 1) and SAPS (2001 a: 1)
[475] SAPS (2003 a: 1)
[476] Simpson (1998: 2), Ehlers (1998: 1) and Electronic Mail & Guardian (22nd September 1997: 2)
[477] Korzybski (1995 (1933): 38), Hartley (1982: 15), Lynch (1999: 9) and Bignell (1997: 81)

story to the way the facts are presented. Thus, the reporting is always influenced by the ideological framework that the journalist moves in. [478]

3.1   The Nationalism of the Afrikaans Population

Afrikaner world view is strongly influenced by what Leatt et al. call "corporate ethic" [479], an ideology which perceives people not so much as individuals, but as members of different cultural, religious or social groups. [480] As Willem van Heerden, the former editor of the Afrikaans newspaper *Dagbrecht*, explained in a paper in 1972:

> "The country's population is a community, not of individuals but of peoples, consisting of a white nation, eight separate Bantu nations, nearly two million Coloureds (persons of mixed blood) and some half-a-million Indians." [481]

The origins of these ideas most likely lay in the fact that early Dutch colonialists were confronted with a wealth of unknown cultures in Southern Africa. Defining the in-group in opposition to these 'others' seemed the natural choice, even as German and French Huguenot immigrants arrived in Africa. The psychological boundary between 'us' and 'them' was drawn between Europeans and Africans and the similarities among the latter as well as the dissimilarities with the former were emphasised. [482]

This collectivist view was probably further exacerbated by the Calvinist faith of the Dutch settlers. Two different arguments are brought forth in literature to support this claim. Akenson elucidates how, taking guidance from "the concept of One People (…) articulated in the Hebrew scriptures [, the Afrikaners] came to believe that they constituted one *volk*" (italics in original) [483]. Van den Berghe applies Max Weber's argument of a link between the belief in predestination and the emergence of collectivism to the Afrikaners. He argues that

> "a belief in predestination leads to anxiety about one's salvation, and that one tries to resolve the uncertainty by seeking outward signs of God's grace. (…) Skin colour seemed the most obvious, indeed the almost inevitable choice in South Africa, all the more so that practically all dark-skinned people were in fact "heathens," and that darkness was traditionally associated with sin and evil in the Christian world view." [484]

Here also lies the origin of the assigning of value to group membership. Christianity is viewed as good while everything else is considered bad and threatening – hence the incorporation of

---

[478] Tomaselli et al. (1987: 22-23)
[479] Leatt et al. (1986: 51)
[480] Hamilton (1976: 84), van Heerden (1982: 195), Wilder (1981: 216) and Leatt et al. (1986: 57)
[481] van Heerden (1972: 39)
[482] Sharp (1980: 27) and van den Berghe (1965: 14)
[483] Akenson (1991: 73)
[484] van den Berghe (1965: 14-15)

the Arab word for non-believer ('Kaffir') into Afrikaans as a derogatory term for blacks or the AWB's composing their flag out of the number 7, the Biblical symbol for the apocalypse. [485] Such ideas were fostered and underwritten by the work of Afrikaans social scientists, particularly anthropologists. These so-called Volkekundiges made the contrast between the 'eie', the self, and the 'anders', the other, the centre of attention. And in their eyes the self and the other did not merely stand on opposite ends of the cultural spectrum. Scholars like Cronje viewed the 'uitheemse', the foreign element, as a threat to the self. [486]

This led many to believe that the survival of the individual depends largely on the survival of the group in a pure form, untouched by outside influences. It was therefore seen as imperative to protect individual cultural groups in a multicultural society. [487] As P. J. Coertze, one of Volkekunde's most influential scholars, stated in an article titled *Akkulturasie*, in which he warns of the dangers of a descent into "the sewer of integration" [488]:

> "It is necessary for us to take all measures to ensure the diversity and the separate development of different ethnic groups in the future. All factors which may still exist to foster a growing-together and an integration into a greater unity in this country must be systematically removed, otherwise we shall not avoid a process of fusion." [489]

This obsession with cultural purity soon grew into racism, which became an intrinsic part of the Afrikaner identity and, along with its religious justifications, survives to this day. [490]

3.2   Political Thinking Among English Speakers

Generally, South Africa's English speakers have claimed to have nothing to do with the Afrikaners' intolerant backwardness. They see themselves as 'liberals', which meant that to them the individual is of supreme importance and his/her interests come before that of the community. The role of the state is seen to be to nurture this individualism. Historically, they have opposed both socialism and nationalism. They favoured a European-style democracy, supported small government and a strong and independent judiciary. Ideologically, this meant that they believed in the freedom and equality of all men, regardless of race, creed, sex or culture. This also entailed strong support for freedom of speech and the press and opposition to undue interference in the individual's personal and economic life. Political stability, they argued, could be achieved only through social justice and economic prosperity. Furthermore,

---

[485] Franks (1987: 174)

[486] Schlesinger (1991: 4), Broughton (1961: 224), Sharp (1980: 32), Lynch (1999: 10) and Ferreira da Rosa Ribeiro (1995: Particularism versus Universalism, p. 5)

[487] Swilling & Phillips (1989: 139), Hammond-Tooke (1997: 133 and 139) and Leatt et al. (1986: 68)

[488] Coertze, P. J., 1968, *Akkulturasie*. In G. Cronje (ed.), *Kultuurbeeinvloeding tussen Blankes en Bantoe in Suid-Afrika*, Pretoria, quoted in and translated by Sharp (1980: 16)

[489] Coertze, P. J., 1968, *Akkulturasie*. In G. Cronje (ed.), *Kultuurbeeinvloeding tussen Blankes en Bantoe in Suid-Afrika*, Pretoria, quoted in and translated by Sharp (1980: 16)

[490] van den Berghe (1965: 15), Broughton (1961: 224), Akenson (1991: 75-77 and 94-95), Leatt et al. (1986: 69-70) and Horner (Unknown: 2)

where these did not exist, they should be achieved through evolutionary rather than revolutionary means. Violence of any kind was strongly opposed. [491]

This, however, was only the theory of it all. In practice, liberalism among English speaking South Africans was a rather conservative affair. Far from striving towards the ideal of total equality of all South Africans, most were content to achieve freedom and prosperity for themselves, and otherwise maintain the status quo. [492] The antagonism with the Afrikaners was therefore not so much over the rights of the black population, but rather over the question whether the English speakers' individual rights should be curtailed in the name of maintaining apartheid. However, the English speakers' support for individualism was not as strong as they claimed. Even they viewed society as a conglomeration of racial and cultural groups that strongly influence the individual's outlook in life. This allowed them to see the racism of apartheid and the stratification of society as natural and thus acceptable. [493]

3.3   Where the Two Camps Meet: White Opinion in South Africa

Throughout the period under review South African thought was dominated not only by group thinking in general, but more specifically by the binary opposition of identity and alterity, of 'us' and 'them'. To divide the world in two is by no means unique to South Africa. It is a century-old trait of European thought that can be traced as far back as ancient Greece. [494] It is, however, of special importance to many white South Africans as it was the founding idea of their society. During apartheid, the central players were the state and the liberation movements. The former, the in-group, was perceived as 'white', even though besides the white population it included black supporters of the political and economic establishment such as the homeland administrations and so-called moderate black leaders. The out-group in turn was called 'black', even though it included a number of whites. The term really stood for the negative opposite of the in-group, the 'radicals': the liberation movements, the township youths and the trade unions. [495]

These two groups were not only seen as facing each other from opposite ends of the political and cultural spectra, but were also assigned opposite places on a good-bad axis with the in-group representing everything desirable and the out-group standing for all negative attributes. As a result, the former came to be associated with such attributes as civilisation, education, moderation, order and peacefulness, while the latter came to represent everything Europeans

---

[491] Broughton (1961: 101 and 224-225), Leatt et al. (1986: 52-54) and Giliomee (1989: 27-28)
[492] van den Berghe (1965: 33-35 and 98), North (1986: 70-71) and Leatt et al. (1986: 62)
[493] North (1986: 90-91) and Leatt et al. (1986: 62-63)
[494] Lynch (1999: 9-10), Chandler (2001: 3) and Quasthoff (1989: 187)
[495] Marinovich & Silva (2000: 45-46), Tomaselli (1991 a: 25), TRC (17th September 1997: Mondli Makhanya; Abie Makue, 2), Louw & Tomaselli (1989: 33 and 40-41) and Dennis Pather in an interview with the author, 11th April 2002

had long feared about the 'heart of darkness': wildness, chaos, primitiveness, uncontrolled eruptions of passion and violence. [496]

This intellectual edifice was again underpinned by the work of Volkekunde. Influenced by Russian anthropologist Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff's 'ethnos-theory', they biologised cultural roles and identities, claiming that a person's culture is in some way inherent in their genes. Each cultural group was claimed to have a distinct – God-given as some more pious Volkekundiges put it – nature, which was described using seemingly neutral, but de facto evaluative adjectives such as 'civilised' and 'primitive' or 'Christian' and 'traditional'. [497]

These word fields served to assign to the people they referred to a spot on the cultural evolutionary ladder that, in the scientists' eyes, all peoples had to climb. However, such evolution was seen to be possible only in a limited way, for, while cultures could advance, people's nature was thought to set clear boundaries to how far they could go. [498] Compared to highly developed whites (at times called 'Europeans' even though the NP insisted that Afrikaners were the white tribe of Africa), blacks (at times called 'Africans') were taken to be one of these undeveloped, 'lower' cultures. And one of the visible signs of this lack of cultural sophistication was seen to be their attitude to violence. As Cloete put it in an article published in 1982 by the University of South Africa: "Even in modern Black communities, the (…) idea that violent action is inadmissible is not yet internalised, and many members of these communities still regard it as acceptable form of behaviour." [499]

Not surprisingly, as graduates from Afrikaans universities made their way into apartheid bureaucracy, the idea that blacks were impulsive and violent and needed guidance from whites to prevent them from killing each other became firmly entrenched in government thinking. [500] B.J. Vorster, the Minister of Police under P.W. Botha, for example, explained:

> "The multiracial composition of our population (…) results in the Police having to persuade people who fundamentally differ from the white man and even from each other and who respect their own distinct norms, to obey laws they do not understand and maintain a kind of order which is foreign to their nature." [501]

This statement is also indicative of another aspect of official discourse in apartheid South Africa. Even in the face of massive evidence of whites regularly committing barbarous acts of cruelty, they were rarely described in these terms. It was as if it were unthinkable whites to be violent savages. As Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok declared: "It can also be justly

---

[496] Butchart et al. (1998: 5), TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap, 3, Para 66, van der Spuy (1990: 93), Posel (1989: 262-263 and 268), Tomaselli (1991 a: 25) and Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161)
[497] Hammond-Tooke (1997: 132-133) and Sharp (1980: 19-20 and 25)
[498] Coetzee (1972: 124-132), Broughton (1961: 190-192 and 226-227), Horner (Unknown: 2) and Shaw (2002: 10)
[499] Cloete (1982: 57)
[500] Sharp (1980: 31)
[501] Quoted in van der Spuy (1990: 93)

claimed that the Force has, in the principles on which its duty has been performed, always maintained Christian norms and civilized standards." [502]

The presentation of the ongoing conflict as one between wild savages and peaceful Christians served to de-politicise the violence in South Africa and to lay the blame on evil powers beyond the country's borders. Since its creation, the NP's main goal had been to convince the white population that outside their country's borders africanists and communists were waiting to take away everything they had worked for. They felt that this would convince people that apartheid was the only way to prevent the end of their world. [503]

After 1990 the government sought to abandon the discourse of racial difference and to replace it with a new ideology of humanity as one and South Africa as a so-called 'rainbow nation' in which all people would live as equals. [504] Such terms can be deceiving, though. Most whites did not want to be part of a metaphorical colour soup. Their vision of the rainbow was that of a loose collection of clearly separate group living side by side – an ethnically based federalist state, in which each faction (including each of the separate 'Bantu nations') would be given considerable territorial autonomy under a weak central government. [505]

Not all people shared this view of the future though. A number of leaders, most prominently Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, were sincere in their attempt to break down the old inter-group boundaries. Their task, however, was a formidable one in a country as divided as South Africa. This was one reason why, rather than trying convince people that the old groups were no longer relevant, they attempted to construct a larger group that everyone could identify with – the 'rainbow nation'. They were only partly successful, though, because the old order was dear to many. As we have seen above, some Afrikaans speakers considered the continued existence of their population group to be a prerequisite for the survival of the individual. Therefore, they often rejected the new nation as unworkable. [506]

4. Paper Voices: The Representation of Violence in South Africa's English Language Press

I believe that by now the character of the violence in South Africa, as well as the changing framework within which the English language press has operated has been made sufficiently clear. It is now time to proceed to the actual media analysis. My approach here is threefold. First, after a brief description of the history and character of the newspaper houses, I will examine the quantitative aspects of the reporting in terms of what Herman & Chomsky have

---

[502] Quoted in Steytler (1990: 121)
[503] Babs Abba Omar in an interview with the author, 5th June 2002, Butchart et al. (1998: 3), Posel (1989: 263) and Louw & Tomaselli (1989: 28 and 33-34)
[504] Steytler (1990: 128)
[505] Hansson (1990: 56)
[506] Cosmas Desmond in an interview with the author, 11th April 2002

called the "propaganda model" [507]. Attention here will be paid predominantly to the relative importance of violence as an item of news as expressed by the frequency of reports, space dedicated to the subject, layout of the individual articles, and the position in the paper. This forms the background to, and sets the stage for, the analysis of the articles' content.

The next step is to find out how the papers' ideological background affected their reports. People often see press reports as mirror images of reality. I reject this view, for it obscures the boundary between the real and the symbolic. Newspaper articles are squarely located in the symbolic world and are never mirror images of anything 'out there'. They always contain a point of view. [508] In order to find just that, the point of view from which South African readers have been looking at violence in their country, I will first look at the role of ideology in the reporting in general. Then, I will move on to find out what exactly South African newspapers take as violence: What is reported? What is ignored? Then I need to see what weight is given to individual incidents and which aspects of them are given prominence. Finally, when all this has been made sufficiently clear, my focus will shift to the angles taken and the people portrayed in the reports. Who is seen to do what? And how are these actions explained? In asking these questions I will try to discover along which lines violence is viewed at what stage in South African history. [509]

In this part of the analysis I will draw extensively on the theory of framing. According to its proponents, frames work by organising reality into clearly distinguishable categories, thus turning an amorphous flow of impressions into a series of events. These are then assigned meaning by being described in terms of previously known discourses. [510] So, what frames are used to describe violence in the South African press? Is it a problem of security? Of mental health? Of culture? Knowing this will give me an understanding of the general repertoire of thoughts available to South Africans to understand the violence in their country.

Once all this is achieved and the newspaper reports are no longer viewed as transparent I can move on to the final step in my analytical process: a micro-level analysis of the content of a representative cross-section of reports. I will make use of the methods developed by Critical Discourse Analysis and social semiotics, that is, an analysis of the language and pictures in their cultural context, to find the images used for describing violence. I believe that these are more than just random metaphors chosen on a case-by-case basis, but commonly shared symbols with clearly defined meanings, which have come to denote the different kinds of violence at different points in history. Viewed as a whole, they combine to form a cultural

---

[507] Herman & Chomsky (1988: 1)
[508] Tuchman (1978: 1), Bennett (1982: 287), Schulz (1976: 29) and Lang & Lang (1981: 671)
[509] Herman (1992: 5) and Sayer (1984: 53)
[510] Bignell (1997: 91)

code, a language of violence so to speak. In my opinion it is this code which truly influences the readers' understanding of the media message. [511]

4.1 Getting to Know the Messenger: The English Language Press in South Africa

Throughout the period under investigation, the market for English language newspapers in South Africa was dominated by two large press groups: The Argus Company/Independent Newspapers and South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN), which, in 1987, changed its name to Times Media Limited (TML). For a while, a number of independent, liberal, English publications existed, but they were swallowed one by one by the large publishing houses. The political and ideological orientation of the sector was consequently fairly uniform as well. They were economically liberal, but socially conservative, and advocated ideals such as freedom of opinion and global cooperation. [512]

4.1.1 The Apartheid Years

During the apartheid years, as the influence of the liberal parties in parliament declined, the English press quickly took on the function of extra-parliamentary opposition. This role should not be overstated, though. The English papers might have thought of themselves as the "voice of the opposition" [513], but their being largely white bourgeois institutions prevented them from speaking out for the true opponents of apartheid, namely the black working class. [514] As Dennis Pather explained: "They may have paid lip service to their opposition to apartheid. Some of them. But not to the extent where they stood side by side with us and, stood up and, made sacrifices." [515]

In most cases, this was not due to maliciousness, but simply the result of the cultural context the papers belonged to. The English press essentially inhabited a white, middle-class world. It was owned, run and staffed mainly by white middle-class men and catered mainly to a white middle-class audience. "In outlook," Tony Heard, the editor of the *Cape Times* admitted, "those running the paper, including myself, had a "white" outlook – indeed, were captives of history, of generations of lingering prejudice." [516] And the English middle class opposed apartheid not because of its inherent racism, but because it was stifling economic growth.

---

[511] Glasgow Media Group (1976: 345), Bignell (1997: 81), Fowler & Kress (1979: 188) and Trew (1979 b: 141)
[512] Potter (1975: 76-77), Martin (1997: 60), Williams (Unknown b: 9-10), Ginwala (1973: 33), Hachten & Giffard (1984: 31), Naspers (2003: 2) and Louw (1993 b: 165 and 176)
[513] Former manager of the Argus Group in an interview with the author, 13th March 2002
[514] Pallo Jordan in an interview with the author, 22nd May 2002, van Nierkerk (1990: 39), Potter (1975: 165-170), Louw & Tomaselli (1989: 33), Mail & Guardian (7th March 1997 a: 1) and Tomaselli et al. (1989: 61)
[515] Interview with the author, 11th April 2002
[516] Heard (1991: 171)

Opposition to the government was also reduced by the fact that the press was essentially controlled by South Africa's large mining companies [517] who quite plainly profited from the oppression of the black population. Apartheid provided them with a near unlimited supply of cheap labour with no rights to speak of, so it would have made no sense for them to advocate an end of it. Therefore, not surprisingly, they pressed for government-friendly reporting. [518]

This is not to mean that the English press was the public relations arm of South Africa's big mining houses. In general they enjoyed a large degree of editorial independence. But everyone knew who they were working for, a factor which did influence their choices at least sub-consciously. [519] As a result, the English language newspapers did not offer an alternative to government discourse, but rather a slightly different version thereof. [520] They fought mostly on minor issues, such as an abolition of separate amenities and the pass system, but left the basis of apartheid unquestioned. [521]

There were a few exceptions to this rule: Donald Woods, the editor of the *Daily Dispatch*, Tony Heard, the editor of the *Cape Times* and the staff of the *Rand Daily Mail*, which, under the editorship of Laurence Gandar, Raymond Louw and Allister Sparks, developed into the only true opposition to the NP. The *Mail* was also the first white newspaper to hire a journalist dedicated entirely to black affairs, and to run stories about the every-day life of the black population. [522] This course had clear effects on its readership. According to Akhalwaya, by the early 1980s, 72% of the *Mail*'s reads were black. As a consequence, few white companies were interested in advertising with the paper. Eventually the owners reacted by creating a new paper from the profitable financial section, *Business Day*, and, on 30th April 1985, closing the *Rand Daily Mail* (along with the *Sunday Express* and the *Sowetan Sunday Mirror*). [523]

At first this seemed to be the end of the opposition press in South Africa. [524] However, during the 1980s many South Africans, particularly the black population, developed a keen interest in politics. They had enough of the government's interfering in their lives and rejected the mainstream media that presented an image of reality that had nothing to do with their daily experiences. The time was ripe for filling the communications vacuum without the help of

[517] In 1989, Anglo American Corporation held a controlling 50.94 interest in Argus and a 61.78 share in TML. Previously, the majority shareholder in SAAN had been the Abe Bailey Trust and Estate who sold its stock to JCI, an Anglo American subsidiary, in 1984. The Argus Company was also a minority shareholder in TML. (TML (Unknown: Inside the Group, 2), Pogrund (2000: 333), Jackson (1993: 38) and Shaw (1999: 207))

[518] Moegsien Williams (17th July 2002) and Raymond Louw (19th July 2002) in interviews with the author, Tomaselli et al. (1989: 28), Sanders (2000: 190), van den Berghe (1965: 107), Brown (1971: 125), Hachten (1984: 97) and Potter (1975: 59)

[519] Independent Newspapers (Unknown: 7), Heard (1991: 147), Jackson (1993: 39-42) and Shaw (1999: 210)

[520] Louw & Tomaselli (1989: 33-34 and 38), Manning (1987: 155), Ginwala (1973: 34) and Hachten (1984: 97)

[521] Independent Newspapers (Unknown: 8), Langa (Unknown: Part 1, 1), Mail & Guardian (7th March 1997 a: 1-2), Barton (1979: 211) and ANC (1997 b: 6)

[522] Mojalefa (1988: 23), Ginwala (1973: 35-36), Sanders (2000: 190), Cruywagen (2000: 1-2) and Raymond Louw in an interview with the author, 19th July 2002

[523] Pogrund (1990: 69-70), Akhalwaya (1990: 53-54), Jackson (1993: 70 and 76) and Hachten (1984: 131-132)

[524] van Niekerk (1990: 41) and Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 12)

large media houses. [525] In the coming years, a number of new independent publications sprung up that became known as the 'alternative press'. Unlike the mainstream media, they did not use the government-created language of separatism, nor did they centre their reporting on the lives of the white population, but advertised unity and colour-blindness instead. [526]

As important as these publications were, for several reasons I will not include them in my analysis. Firstly, as they admitted themselves, they stood outside the official South African discourse, and an examination of their articles would therefore not further my aim of understanding the world of the mainstream press. Secondly, with their small circulation of between 10,000 and 80,000 copies, and their often irregular publication cycles, they were not a big factor in the English language media market and therefore had little influence on public opinion. Besides, and this brings us to my third and most important reason for leaving them out, even those alternative newspapers published in English were mainly read in the townships and by opponents of apartheid (including whites), not by the average English speaking South Africans that I am trying to understand. [527]

An entirely different story altogether is that of *The Citizen*. Launched on 7th September 1976 with money secretly supplied by the government, it was also the only English newspaper that supported the NP and its apartheid policies openly and unapologetically. [528] When, in 1978, revelations of the state's funding of *The Citizen* reached the public, the government was forced to sell the newspaper to Perskor, an Afrikaans press group, for the discounted price of the printing press it owned. By then it was on the verge of breaking even, so Perskor, who amalgamated it with its *Financial Gazette*, had no problems maintaining it throughout the following years. And it was not just scraping by, either; *The Citizen* grew into one of the biggest success stories in South African newspaper history. In 1996 its circulation reached a daily average of 138,071 and by 1998 it was the third largest daily in the country. [529]

4.1.2   The Situation after 1990

The South African media landscape changed substantially after the end of apartheid. The first to feel the effects of the transition was the alternative press. They had largely relied on donations from opponents of apartheid for funding and after 1990 the money quickly dried-up. Some alternative newspapers attempted to morph into commercial ventures, but they were too small and their readers had too little buying power to be of any interest to advertisers.

---

[525] Louw (1993 b: 177), Guardian (25th January 1988: page unknown), Merrett (1994: 89), Massing (1987: 38) and Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 8 and 157)

[526] Daily Mail & Guardian (2nd December 1998: 2), Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 159), Electronic Mail & Guardian (The Pack of Beers that Launched a Newspaper: 3) and Jackson (1993: 48-50)

[527] This is not to mean that I did not look at the alternative newspapers. Their role for the present dissertation is to serve as a backdrop against which the reporting of the liberal papers can be judged. I have therefore compared the two in many places to illustrate that the choices made by the mainstream were not necessarily the only possibility of dealing with reality.

[528] Manning (1987: 155), de Villiers (1980: 130) and Jones (1998: 2-3)

[529] Financial Mail (12th March 1999: 1), Pogrund (2000: 290) and de Beer (1993: 81)

With the exception of the *Weekly Mail*, which was saved by an injection of money from the British *Guardian* in 1995, none of the alternative newspapers survived the transition to democracy. [530] Today, it is called *Mail & Guardian* and, with a circulation of nearly 40,000, has become an important factor in the South African media landscape. [531] These later edition of the paper have therefore been included in my analysis.

In the mainstream newspaper market, the first and probably most consequential change was the buyout, in three stages (completed in 1999), of the Argus Company by the Irish Independent Group and its subsequent name change to Independent Newspapers (in 1994). The deal was a big blow to black empowerment, not least because the company had taken a number of steps during the preceding years, which had clearly put it in the lead in the English newspaper market. [532] In 1985, the Argus Group closed the loss-making *Friend* and added *The Natal Mercury* to its stable. In 1994, Independent Newspapers bought the *Cape Times* from TML in a much-criticised behind-the-scenes deal, and finally, in 1995, it launched the *Sunday Independent* in direct competition with the *Sunday Times*. [533]

Still, the English press did not stay entirely in white hands. In October 1996, the black-owned National Empowerment Consortium took effective control over Times Media Limited when it acquired 35% of the shares of Johnnic, TML's newly founded holding company. [534] Shortly thereafter, the company sold 50% of shares and joint management control of its two business publications, the *Financial Mail* and *Business Day*, to Pearson, the UK-based publisher of the *Financial Times*. [535] Finally, in 2000, the *Evening Post* in Port Elizabeth was closed due to mounting losses. [536]

The Citizen, too, changed into black hands when, in 1996, Perskor merged with Kagiso Trust, one of the most prominent new black-run investment groups. The group was sold two more times in the following years, and in 1999, finally ended-up as a joint venture between Caxton Publishers and New Africa Investment Limited (NAIL), another major black empowerment company, that, in 1993, had bought the *Sowetan* from the Argus Company. [537]

Despite such fundamental changes in ownership, the English press was slow at adjusting to the new South Africa. Continuity was most marked with regards to the target audience. A newspaper's primary source of income is the sale of advertising space, and, while a few black

---

[530] Lewin (1998: 4), Clayton Powell III (1999: 2) Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 223-225), Mpofu (1996: Chap 4, p. 3), Jackson (1993: 68), Berger (2001: 153) and Daily Mail & Guardian (2nd December 1998: 2)
[531] Clayton Powell III (1999: 2), Berger (2001: 153) and Electronic Mail & Guardian (History of the Mail & Guardian: 2)
[532] Faure (Unknown: 4), Berger (1999: 12), Daily Mail & Guardian (2nd December 1998: 5-6) and Comtask (1996: 22)
[533] Grogan & Riddle (1987: 12), Martin (1997: 60), Louw (1993 b: 165), Merrett (1994: 169) and IOL (2002: 1)
[534] Berger (1999: 13), Teer Tomaselli & Tomaselli (2001: 133) and Sunday Times (20th April 1997: 2)
[535] Financial Mail (13th December 1996: 1-2), Berger (2001: 153) and Teer Tomaselli & Tomaselli (2001: 133)
[536] Business Day (4th May 2002 a: 1) and Dispatch Online (1st December 2000: 1-2)
[537] Jones (1998: 3), The Government of South Africa (1999: 13), Financial Mail (12th March 1999: 1) and Berger (2001: 155)

people grew wealthy relatively quickly, the most profitable readers were taken to be white. Blacks were for a long time only of marginal interest to the mainstream press. [538]

One look into the newsroom of an English language newspaper in South Africa during the 1990s also quickly revealed some of the shortcomings of the new era. While the number of black journalists went up steadily and a number of blacks were promoted into editorial positions, their numbers did not reflect their share of the overall population. Especially the second tier of power, the sub-editors who get to decide on newspaper layout, write headlines and edit stories, is still mostly white. The reasons for this are numerous – from racism to lack of properly trained black staff – but they certainly do not represent an impassable hurdle. If the current trends continue, South Africa should in the not too distant future overcome the racial divide in the newsrooms. [539]

4.2   An Analysis of News Reports in Terms of the 'Propaganda Model'

In the present chapter I will investigate the link between the attention devoted to the subject of violence in the South African press and its importance to South African culture. However, this is no mere content analysis. We cannot assume that a subject that attracts little media interest is of little importance to a culture, nor is it true that the topic that is given the most attention is the one most cared about. Therefore, the question I have to answer is not what is reported – although this aspect is certainly interesting and will be touched upon – but how a situation as a whole is portrayed. This is why I have opted for the 'propaganda model', an analysis that, according to its creators,

> "focuses on (…) [the] inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their message across to the public" [540].

However, I see the world differently than Herman & Chomsky, which has clear implications for my work. They postulate a unidirectional line of influence from "money and power" via the media to "the public". I on the other hand strongly believe that the idea of direct media influence has been refuted by Stuart Hall's research into coding and decoding. As I have shown in chapter 1, media consumers are not mere receivers of someone else's prefabricated message, but active participants in the communication process.

So, if I reject their basic premise, in which way is Herman & Chomsky's model useful to me? It is beyond doubt that the political economy of the media, the media culture of a country and the ideological environment in which the media operate, shape the public's understanding of

---

[538] Thabo Leshilo (24th July 2002) and Thami Mazwai (16th July 2002) in interviews with the author and Berger (2001: 168)
[539] Berger (1999: 17)
[540] Herman & Chomsky (1988: 2)

the message they convey. Therefore the authors' initial question – How does the socio-political context in which the media operate influence their reporting? – is one which should be addressed here. And their 'propaganda model' lends itself to this kind of investigation. I would, however, prefer to call my approach the 'ideology model'. The term propaganda implies that there is active and wilful intervention on the part of the powerful interests that control the media. And while, as I will show, the apartheid government interfered extensively, such a sweeping claim that everyone in power always does, in my view, lack proof.

4.2.1 Factors that Influenced the Amount of Reports on Violence

The reporting of violence in the South African press is primarily influenced by one thing: the point in time at which it is published. During the apartheid years, violence was continuously underreported. This was in part due to the newspapers' editorial policies and their audience's likes and dislikes, but by far the biggest influence was government interference in media affairs. Freedom of expression was not granted any special protection under either of the two constitutions that were in force during the apartheid years, and the government never kept its dislike of the concept a secret. As Louis le Grange, at the time Minister of Public Works, explained to the Newspaper Press Union (NPU), a large publishers' association, in 1978:

> "The freedom of the press is not a civil liberty and the public do not have the right to be informed. Privilege can not be allowed to be abused and create a state of unrest and chaos in the name of press freedom." [541]

The NP believed in the media's power of persuasion and identified it as an important site of the struggle for the hearts and minds of South Africa's white population. [542] And they fought this war incessantly and on all fronts by censoring media output, releasing masses of propaganda and planting spies in the newspapers' editorial offices. According to Mortimer, a former general in the SADF, these moves had one common goal: "The population had to be influenced to accept and support the national aim". [543]

In the following sub-chapters, I will briefly sketch the ideological and legal background against which the press operated before moving on to the actual analysis of the media reports. I believe that this is vital for understanding the choices that led to the publication of certain stories and the elimination of others.

a)   Censorship

The NP's may have frequently assured people that their country stood on the side of the free world in the fight against (communist) oppression, but this did not prevent them from

---

[541] Quoted in Brewer (1986: 333)
[542] Cloete (1985: 69) and Burns (1990: 69)
[543] Mortimer (Unknown: 10)

interfering with the media. It merely meant that they were unable to introduce a censorship law as such. Instead, individual clauses aimed at restricting press freedom were hidden in over 100 other laws. [544] Moreover, there was no centrally organised pre-publication censorship, as for example in the Soviet Union. The responsibility for staying within the government-defined boundaries lay entirely with the newspaper houses who faced fines, bannings, and imprisonment of their staff if they did not comply. [545] As Tony Heard explained:

> "We didn't have in-office censors. The system that had been devised, the far more effective form of censorship, the best form of censorship, is not to have a boring little man or woman with a blue pencil, you know, a boring little censor in the office. (…) The best way is to make the press censor themselves." [546]

This system of outsourced control often worked to the government's advantage, because even the most progressive editors generally decided to err on the side of caution rather than risk government repercussions. [547] During our interview even liberal editor Tony Heard admitted:

> "I was a marvellous censor and at times I did pick stuff out. Far more than I'd want to admit to today. But, sure, you know, sometimes you're terrified, it's late at night, the story arrives on you desk, suggesting that we are invading Angola, for instance. And you say, hang on, let's talk about that tomorrow, you know." [548]

Articles about violence, particularly of the politically motivated sort, often struck out. For one, widespread coverage of the township unrest might have created the impression that the government was no longer in full control of the situation. Furthermore, it was argued that by reporting their actions, the media would give the opponents of apartheid a platform to voice their views, something that had to be prevented at all costs. [549]

Many owners and managers shared this view, so the newspapers' self-censorship often exceeded what was mandated by law. Over the years, they entered into several agreements with the government promising, among other things, not to hinder or embarrass the police, to inform a senior officer before publication of "information concerning crime or State security which has been obtained by the newspaper independently of the police, to enable such officer to advise whether the information should be published" [550], and to use information about

---

[544] Tyson (1990: 68), FXI (Unknown: 4), Pogrund (1976: 10) and TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 112
A list of all laws with implications on press freedom can be found on the website of the Freedom of Expression Institute at http://fxi.org.za/archives/2karen.txt. See also Burns (1990) for an overview of the legal situation in apartheid South Africa.
[545] de Villiers (1976: 351), Jackson (1993: 103) and Hachten (1984: 102-103)
[546] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002
[547] Gerald Shaw (22nd May 2002) and Ken Owen (30th May 2002) in interviews with the author
[548] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002
[549] Posel (1989: 263), van Heerden (1982: 206), Louw & Tomaselli (1989: 39), Teer Tomaselli (1992: 98) and Leon Mellet in an interview with the author, 26th June 2002
[550] Quoted in Pogrund (2000: 238)

defence matters from official sources as far as possible and to have all other articles authorised and, if necessary, edited or commented by the government. [551]

During the state of emergency, that is, almost throughout the entire 1980s, the South African government successively outlawed virtually all reporting of violence. [552] In November 1985, publication of visual footage of the unrest was banned and any journalists who wanted to report on political violence had to be accredited with the police or the government's Bureau for Information. [553] On 12th June 1986, new press restrictions came into force that prohibited the reporting of political protests, including consumer boycotts, strikes, demonstrations, and the funerals of unrest victims. The names of detainees or victims of the unrest could not be mentioned either, and the media had to remain silent about the actions, or rather the existence, of conscientious objectors. [554] In December 1986 special press regulations were posted in the *Government Gazette*, which made reporting on the violence in the townships without authorisation from the government virtually impossible. [555] The publication of any details of security action or the fate of detained persons became illegal, as did making 'subversive statements', promoting an unlawful organisation, encouraging people to take part in protest actions, aggravating feelings of hostility, and weakening public confidence in the termination of the state of emergency. [556] Journalists could enter unrest areas only by special permission and had to obtain written permission for publication of what they had seen. [557] Hence, most newspapers that were even remotely critical of the government had no choice but to use the material supplied by the only official source of information at that time – the government's 'Bureau for Information'. [558]

Many English language newspapers began carrying notices on the front page informing readers that there were things they were not telling them about. Others periodically carried reminders that specific articles had been censored, or printed articles with unfinished or partly blacked out sentences to show how much information was actually missing (see fig. 2).

---

[551] TRC (16th September 1997: NPU, 5), TRC (24th January 1997: 8) and Burns (1990: 124)
[552] Manning (1987: 156) and Frederikse (1987: 210)
[553] Anthonissen (2001: 27), Teer Tomaselli (1992: 92), Freedom to Write Committee (1981: 24) and Byrnes (1996: Communications and Media, 1)
[554] Grogan & Riddle (1987: 4), Frederikse (1987: 210), Collinge et al. (1988: 28-29) and Süddeutsche Zeitung (22nd December 1986: page unknown)
[555] TRC Report, Vol 3, Chap 1, 1986, Nathan (1989: 74) and Frederikse (1987: 210)
[556] Armstrong (1987: 205-206) and Collinge et al. (1988: 28-30)
[557] Phelan (1987: 34), Frederikse (1987: 210), Sperling & McKenzie (1990: 3) and Business Day (21st January 1997 a: 2)
[558] Armstrong (1987: 209), Collinge et al. (1988: 34), Jackson (1993: 145-146) and Tomaselli et al. (1986: 13)
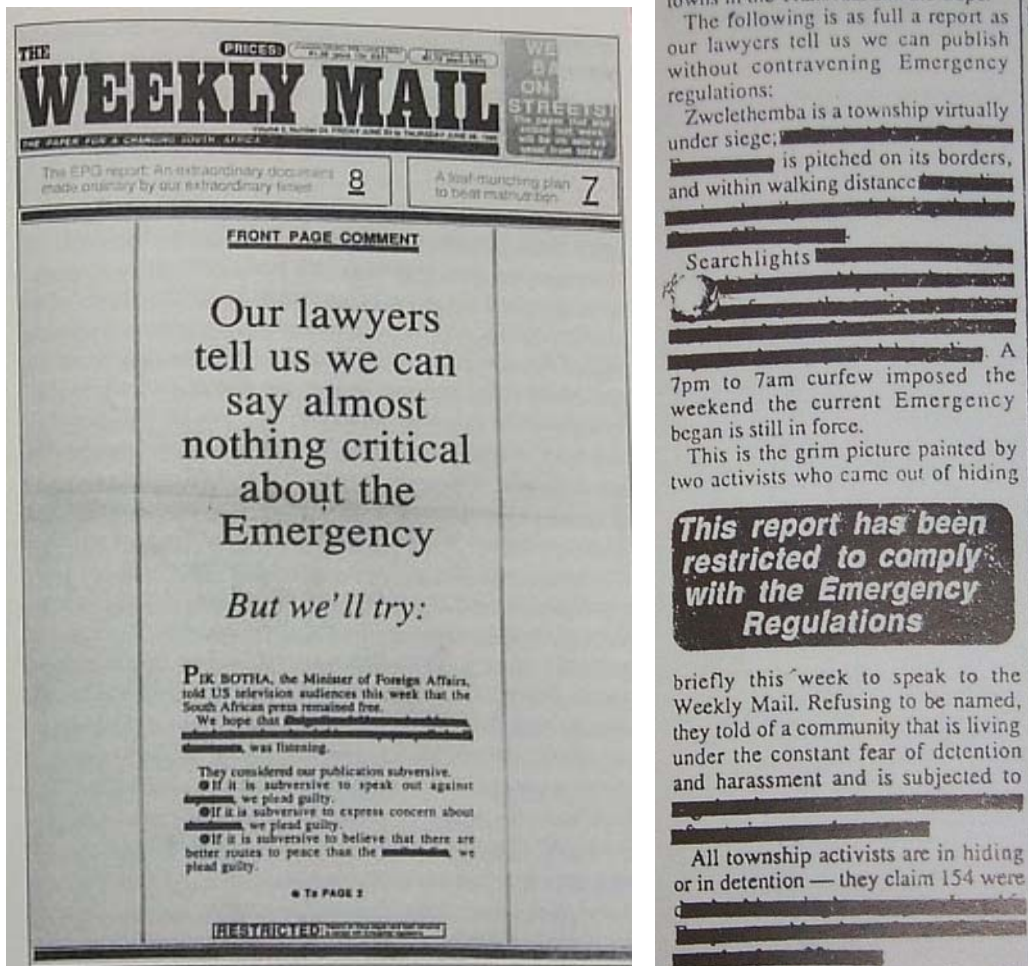
Figure 2: Nothing left to say: *Weekly Mail*, **June 20ᵗʰ 1986: 1 and 8ᵗʰ August 1986: 1**

Such measures were eventually declared illegal, though, to create an illusion of normality, which ensured that the public remained ignorant of the true extent of official interference. [559] This is not to say that, if people had wanted to, they could not have found ample proof of the ongoing censorship. The *Sowetan*, for example, tried to alert its readers of the prohibition on political comment by choosing such strange subjects as the potato for its weekly column. [560] The *Weekly Mail* circumvented the new legislation by replacing the blacked-out spaces with the instruction "For further information telephone your Minister" [561] and adding the relevant civil servant's office and home numbers. And on 12ᵗʰ December 1986, under the title "The emergency made simple" [562], the newspaper listed all restricted topics and told readers that, if they wanted to discuss them, they should "Simply phone these numbers and ask for permission" [563]. The contacts given were the President, all senior government ministers, the Bureau for Information, the head of the National Intelligence Service and the Secretary of the State Security Council.

---

[559] Martin & Moorhead (1997: 10), Frederikse (1987: 222), Anthonissen (2001: 141 and 149) and Heard (1991: 149)
[560] Merrett (1994: 142)
[561] Quoted in Merrett & Saunders (2000: 469)
[562] Weekly Mail (12ᵗʰ December 1986: 1)
[563] Weekly Mail (12ᵗʰ December 1986: 1)

The mainstream press on the other hand did not bother with such elaborate methods of defiance. Their readers would not have bought empty newspapers for long, which would have led to substantial losses of sales and advertising income. Therefore, rather than annoying everyone, they opted for cooperation with the authorities. "Pictures of rugby and beauty queens have replaced township unrest on many front pages," Tony Heard lamented in 1987. "The habit of compliance dies hard." [564]

Besides direct forms of censorship, many indirect methods were used during the 1970s and 80s. In an attempt to prevent journalists from doing their job the police confiscated their press cards or car keys, called them in for questioning so that they missed important appointments, or had their notes and films stolen. Many black journalists and most employees of the alternative press were at some point banned, hassled or attacked by policemen. Their homes and offices were targeted by bombers and vandals. They were often charged and generally found guilty of offences against the press laws or sent straight to prison without trial. There they were often tortured or held in solitary confinement for long periods of time. [565]

The list of harassments is, unfortunately, too long for the present paper, but I do believe my point has been made clear even without specific examples. To anyone interested in the extent of intimidation and prosecution of journalists, I recommend Stewart (1986) who lists 14 pages of arrests and attacks just for the time period between September 1984 and 1986. [566]

b)   Spies in the Newsroom

Another strategy for controlling the media, which combined elements of censorship and propaganda as well as intelligence work, was the planting of spies in all media houses. The agents made frequent reports to the police about their colleagues' transgressions, told their superiors of the organisational structure of the media houses and gave them information that might later be of strategic importance. [567] Journalists' research was of interest, too, because they often had access to information about the liberation movements that the police had trouble obtaining through questioning. It was easier to spy on the journalists and to copy their notes and pictures. At times the spies themselves were the liberation movements' contacts in the media and got access to dissidents through their work. Former spy Craig Williamson told the TRC: "You were legitimately able to gather authentic information (...) and via you that information would get to the South African Security Forces." [568]

This also had the much-welcomed effect that opponents of apartheid lost confidence in the mainstream media when they noticed that the information they gave to journalists often ended

---

[564] Heard (1987: 12)
[565] TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 65, Pollack (1981: 57-58), Heard (1986: 120), Harber (1990: 42) and Isaaks (1990: 30)
[566] Stewart (1986: 24-40)
[567] Mail & Guardian (20th December 1995: 1), FXI (Unknown: 3) and TRC (16th September 1997: Craig Williamson, 3)
[568] TRC (16th September 1997: Craig Williamson, 5-6)

up with the police and that promised articles were rarely printed. [569] This lack of trust could have serious consequences for journalists in the field. Especially during the 1980s it was not unheard of that reporters were attacked when they entered the townships. Hence in an attempt to protect themselves, many reporters began to rely entirely on information from the government or ignore the townships altogether. [570]

The agents also had the power to eliminate troublesome journalists by wrongly accusing them of being spies, thereby ruining their reputation, or at least to prevent them from publishing unwanted material by stealing their notes or manipulating their equipment. [571] But even their mere presence had a censoring effect. The knowledge that they were surrounded by spies made journalists paranoid and distracted them from their work. Much energy was lost on hiding important material to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. [572]

c)   Let's not Go There – The Attitude within the Media Houses

The serious misrepresentation of the ongoing violence was not only due to government interference though. The press itself was also to blame for failing to accurately represent the situation in the townships. Editors who did not want to publish stories about political violence or the struggle of the liberation movements used the media regulations as an excuse to reign in their more critical reporters. Some did it because they themselves supported the status quo, but most of the time, important information that could legally be printed was omitted for fear of alienating readers and advertisers. [573]

Not unlike ordinary Germans during the Nazi years, many white South Africans adopted a 'hear no evil, see no evil' mentality. They enjoyed the life they had and preferred not to ask why they could afford a maid, a gardener and a childminder – all of them black of course – on just the main breadwinner's salary, or why they did not have to get out of their cars to pump petrol, let alone ever clean a car window. [574] And the mainstream media made it easy for them to forget.

---

[569] Pallo Jordan in an interview with the author, 22nd May 2002, Merrett (1994: 88), TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 10) and TRC (16th September 1997: Craig Williamson, 5)

[570] Massing (1987: 39), Oosthuizen (1994: 1-3), Griffin (1992: 1-2) and Tomaselli (1994: 135-138)

[571] TRC (17th September 1997: Don Mattera, 3), FXI (Unknown: 6) and TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 2, Para 22

[572] FXI (Unknown: 6), TRC (16th September 1997: Craig Williamson, 7), TRC (17th September 1997: Raymond Louw, 3) and TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 2, Para 22

[573] Patten (1997: 18-19), Lacob (1982: 50), O'Dowd (1996: 68 and 82), Adhikari (2000: 331), Massing (1987: 36-37), TRC (17th September 1997: Vrye Weekblad, 1) and Gerald Shaw in an interview with the author, 22nd May 2002

[574] Massing (1987: 37), Hope (1988: 53), Tyson (1990: 73), Merrett (1994: 137), van den Berghe (1965: 106-107) and Dennis Pather (11th April 2002) and Babs Abba Omar (5th June 2002) in interviews with the author

For example, at the end of 1976, the *Sunday Times Extra*, the *Times*' township edition [575], printed a list of the known victims of the Soweto Uprisings. This significant piece of information was nowhere to be seen in the white edition. [576] Similarly, *The Argus* was lucky that two of its reporters, Denis Cruywagen and Willie de Klerk, were the only journalists to witness the infamous 'Trojan Horse Incident' in 1985. But instead of capitalising on this fact, they placed the story on page three, illustrated with only tiny pictures. It would take the more courageous *Cape Times* to really follow-up the event. [577] Even the *Rand Daily Mail* went along with the game. Lacob gives an example from 1982 when a colour picture of a bombing in Soweto appeared on the front page of the township edition only. The same slot in the white edition was given to a story about a leopard that had given birth to cubs in the Johannesburg zoo. [578] As Mike Tissong explained to me in an interview:

> "The townships and the areas outside of where they lived were like something in the distance, which they didn't really know and didn't want to know. And the people who took decisions on the newspapers also reflected that." [579]

Several other journalists I spoke with agreed with this assertion [580] as did some of the editors interviewed by O'Dowd. For example Godfrey Haines, the chief sub editor at the *Cape Times*, explained: "You don't want to shock people so that they actually turn away. You want them to buy the paper." [581]

However, the public were not the only ones who, over time, lost interest in the violence. The journalists also grew tired of the uphill struggle against the censorship machinery and resigned themselves to doing what they saw as the best they could. [582] "We tried to break the law," a former manager of the Argus Company explained, "but mainly abided by the law to stay open." [583] Even Ken Owen, one of South Africa's most outspoken journalists, admitted:

> "Somewhere along the line we all had to make compromises, and we made them; I mean, we made them. Some of them were quite shameful compromises and some were perhaps better. But we all compromised. If you stayed here, you compromised." [584]

---

[575] Most white newspapers had such separate editions aimed at black readers. In recent years they have been the subject of much controversy. On the one hand they have been praised as a way of giving black journalists work while providing the township population with information they could not otherwise obtain. On the other hand they have been decried as apartheid editions that served to entrench the old mental divisions between blacks and whites and to perpetuate the lower standing of black journalists. Business Day (26th March 1999: 1), Independent Newspapers (Unknown: 39-40), TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 2) and TRC (17th September 1997: Raymond Louw, 8-9)
[576] Kane-Berman (1979: 159)
[577] Green (1998: 3-4)
[578] Lacob (1982: 56)
[579] Interview with the author, 17th July 2002
[580] For example Babs Abba Omar (5th June 2002), Thabo Leshilo (24th July 2002) and Ken Owen (30th May 2002)
[581] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 97-98)
[582] Lacob (1982: 51), TRC Report, Vol 5, Chap 8, Para 93 and Mail & Guardian (1st August 1997: 1)
[583] Interview with the author, 13th March 2002
[584] Interview with the author, 30th May 2002

Others were probably not too interested in fighting in the first place and used the emergency regulations as an excuse to not have to deal with uncomfortable stories. [585]

d)   Press Politics in the New South Africa

Obviously things have changed a lot since the end of whites-only rule. Press freedom is among the basic rights granted by the new South African constitution [586] and is largely respected by the new government. In a survey published in 1998 Washington-based Freedom House ranked South Africa's press freedom 15th among 186 countries. [587]

Not all is rosy, though. A number of apartheid laws that limit press freedom remain in force and hang like a Damocles' sword over the heads of the media. The new government is careful when applying these regulations, but it still does use them every once in a while. [588] Moreover, even the new people in power have shown their scepticism towards critical reporting. High-ranking government officials, including Presidents Mandela and Mbeki, have repeatedly attacked journalists for the content of their articles. White journalists and media houses are often accused of racism when they attack the government. Similarly, black journalists are reproached for acting disloyal towards their own population group. [589]

And the government does not limit itself to purely verbal attacks either. In May 1998, Newton Kanhema, a journalist from Zimbabwe, had his work permit revoked and was deported from South Africa after having uncovered a weapons deal between the ANC government and Saudi Arabia. [590] In another high-profile case in July 1998, Cape Town journalist Thabo Mabaso was arrested without reason and beaten by police in Guguletu. As a result of the incident he lost sight in his left eye. [591] And just before the 1999 elections, Swiss journalist Jean-Philippe Ceppi was arrested under the 1982 Protection of Information Act and held in custody for three days for the supposedly possessing secret military papers. In fact the documents had been declassified and he had received them legally and openly from the TRC. [592]

A number of spies also remained in their jobs and continued their double life until after the election. According to former colleagues who decided to reveal their own role to the TRC, some of them were still in fairly senior positions when the Commission held its media hearings. And there can be no doubt that they were still passing information on to the police. SABC television producer Jacque Pauw, for example, found that in December 1994 one of his colleagues had leaked his notes for an episode of the current affairs series *Agenda* to the

---

[585] Teer Tomaselli (1992: 128) and Jackson (1993: 152-153)
[586] See Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Chap 2 Bill of Rights, Section 16
[587] IJNet (2000: 1), GCIS (1999: 1) and Retief (2002: 26-27)
[588] Freedom House (1999: 31-32), van Rooyen (1994: 1-2), Comtask (1996: 14) and IJNet (2000: 1)
[589] Sparks (1999: 80), Pottinger (Unknown: 1-2), US Department of State (1999: 76), Retief (2002: 200), IJNet (2000: 1-2) and Thabo Leshilo in an interview with the author, 24th July 2002
[590] Kanhema (1998: 1), IPI (1999: 1), CPJ (1998: 1) and US Department of State (1999: 6)
[591] IJNet (2000: 2), IPI (2000: 2) and US Department of State (1999: 6)
[592] IPI (2000: 1) and Berger (1999: 8)

police. [593] And in 2000, the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) revealed that agents for the new Defence Intelligence (DI) had attempted, and in some cases probably succeeded, to recruit journalists as spies. [594] But none of these things is half as bad as in the old days. And, as journalist Mike Masipa has pointed out: "The treatment of the press in South Africa is generally a picnic compared with violations of press freedom elsewhere on the continent." [595]

4.2.2   The Quantitative Changes in the Reporting of Violence

a)   Cover me with Violence: The Soweto Uprisings 1976

Due to the relative freedom of speech during the beginning of the time period under review here, the Soweto Uprisings were still extensively covered in the English language press. [596] All afternoon papers ran it as their lead story on 16th June and updated it as the events unfolded. *The Star*, for example, changed its cover page at least [597] four times that day to keep up with the developments in Soweto. In the Late Final Edition, six articles and two pictures covering most of the front page are dedicated to the Soweto Uprisings, reducing the former lead story, a conflict between Botswana and Rhodesia, to an almost insignificant little two column piece in the bottom right corner below the fold (see fig. 3).

---

[593] Mail & Guardian (20th December 1995: 1), TRC (16th September 1997: John Horak, 6) and TRC (16th September 1997: Vic McPherson, 3)
[594] Retief (2000: 146-147), CPJ (2000: 2) and TRC (16th September 1997: John Horak, 6-7)
[595] Masipa (1998: 1) and IJNet (2000: 1)
[596] Magubane (1989: 98), Business Day (21st January 1997 b: 4) and Tomaselli et al. (1987: 111)
[597] I was unable to establish exactly how many editions were published each day, so the numbers given here reflect the number of different editions I found and analysed in different libraries.

Figure 3: *The Star*, 16th June 1976 (Late Final Edition): 1

The *Argus* updated at least five times (four editions on Soweto) and in the end dedicated the entire front page to Soweto (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: *The Argus*, 16th **June 1976 (City Late Edition): 1**

The uprisings – or 'riots' as most papers called the events – received more attention inside the newspapers with photo spreads and features in *The Star* on pages 3 and 7 and in *The Argus* on page 27. The morning papers painted a similar picture the next day. The *Cape Times* filled its front page as well as pages 2 and 10 with pictures and articles about Soweto, *The Natal Mercury* featured the uprisings on pages 1, 2, 3 and 5 and the *Rand Daily Mail* filled the first five pages and half of page six with articles and images of the events. They also published an opinion piece on page 15.

Most newspapers kept this up well into the next week. The *Cape Times* for example still carried the riots that had by then spread across most of the country as its lead story on 22nd

June. Also, the viewpoints from which it was covered were broad, with newspapers like *The Star*, the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Express* giving ample space to leading blacks, such as the mayor of Soweto, – if not to the students themselves – to voice their opinions. *The Star* also published a picture on 19th June 1976 showing a child running, about to be shot from behind (see fig. 5). [598]
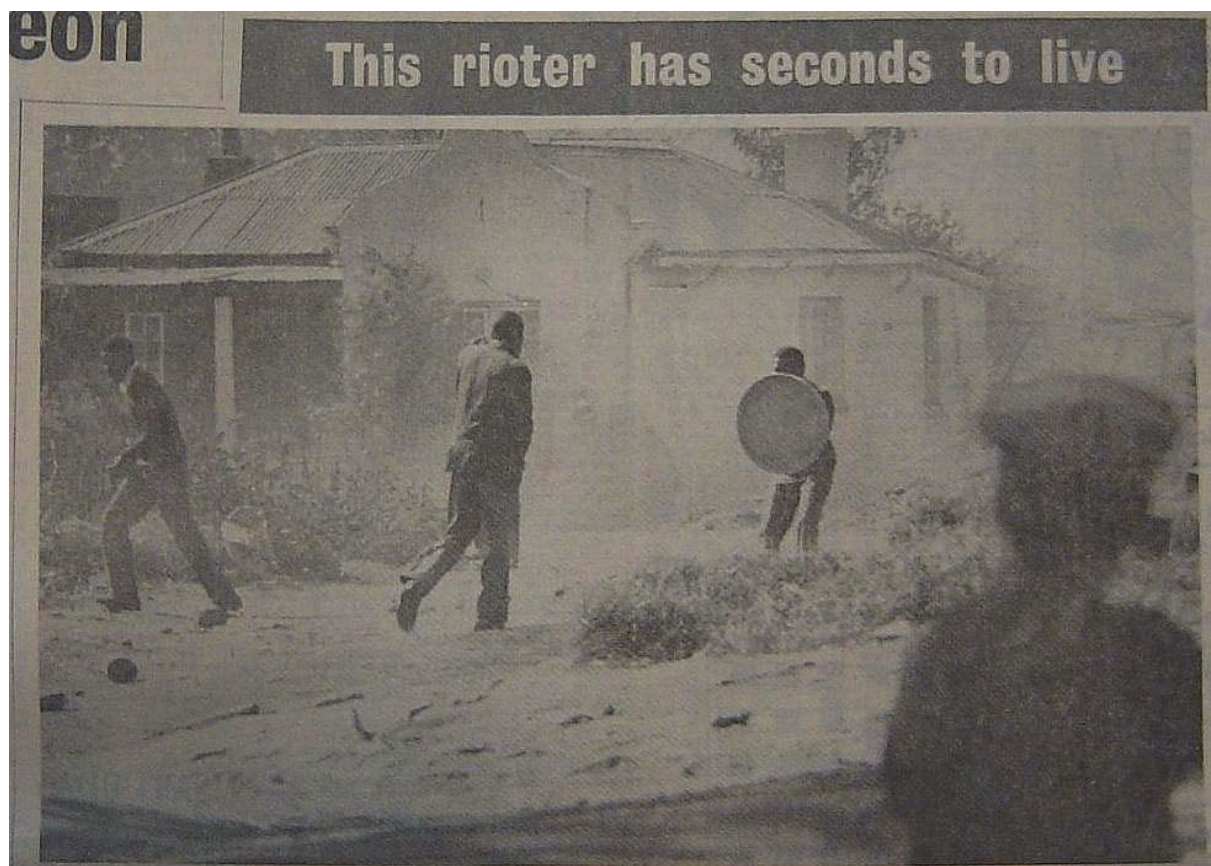
Figure 5: Crowd control SAP-style – shoot first ask questions later (or not as the case may be) (Source: *The Star* (19th June 1976: 3))

However, bias already started to creep into the reporting. For example, while it is true that the picture in figure 5 is a great example of the press uncovering police brutality, the linguistic clues work against this message. The people are barely discernible and we cannot make out any personal features. The reader therefore has to rely on the caption to find out what exactly is happening. This, however, does not say that a child is about to be shot by a policeman but rather that a "rioter has seconds to live" [599]. This sentence serves both to pit the reader's sympathies against the kid by using a negative term to describe him, and to absolve the policeman of any guilt in the killing. It is phrased in a way that puts the student, who is in fact the passive person in the real-life situation, into the grammatical agent position. The action thus becomes closely associated with him, while the real-life agent, the policeman, is completely absent from the sentence and thus less present in people's mind. This message is underlined by the visual elements of the image. The picture is focussed on the students,

---

[598] Brewer (1986: 78) and TRC (22nd July 1996: 7)
[599] The Star (19th June 1976 b: 3)

relegating the policeman to a secondary position on the periphery of the events. He is blurred, a mere outline, with no weapon – no instrument for inflicting violence – to be seen. Furthermore, while the caption speaks only of "this rioter" [600], we are actually shown three people, a fact which further confuses the situation.

Besides such ideological slants in the reporting, newspapers showed bias against blacks on the organisational level as well. Although they depended on black journalists for news from the townships, they were never accepted as equal to their white colleagues. [601] Their articles were always met with scepticism, frequently double-checked by white colleagues, and more often than not completely rewritten to suit the tastes of white readers. [602] As Mike Tissong told me:

> "These stories that came in were always submitted to white seniors and their life experience was not that which was being submitted in writing by black journalists. So, a lot of the time, those stories were not used, a lot of the time they were not believed by their superiors, so they would be cut to very brief inserts into the paper, which killed the impact of those stories." [603]

As a result, the real extent of the revolt was never made public. Nor were the student leaders interviewed in the white press and their opinions and reasons for protesting were never given the coverage they deserved. [604]

b)   Quietening Down: Mid-1976 to 1985

The reporting on political violence declined steadily after the Soweto Uprisings. An analysis of a cross section of English newspapers on a randomly chosen day after the government had regained control of the townships shows a drastic reduction of the number of reports on violence. By the middle of July 1976 the press had returned to its usual reporting of white affairs, terrorism in other countries (meant to signal to the white population that their country was nothing special, so there was nothing to fear) and gossip about celebrities, sport, and petty crime. *The Argus*, for example, worried about terrorism in Ireland [605], Idi Amin [606], life on Mars [607], and mixed cricket [608]. The ongoing violence in the country was only touched upon in articles about 'unrest incidents' or school closures. [609]

---

[600] The Star (19th June 1976 b: 3)
[601] Mike Tissong in an interview with the author, 16th July 2002, Mail & Guardian (14th June 1996 a: 1-2) and Tutu (1999: 174)
[602] Mail & Guardian (7th March 1997 b: 1), Garman (1997 b: 2-3), TRC (17th September 1997: Mike Tissong, 2), TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 4) and Dennis Pather in an interview with the author, 11th April 2002
[603] Interview with the author, 16th July 2002
[604] Hirson (1979: 187-188), Brewer (1986: 78) and Kane-Berman (1979: 6-7 and 47)
[605] The Argus (22nd July 1976 c: page unknown)
[606] The Argus (22nd July 1976 b: 10)
[607] The Argus (22nd July 1976 a: 3)
[608] The Argus (26th July 1976 b: 1)
[609] See for example The Argus (26th July 1976 a: 1) and The Argus (28th July 1976: 1)

The clashes between police and demonstrators around the first anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings received even less, and a lot less dramatic, coverage than the original events. The language was more sober with talk of 'unrest' and 'shooting' rather than 'riots' and 'arson'. The imagery was toned down noticeably as well with the traditional symbols of crowds, fire, and stone-throwing (which I will analyse in detail in chapter 4.6) rarely depicted. Below are the two front pages of the *Rand Daily Mail* on 17th June 1976 and 17th June 1977 respectively (see figs. 6 and 7).

Figure 6: Now it's here… (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (17th June 1976: 1))

Figure 7: … and now it's gone! (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (17th June 1977: 1))

Note the difference in language and images used and in the relative prominence given to the violence. In 1976 there was talk of a "flaming night" [610] and riots that "rage" [611] along with images of a truck on fire, all of which fed into the fire symbolism described in chapter 4.6.2 b. The issue in 1977 writes of "shootings" [612] and uses an image that cannot immediately be associated with violence. And even though another article about a "flare-up" [613] in the Eastern

---

[610] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[611] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[612] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1977 a: 1)
[613] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1977 b: 1)

Cape does serve to enhance the effect of the lead story, the overall impression remains that what happened in 1976 was a huge story that deserved the entire front page, but the repeat in 1977 was definitely not worthy of such attention.

Similarly, Steve Biko's death on 12th September 1977 was only reported briefly and from a very narrow perspective. *The Star* did not mention the black consciousness leader at all on 13th September and on 14th September published only the government's point of view in a lead article titled "Kruger rejects world outcry" [614], later changed to "Kruger – Biko death exploited" [615] and illustrated only with a passport-photo sized mugshot of Biko. *The Argus* managed to get the news of Biko's death into its last edition on September 13th under the headline "Top black leader dies in detention" [616], but printed no pictures. The next day *The Argus* carried a front page lead and three stories on page 3, but still no pictures.

Only two papers dared to break the mould: the *Daily Dispatch* and the *Rand Daily Mail*. Both gave the murder the attention, if not the name (it was generally called 'death') it deserved and, even more importantly, made the slain leader appear human by describing his life's work rather than just his death, and illustrating their articles with large pictures of Biko. On 14th September, the *Daily Dispatch* dedicated its whole front page to him including a large picture, and the *Rand Daily Mail* published a long lead article (it covered the left third of page one) titled "World outcry over Biko death" [617] as well as an opinion piece titled "Steve Biko" [618] and a small article about the reaction of the US government to the news of Biko's death on its front page. They were complemented by a picture of Biko, which showed him from the waist up with his hands folded. On page two we find a continuation of the lead article under the headline "Steve Biko dies in detention" and two small images of a vigil held in his honour, one of a crowd of mourners and one of two individual mourning women as well as the continuation of the front-page article about the US reaction. On page nine, the entire top third is dedicated to an article titled "My friend Steve Biko" [619] with the sub-headline "A personal tribute by DONALD WOODS editor of the Daily Dispatch". It is illustrated with a mugshot of Woods and a large picture of Biko from the waist up facing the camera.

The amount of violence shown in the press was reduced yet again by the early 1980s with only such spectacular events as the ANC bombing of the air force headquarters in 1983 receiving any serious attention. The coverage of violence went up again in 1984/85 just before the declaration of the first state of emergency. The shooting in Uitenhage on 21st March 1985 for example received wide coverage. *The Star* made the shootings its lead story in the Late

---

[614] The Star (14th September 1977 a: 1)
[615] The Star (14th September 1977 b: 1)
[616] The Argus (13th September 1977: 1)
[617] Rand Daily Mail (14th September 1977 a: 1)
[618] Rand Daily Mail (14th September 1977 b: 1)
[619] Rand Daily Mail (14th September 1977 c: 9)

Final edition of that day and on 22nd March the *Daily Dispatch*, *The Argus*, the *Rand Daily Mail* and *The Star* all devoted their cover pages to the events. The newspapers stayed on it, too, with the *Cape Times*, the *Daily Dispatch* and the *Rand Daily Mail* still reporting updates on their front pages on the 26th March. The *Sunday Star* (of 24th March) also devoted ample space to the shootings with most of the front page and all of page two explaining and analysing the events.

Figure 8: The *Rand Daily Mail*, 22nd March 1985: 1

Still, one look at a newspaper from that time will show that the era of relative freedom was over once and for all. If we take, for example, the front page of the *Rand Daily Mail* on 22nd March 1985 (see fig. 8) and compare it with that on 17th June 1976 (see fig. 6) we will find that the language as well as the visual make-up of the page have been greatly sanitised.

No longer is the reader presented with either the raw anger of the township population in the shape of burning vehicles, nor with the mighty force of the apartheid government as symbolised by the soldiers we saw before. Instead we are shown a relatively calm township scene. Although the potential for violence is depicted in this photo in the shape of a Casspir, we are spared any more thought-inspiring views.

In the headline the paper employed a similar strategy of speaking without actually saying too much. "17 dead in East Cape bloodbath" [620] we are told. But what does it mean? Who are the killers? Who are the victims? Why did it all happen? And how? At first sight we do not know. Only in the much smaller kicker (a headline above the headline), which would be overlooked by anyone except interested parties, do we find out that "Police fire on 4 000 funeral marchers in Uitenhage" [621]. And yet, the overall impression that the article conveys when compared to the reporting of the Soweto Uprisings is that the killing of these 17 marchers constitutes a less outrageous act of police brutality than that of four protesters on June 16th 1976. It is true that we cannot measure violence by the numbers of lives lost, but I think we should keep in mind the effect that such reporting has on people's evaluation of the situation.

There is another reason why the reporting during the mid-1980s need to be looked at with caution. For propaganda reasons the government allowed the publication of more material on violence during this period than they really wanted to. When it became clear that declaring a state of emergency could no longer be avoided, the government started to look for ways of justifying this step to the white electorate. Therefore, in the hope of heightening anxiety among whites about the situation in the townships, the media were given a little more freedom to report the ongoing violence there. The central question when looking at these years is therefore no longer if acts of violence were mentioned in the press, but how they were reported. While for the 1960s and 70s the number of reports on violence can easily be used as a barometer to judge press freedom, for the 1980s this would lead to an overly positive impression of the situation. [622]

c)   And then There was Silence: The State of Emergency

With the proclamation of the first state of emergency the reporting about violence changed drastically. Since the banning of visual footage of the unrest in November 1985, the only

---

[620] Rand Daily Mail (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[621] Rand Daily Mail (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[622] Jackson (1993: 145) and Posel (1990: 156)

thing the newspapers could produce were visually bland reports that made it easy to forget what the text was trying to highlight (see fig. 9).

Figure 9: No violence, just security and peace (Source: *Cape Times* (13ᵗʰ June 1986: 1))

After December 1986, when publication of information about the townships that had not come from government sources was declared illegal, the unrest was almost completely hidden from the white media audience. [623] By the late 1980s the reporting on violence had been reduced to a list of 'unrest incidents' and casualty listings from various hospitals. For example, on 7ᵗʰ

---

[623] Isaaks (1990: 30) and Posel (1990: 171)

September 1989, *The Star* ran a small story on its front page under the title "At least 4 killed, 100 hurt in Cape violence" [624]. The beginning read:

> "At least 4 people died last night and an estimated 100 men, women and children were injured during a night of violence which saw burning barricades and running battles between police and Cape Flats residents.
>
> A Groote Schuur Hospital spokesman said 40 people had been admitted during the night with birdshot wounds.
>
> A Gatesville Medical Centre spokesman said doctors treated at least 20 people, including children between 4 and 8, for birdshot wounds. Another 10 were admitted to Woodstock Hospital with birdshot wounds.
>
> At Tygerberg Hospital, a casualty ward doctor said between 15 and 20 patients were treated for birdshot and buckshot wounds during the night. At least 5 patients had been booked into theatre for stomach bullet wounds and x-rays had shown 2 of them to have been shot in small arms fire.
>
> In Khayelitsha ambulancemen said they had been called to collect a 69-year-old woman who had been shot dead." [625]

The article shows no overt sign of censorship, such as blanked out spaces or unfinished sentences, in the article itself, and only a small note next to it indicating that the newspaper was "being produced under the severe restrictions of the emergency regulations" (see fig. 10).
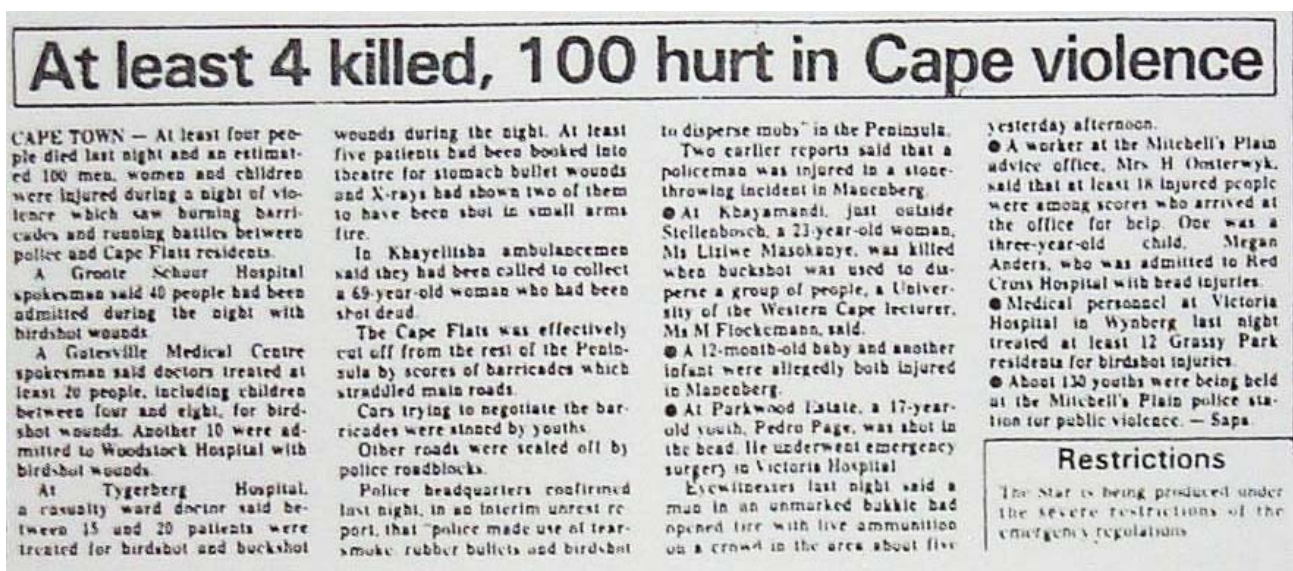
Figure 10: Not quite the same coverage as 1976 (Source: *The Star* (7th September 1989: 1))

An uncritical reader or one not willing to see the enormous effect that the censorship had on the press could well make him/herself believe that they are really getting all *The Star* had to say rather than all the authorities allowed them to say. And he/she would probably soon come to the conclusion that reading such boring enumerations of birdshot wounds and hospital

---

[624] The Star (7th September 1989: 1)
[625] The Star (7th September 1989: 1)

117

names was not really worth the time and effort and could next time be skipped altogether. Thus, by rendering the reporting uninteresting, the government actually achieved a news blackout without imposing one. I should just briefly point out, though, that the interested reader could, and most likely did, get quite a bit of information out of these lines: Four people were killed, at least one of them shot dead by the police. Roughly 100 more were injured, some of them seriously (as the operating theatre and the x-rays indicate) when police opened fire (no one else uses birdshot) on township residents (the unnamed victims are never policemen), including women, young children and elderly folks. This information can be further supplemented with what we are told in the following paragraphs:

> "The Cape Flats was effectively cut off from the rest of the Peninsula by scores of barricades which straddled the main roads.
>
> (…)
>
> Police headquarters confirmed last night, in an interim unrest report that "police made use of tear-smoke, rubber bullets and birdshot to dispense mobs" in the Peninsula.
>
> Two earlier reports said that a policeman was injured in a stone-throwing incident in Manenberg.
>
> At Khayamundi, just outside Stellenbosch, a 23-year-old woman, Ms Liziwe Masokanye was killed when buckshot was used to disperse a group of people, a University of the Western Cape lecturer, Ms M Flockemann, said.
>
> (…)
>
> Eyewitnesses last night said a man in an unmarked bakkie had opened fire with live ammunition in the area about five yesterday afternoon."

This account is followed by another brief list of injured people, mostly birdshot wounds, and a note that about 130 youths had been detained in Mitchell's Plain. Again this text does not seem to say a lot. But if we dig deep, we find that really all victims spoken about so far, with the exception of the policeman, were killed or injured by police (who have now officially admitted to having used birdshot). We are also told that a plain-clothes policeman had been driving around the Cape Flats with the intention to shoot and kill residents. Where do I get that from? The unmarked bakkie and the live ammunition. The former is a hidden reference to a cop – bakkies were generally driven by whites, the reference that it was unmarked would make no sense unless it was opposed to a 'marked' vehicle and no one except the police would have got through the barricades and into the are in the first place – while the latter clearly indicates an intent to injure and kill people (and not the police, either). Unfortunately, as my research has shown, few people actually bothered to dissect the articles as I have just done to recover their hidden messages. Most largely remained in the dark about the situation in their country during the state of emergency.

d)   The Lid Finally Blows: 1990 to 1994

The day of reckoning came in 1990, and while the change did not come overnight, it did happen quite quickly. Within a few weeks of the end of the state of emergency, the number of reports about violence exploded. [626] If we look at the newspapers of 2nd March 1990 (1 month after the unbanning of the ANC) with those of 19th April 1994 (1 week before the first non-racial election), we find that the reporting in 1990 still looks very much like that of the late 1980s: Some newspapers carried some stories about (mainly political) violence. By 1994 they have clearly changed their attitude. Violence and crime have moved to the centre of attention. As Thabo Leshilo, the editor of the *Pretoria News*, explained:

> "During apartheid, journalism was easy. Politics always provided news. You didn't have to go looking and one journalist could write three stories in a day. Now it is not like that anymore. Crime has become the new apartheid. It is easy." [627]

The Star, for example, did not carry any reports about violence on 2nd March 1990. The *Cape Times* printed two reports that were reminiscent of the old apartheid era. In the top right corner on page five readers were told of "Street battles and stonings in Cathcart" [628] in an article without pictures. Then, underneath, there is "Natal attack: Man shot" [629], an article without any illustrations, whose opening paragraph reads:

> "One man was reported killed and 46 injured in unrest related incidents of stone-throwing and arson, police here said yesterday.
>
> A crowd attacked a private dwelling and shot a man dead at Table Mountain in Natal.
>
> Police used tear-smoke, rubber bullets and birdshot to disperse a crowd that stoned private vehicles and a private dwelling at Matlokeng, near Zastron." [630]

Four years later violence is suddenly a major issue in both papers and is at times even given more attention than the impending elections. *The Star* of 19th April 1994 carried no less than 11 articles about violence. The lead story that day was about the killing of photographer Ken Oosterbroek during an assignment in Thokoza township. The headline reads "Photographer slain in action" [631] and the story is illustrated with the last picture Oosterbroek took before he was shot. At the bottom of the page, roughly in the middle, we read "March 'bid to kill Mandela'" [632] in a story without images. On page two, in the top right corner there is a tiny article titled "Murderer gets life four times" [633], and on page three, in the bottom left corner

---

[626] Simpson & Rauch (1993: 6), Hamber & Lewis (1998: 1) and CNN Interactive (1998: 1)
[627] Interview with the author, 24th July 2002
[628] Cape Times (2nd March 1990 a: 5)
[629] Cape Times (2nd March 1990 b: 5)
[630] Cape Times (2nd March 1990 b: 5)
The story was really written in this staccato style, I did not cut anything out of the text.
[631] The Star (19th April 1994 a: 1)
[632] The Star (19th April 1994 b: 1)
[633] The Star (19th April 1994 c: 2)

the two front-page reports are continued, all without illustrations. Page six is dedicated to Ken Oosterbroek's obituary, which is titled "An eye for violent drama – and beauty" [634] and illustrated with Oosterbroek's photographs. Page twelve is entirely dedicated to violence with the following stories vying for the readers' attention: "Child found mother's body, says witness" [635], " 5 policemen charged with 4 murders" [636], "Aim of roadblock was to assault 'kaffirs', court told" [637], "I would never harm my child" [638], "Man killed in mob attack" [639] and "Pensioners hurt in pay point stampede" [640]. The *Cape Times* on that day looked similar with a total of 15 stories about violence, five on page one, three on page two, one on page three, two on page four, and four on page five.

e)   Longing For the Good Old Days: 1994 and After

The new formula of showing ever more violence in return for ever higher sales did not work for long, though. People soon grew weary of the daily horror stories and stopped reading newspapers. There was more violence visible in their every day life than they could and wanted to cope with. As Gerald Shaw put it:

> "You know, what has happened, (…) is that criminal violence is now underreported, because the readership of the media … has it up to here. Can't stand it anymore. Horrible rapes, child abuse, armed robbery, hijacking. You know, all this violence, … for someone to shoot you dead for a cellphone. It always happens. And people just don't want to read it anymore." [641]

And Dennis Pather confirmed: "Readers … the guys that buy the paper, they're saying I'm faced by all this violence. I'm tired. Don't give me the daily diet of negative news. Just death, death, death." It would seem that they were quite right in their assessment. I heard similar arguments time and again in my interviews with ordinary South Africans. As a lady told me:

> "I don't read newspapers. If you live in South Africa you must just ignore it all and focus on the positive things. If you live here you must be crazy to read newspapers. I don't want to know what's going on." [642]

And another confirmed: "I don't read papers because I get angry and frustrated by all this nonsense. I know a lot of people who think like this. People would rather stay ignorant and get on with their lives." [643]

---

[634] The Star (19th April 1994 d: 6)
[635] The Star (19th April 1994 e: 12)
[636] The Star (19th April 1994 f: 12)
[637] The Star (19th April 1994 g: 12)
[638] The Star (19th April 1994 h: 12)
[639] The Star (19th April 1994 k: 12)
[640] The Star (19th April 1994 j: 12)
[641] Interview with the author, 22nd May 2002
[642] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002
[643] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002

For the newspapers this attitude meant lower sales and less advertising, a loss of income that led them to change their editorial concept. Johann de Villiers explained: "At one stage we religiously reported everything we could get our hands on. And then we started backing off because we thought the time had passed." [644]

A random sample of newspapers from 2002 confirms that, by then, violence was no longer the centre of the press' attention: The *Mail & Guardian* of 8th March 2002 carried no news reports about violence. In the *Daily Dispatch* of 17th April I found two small stories on page two, both about incidents of murder in the Eastern Cape. The *Sunday Independent* of 11th August 2002 reported the case of a Portchefstroom man who had assaulted the referee at a rugby match on its front page. The *Cape Times* of 11th November 2002 published a small, 1-column story about the search for six right-wingers suspected of being responsible for a number of bomb blasts in Soweto the month before. The *Cape Argus* of 12th November 2002 did not carry a single report about violence. Crime – such as burglaries or fraud – got a little more attention overall, but violence was no longer a big story.

The notable exception was *The Star*. The first issue I pulled out of my pile was that of 18th July 2002 which contained a total of nine articles about violence, including one on the front page (though not the main story) and two smaller ones on page two under the heading "Crime Count + Crime Busters" (see fig. 11)

Figure 11: Crime Count + Crime Busters – the apocalypse one bite at a time (Source: *The Star* (18th July 2002: 2))

---

[644] Interview with the author, 25th May 2002

Just to make sure that I had not looked at a particularly violent issue I also counted the reports in the issue of 16th July, which also contained nine reports on violence, including four in the "Crime Count + Crime Buster" section on page two, and that of 4th November, where I only found six articles on violence and no "Crime Count + Crime Busters" [645], however, the lead story was about several rapes of teenagers during the National Children's Day celebrations in Johannesburg. A conclusion is therefore hard to draw, but overall I would still say that *The Star* stands out among the newspapers of 2002 in the amount of violence reported.

4.2.3 Insert: The Newspapers' Changing Approach to Violence

Before concluding this chapter, I should briefly mention that not only the total amount of violence seen in the newspapers has changed with time, their approach to the subject evolved too. Reports about relatively similar events in the same newspaper will be completely different at different points in time.

Figures 12, 13 and 14 for example are press photos that were used to illustrate reports about necklacings at different times in South African history. They were all taken at the time of the event and either these or similar photographs were published in several commercial newspapers in South Africa. Figure 12 shows the necklacing of Maki Skosana, figure 13 depicts the killing of Lindsaye Tshabalala and figure 14 is a picture of Rashaad Staggie burning to death after members of PAGAD had thrown a petrol bomb at him.
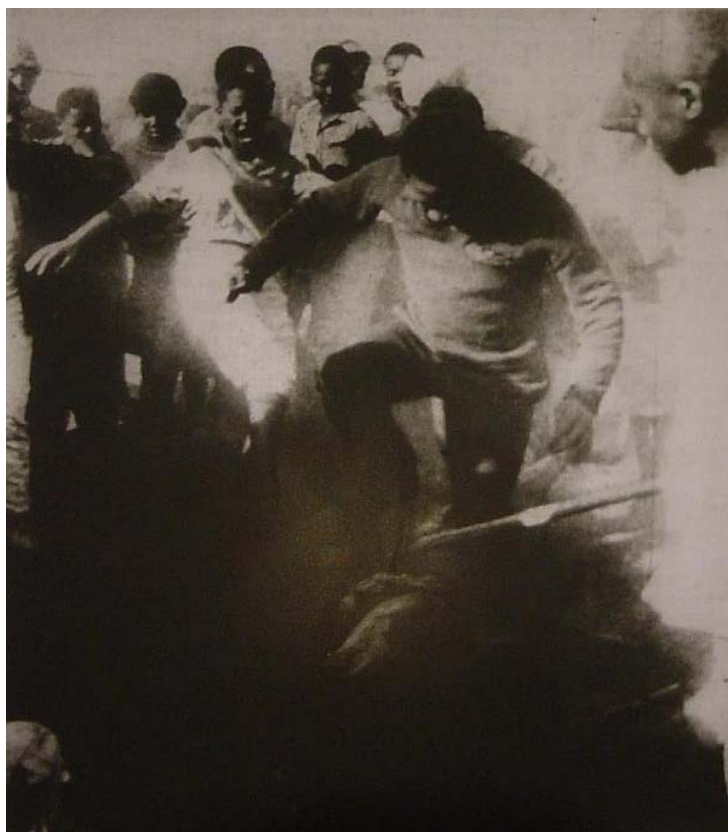
Figure 12: The last moments of Maki Skosana (Source: *The Star* (20th May 1985: 4))

---

[645] Ending this column was a conscious decision. As Jeremy Gordin told me: "We used to have a crime column in *The Star*, but we decided to ditch that because it's just such bad news all the time." (Interview with the author, 31st July 2002)

Figure 13: Worthy of a Pulitzer Prize – the slaying of Lindsaye Tshabalala (Source: *Weekend Argus* (15th September 1990: 6))

Figure 14: The slow demise of a gangster – Rashaad Staggie dying outside his Cape Town home (Source: *Cape Times* (5th August 1996: 1))

When comparing the three pictures, we notice that over the years photographers moved closer to the events. The inhibition about graphic depictions of violence disappeared.

In figure 12 Maki Skosana is not really visible. The image is quite blurred and we can only guess who or what it is that is being kicked. Only the article, titled "Funeral mob batters and burns 'spy' at Reef burial" [646] tells as that we are looking at the gruesome murder of a human being. Figure 13 is a lot more explicit. We can see a person, on fire, being assaulted by another. Figure 14 goes yet another step further. True, it is no more explicit, nor closer to the

---

[646] The Star (20th May 1985: 4)

victim than figure 13, but unlike the previous two it reveals the victim's face. Looking at this photograph, anyone who knew Rashaad Staggie would probably be able to make out it was he. And as we will see in chapter 4.6.4 b, in the early 1990s the ability to identify the victim in a photograph, worked as a strong factor against publication while by the time of the Staggie murder it was obviously no longer a deterrent. In 1993 the *Cape Times* had decided against using a photograph that showed Chris Hani's face in an article about the SACP leader's murder. [647] Staggie's murder on the other hand was covered from all angles on the front page above the fold. Anyone who looked could not help but see it.

Similarly, while during the 1970s dead bodies tended to be shown – if at all – from a distance and lying face down, by the early 1990s exposed faces were no longer anything special. On the contrary, O'Dowd found in her study of news photographs accompanying reports on political violence during the transition period that "photographs were further selected that were potentially visually offensive – that is, containing blood, bodies and/or graphic depictions of murder." [648] This was confirmed in her interviews with newspaper editors. Fred Fitzgerald, night editor of the *Daily Dispatch* told her in 1994: "Three, four, five years ago we would seldom show a body on page one. These days we do it more often." [649]

The same is true of textual representations. Explicit verbal descriptions of violence rarely appeared in earlier news reports. However, as time passed, newspapers became more graphic in their descriptions. [650] If we look for example at the headlines of the articles accompanying the images above we will find a similar increase in drama and explicitness as in the photographs. "Funeral mob batters and burns 'spy' at Reef burial" [651] we read in 1985. By 1990, we had moved on to a "Slaughter in Soweto" [652] and by 1996 we reached a "Night of bloody execution" [653].

4.3   The Loci of Ideology

In the last chapter, I mainly concentrated on the differences between reports from different time periods. This helped me understand the relative importance of violence in public discourse at different times. In the present chapter, I will move in the opposite direction, namely towards a search for elements that the reports have in common. My aim is to uncover the underlying ideology in order to create an understanding of the point of view from which the individual images used to describe violence at different times can be interpreted. First I will focus on ideology in language, as studied for example by critical linguistics. Then the

---

[647] O'Dowd (1996: 96)
[648] O'Dowd (1996: 32)
[649] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 50)
[650] Bignell (1997: 94) and Lüger (1983: 50)
[651] The Star (20th May 1985: 4)
[652] Weekend Argus (15th September 1990: 6)
[653] Cape Times (5th August 1996: 1)

next step is to see what other, non-linguistic, devices were used to communicate political views and ideologies.

4.3.1 Linguistic Choice as an Expression of Ideology

a)   Vocabulary

Lexical choice is an important tool for establishing ideology. Words help us to categorise the world in terms of the ideological systems, which they represent. [654] Thus, whether we call an MK operative a 'terrorist', a 'freedom fighter', a 'guerrilla' or a 'revolutionary' says as much about ourselves, our ideology, and our attitude towards the person described as about him/her. Similarly, a newspaper's use of euphemisms like "restoring peace in South Africa's burning townships" [655], "quell the unrest and stop the violence, thuggery, intimidation, arson, assault and murder" [656] or "controlling crowds" [657] to describe the actions of the security forces during the 1980s as opposed to terms that may amplify their violent behaviour, such as "massacre" [658], "Police 'reign of terror'" [659] or "bloodbath" [660], was not only an indicator of the genre of the publication (in fact, the question of genre has only become important since 1994 as the newspapers have diversified) but also of its stand towards the behaviour of those government forces involved. The terms in the first group were more often found in conservative publications like *The Natal Mercury* and *The Citizen* or the populist Sunday press, while the latter were generally used by progressive papers like the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Cape Times* or the alternative press.

The same is true for less obviously ideological words. The newspapers have a multitude of wordings at their disposal that help them to show approval or disapproval of certain actors or events. If, for example, the ANC is described as "fleeing" in the lead story of *The Star* of 26th January 1986 ("ANC flees Lesotho" [661]), if people are said to be "rampaging" [662] or on the "rampage" [663], if they are called a "mob" [664] or if violence is talked of as "senseless" [665], we can be fairly sure that the author of the article is not in favour of the person(s) involved. This stand becomes even more clear if terms are used, which cross the line to verbal abuse, such as "terrorist" [666], "savage" [667] or "savagery" [668].

---

[654] van Dijk (1991: 210-214), Reah (1998: 73), Sornig (1989: 105) and Kitis & Milapides (1997: 577)
[655] Sunday Times (21st July 1985: 1)
[656] The Sunday Star (21st July 1985: 1)
[657] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 a: 5)
[658] Grassroots (April 1985: 1)
[659] Cape Times (5th October 1985 b: 2)
[660] Rand Daily Mail (22nd May 1985 a: 1)
[661] *The Star* (26th January 1986 a: 1)
[662] The Argus (16th June 1976 b: 1)
[663] Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 c: 1) and Pretoria News (18th June 1992 a: 1)
[664] Cape Times (26th March 1986: 2) and Natal Mercury (2nd March 1990: 3)
[665] Pretoria News (7th September 1990: 1) and The Star (7th September 1990: 1)
[666] The Argus (2nd June 1980: 1 a) and Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 b: 1)
[667] Cape Times (13th September 1990 a: 5)

On the other hand the newspapers can use terms of endearment, praise, or admiration to describe actors or events. If policemen or soldiers are said to have had "no alternative but to order fire in self defence" [669] or to have "fired to save their lives" [670], the press signal understanding for their situation. More strikingly, several newspapers openly applauded a SADF raid into Botswana in 1985. "SADF units blast ANC in Gaborone," [671] *The Star* wrote triumphantly. And, in a headline that was to make history, the *Sunday Times*' praised the "Guns of Gaborone" [672]. Incidentally, the press kits that these articles were based on had been prepared by a team of government propagandists under the auspices of Stratcom. [673]

Language offers its users many more possibilities of distancing themselves from what is said or of showing approval of, or solidarity with, the people and situations described. One common way to achieve the former is through distance markers such as 'supposedly', 'allegedly', 'purportedly', while inserting adverbs such as 'certainly', 'likely', 'probably' or 'surely' can have the opposite effect. Another method that the newspapers have frequently employed is the use of indirect speech. Here, the key to ascribing values generally lies in the words used to describe the action of speaking. If people are said to have 'claimed' or 'maintained' something, the newspapers signal that they do not fully agree with the assertion. More neutral terms, such as 'said', 'told' or 'spoke of' leave it much more open to the reader to find their own interpretations of the text, and in the case of 'assured' or 'guaranteed' the preferred reading would generally be favourable.

The above-mentioned elements can obviously be combined to increase their effect. For example, in a story about the burning to death of a community councillor in Kwanobuhle, the *Daily Dispatch* of 25th March 1985 published the following sentence: "The chanting crowd reportedly danced on the charred remains of people they said were those of Mr. Kinikini and his son." [674] Here we find two distance markers, "reportedly" and "said", which together indicate that the events possibly happened as reported, but there is a chance that they might have been different. The first level of insecurity is whether the victims are really Mr. Kinikini and his sons. The information came from the killers themselves, whom, as the distance marker indicates, the newspaper does not take to be a very reliable source. Also in doubt is the dancing of the crowd. An unnamed source told the newspaper about it, but for reasons that are not immediately obvious the writer chose not to use the factual formulation 'the crowd danced', but opted instead for inserting the word 'reportedly'.

[668] Pretoria News (21st May 1983: 1) and Pretoria News (24th May 2002: page unknown)
[669] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[670] Rand Daily Mail (16th June 1977: 3)
[671] The Star (14th June 1985: 1)
[672] Sunday Times (16th June 1985: 1)
[673] de Kock & Gordin (1998:118-119), TRC (16th September 1997: Vic McPherson, 4 and 6) and ANC (1997 b: 7)
[674] Daily Dispatch (25th March 1985: 1)

An example where an indirect quote is used to signal agreement with the content is an article on page five of the *Pretoria News* of 13th June 1986. Under the headline "Entire country target" [675] President Botha is granted a lot of space to explain his reasons for the declaration of a national state of emergency. Somewhere in the middle of the article we are told that "Mr. Botha said violence had also increased in white areas." [676] Note the use of the neutral 'said' as opposed to 'claimed' to make a claim that is not supported by any further evidence. Botha is clearly accepted as an authoritative source whose words do not need to be questioned further, and the newspaper itself is painted as a neutral conveyor of information. The paragraph that follows the sentence above is entirely written as an indirect quote of Botha. Somewhere in the middle we reach a sentence that is a clear endorsement of Botha's standpoint: "It was clear that black revolutionaries did not enjoy the support of the majority of blacks." [677]

In my opinion this combination of "Mr. Botha said" and "It was clear that" is not meant to communicate the opinion of the state president, but something that the newspaper takes to be factual information. Botha, described positively as "Mr." rather than just by his name or, as some papers did at times, by the familiar initials 'P.W.', is merely the messenger whose authority underlines the validity of the message. I have several reasons to take this point of view. For one the newspaper does nothing to either distance itself from what is said or to signal to the reader that there are alternative views about the situation. Secondly, the distance between the last time the speaker is mentioned and the sentence I quoted is fairly long for a newspaper text. Botha is last referred to at the end of the last paragraph. He is not even present in the vicinity of the words quoted. It is therefore not unlikely that, by the time he/she reaches the sentence, the reader has forgotten that he/she is actually reading the subjective opinion of one man. This helps to make the sentence appear more factual.

The last aspect of ideology at the level of lexis that I want to give attention to here is that of modality. CDA identified modality, defined by Kress & Hodge as "indications of the degree of likelihood, probability, weight, or authority the speaker attaches to the utterance" [678], as one of the major sites of ideology in language. Modal auxiliaries such as 'may', 'can', 'should', 'might' or 'could' and verbs that express mental processes such as 'think that' 'feel that' 'claims that' are, just as the above-described adverbs 'probably', 'likely' and the like, clear indicators of the newspaper's position towards the events and persons described. [679]

Let us consider an example. When, on 12th June 1986, the South African government declared a countrywide state of emergency, President Botha addressed the world and explained that he

---

[675] Pretoria News (13th June 1986 a: 5)
[676] Pretoria News (13th June 1986 a: 5)
[677] Pretoria News (13th June 1986 a: 5)
[678] Kress & Hodge (1979: 122-123)
[679] Thompson (1990: 287), Kress (1983: 135), Fowler (1991: 64) and Kress & Hodge (1979: 122-123)

would not be forced into dealing with internal matters in a way imposed on him by outside opinion. On 13th June, two newspapers quoted this speech in the main headlines on page one: "SA will 'go it alone' if necessary" [680] wrote the *Natal Mercury*, and the *Cape Times* stated "SA may 'go it alone'" [681] (see fig. 9) They are quoting the same speech, but convey two different messages. The more conservative *Mercury* chose the factual 'will' indicating the government's determination, leadership, and dedication. The more progressive *Cape Times* on the other hand opted for the less certain 'may', a modal verb that merely indicates a possibility, not a fact. The government is leaving all options open, including unilateral action. This formulation portrays South Africa as much more careful, as a country that shows a lot more concern for international opinion than that described by the *Mercury*, and as one that is much less keen to be isolated internationally.

b)   Syntax

Syntax is an important means for coding worldviews, often without any conscious choice on the part of the writer. The way in which elements are ordered within a sentence can add weight to certain aspects while reducing that of others. In news texts, sentences are often structured in a way that reflects the article's priorities. Important information is placed in the front section, which is generally thought of as the focally most significant part, while less vital facts are placed further in the back. [682] For example, in an article about the bail hearing of a Khayelitsha man who was accused of "being the leader of a lynch mob" [683] in the *Cape Argus* of 19th February 2002 we find the following section:

> "The lynching incident has been described by police as one of the more horrific cases of street justice.
>
> The three were accused by residents of being part of a gang that had robbed and murdered a number of business people in the area.
>
> Their lynching came days after the police released three other men whom the community had handed over to the police, accusing them of being leaders of the gang.
>
> The three dead men have not been buried yet as the police have asked their families to wait for DNA testing to confirm their identities.
>
> Following the lynching, more cases of vigilantism were reported in Khayelitsha, with one man being beaten to death and another having a scorching steam iron placed on his back." [684]

[680] The Natal Mercury (13th June 1986: 1)
[681] Cape Times (13th June 1986 a: 1)
[682] van Dijk (1988 b: 10-11) and Kitis & Milapides (1997: 570-576)
[683] Cape Argus (19th February 2002: 5)
[684] Cape Argus (19th February 2002: 5)

Note that each sentence, and even more strikingly each paragraph, starts either with a reference to the lynching or to the victims. The lynching is put at the centre of the reader's attention in the first sentence, for which the author chose a passive construction, presumably for the very reason of emphasising his subject. This theme is then taken-up in two other sentences thereafter, constituting a red thread through the entire section. After these sentences, there is no longer any doubt what the article considers to be important.

The strategy of 'fronting' can also be used to de-emphasise negative behaviour by members of the in-group by placing them later in a sentence, just as negative behaviour by the out-group can be emphasised through placement early in a sentence. [685] Compare for example how the actions of the police and the demonstrators on 16th June 1976 were portrayed in the following article (titled "How a demo became a riot" [686]) in the *Natal Mercury*:

> "7-9.30 a.m. – Groups of high-school children moved from school to school carrying placards and demonstrating against use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction.
>
> 9.30 a.m. – Crowd estimated by police at 4 000 - 5 000 had confrontation with small police group which tried to stop procession and take placards. This led to stoning of police and shooting incident in which boy of 13 killed and seven children injured by gunfire. All police withdrawn from vicinity of Orlando West High School."
>
> (…)
>
> 2.30 p.m. – Column of police vehicles and men moved off from the area of the Orlando West High School. Most of huge crowd had dispersed.
>
> 3 p.m. – Large groups of youths reported moving in various areas stoning cars of whites and Blacks. Police and anti-terrorist force arrived from Johannesburg in camouflage suits and with light machine guns. (…)" [687]

Generally, the school children appear in the front part of the sentences. They "moved from school to school", they "had confrontation" and they are "moving in various areas stoning cars". The policemen on the other hand appear in the initial section of only two sentences, the one where they "moved off from the area" and where their replacement from Johannesburg arrived. Thus, in the sections quoted, the children are clearly focussed on in a negative way and portrayed as the more active and aggressive force.

A similar phenomenon, albeit from the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, can be found in the following section of a lead article from the *Cape Times* of 25th October 1985:

> "On this, the policemen, watched by the major, rapidly closed up on the young man and without warning assaulted him.

---

[685] van Dijk (1991: 215-216)
[686] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 b: 1)
[687] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 b: 1)

> While one policeman struck the man on the head with his baton, drawing blood from a gaping wound and causing him to collapse on to the pavement, the others stood over him threateningly, with sjamboks." [688]

The *Cape Times* clearly constructs the police as the out-group. They are described as agents of negative behaviour: Assault, striking the man, drawing blood, causing him to collapse. I probably do not need to elaborate much further on this example, as it should be amply clear that the grammatical agent position is used to make the reader more aware of the policemen's negative behaviour. As in the last example they are mentioned not only at the beginning of the sentence, but at the beginning of every paragraph, a strategy that is not only used in the quoted section, but frequently throughout the entire article and in the headlines of two adjacent smaller articles which read "Bo-Kaap violence: Police shoot pupil" [689] and "Police beat, arrest press" [690]. Even the pictures on this page communicate a message of police agency in the face of not much else (see fig. 15).

Figure 15: All dressed up and nowhere to go – police in central Cape Town (Source: *Cape Times* (25th October 1985: 1))

Besides emphasising certain actions or events, the initial part of a sentence, the "theme" [691] as Fairclough has called it, serves to establish certain facts as given and therefore unquestionably true. It is the text producer's point of departure, and as such sets the agenda for the rest of the

---

[688] Cape Times (25th October 1985 a: 1)
[689] Cape Times (25th October 1985 b: 1)
[690] Cape Times (25th October 1985 c: 1)
[691] Fairclough (1992 a: 183)

sentence. For example in the *Cape Times*' lead article on 22nd July 1985 we are told of "the three people who died in unrest on Saturday" [692]. And while that formulation is in itself quite plainly ideological (people generally do not just drop dead in unrest, they are killed), I want to draw your attention to two of the examples they list:

> "In the Eastern Cape, police shot dead Mr. Edward Dolman who was allegedly stoning a security camp for black policemen in Morhenvell on Saturday night.
>
> In Zwide, near Port Elizabeth, a youth was killed when police dispersed a crowd with birdshot after an attack on a policeman's house." [693]

In the first example, the relative clause at the end of the sentence elaborates on Dolman and his actions, whereas in the second example it is the behaviour of the police that is under investigation. Thus, although in both cases similar events happened – police shot dead a person who was attacking policemen – the emphasis is clearly placed differently in the two sentences. This is achieved with the help of a handy tool English language provides the writer with: passivisation. Passivisation is most commonly used to de-emphasise negative behaviour among the in-group. In a passive sentence the agent of the real-world action becomes the grammatical subject, thus de-emphasising his/her involvement in, and responsibility for, the action. If an act is attributed to someone who appears in the agent position of the sentence, their involvement becomes more obvious and readers tend to hold them more responsible than if they appear in any other roles or if they are not mentioned at all. [694]

Consider for example the first sentence of the above-cited *Argus* article:

> "Nine suspected ANC insurgents, including three women were shot and killed at police roadblocks near the Swaziland border over the past week, Law and Order Minister Mr Adriaan Vlok announced." [695]

And the explanation given a few sentences later:

> "The Mozambique group and those killed by police formed part of a "planned influx of ANC terrorists" who had received instructions to execute large-scale acts of "indiscriminate terror, irrespective of race, age or creed" on June 16, the anniversary of the Soweto riots, said Mr Vlok." [696]

Again the two sentences in fact refer to the same action – policemen killing nine people – however, they do so in different ways. This last sentence acknowledges the police's involvement in the group's killing, however it distracts from their responsibility by putting them in the object position of a passive clause. Agency is instead moved to the objects of the

---

[692] Cape Times (22nd July 1985: 1)
[693] Cape Times (22nd July 1985: 1)
[694] Fowler et al. (1979: 98-99), Fowler (1991: 70-73), van Dijk (1988 a: 81) and van Dijk (1998 b: 32-33)
[695] The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)
[696] The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)

real-life action: the victims. The first sentence goes another step further at absolving the SAP of any guilt by entirely deleting them from the relevant clause. Nine insurgents were killed, we are told. The killers, however, cannot be found. We have to use our cultural knowledge about such things as 'insurgents' and 'roadblocks' to deduce that the people manning the roadblock were in fact responsible for the deaths.

Similarly, compare the two headlines *The Argus* used for the same article about an air force raid into Mozambique in two different editions. In the City Late Edition the paper declared "SAAF raids Maputo" [697]. By the time of the last Late Final Edition this had been changed to "ANC blasted in Maputo" [698]. In the first case the people responsible for the raid are explicitly mentioned. In the latter example on the other hand the agent is deleted. The action thus seems more closely connected to the real-life subject, the ANC, which now appears in the grammatical agent position.

This strategy was also widely employed in the reporting of the Soweto Uprisings. When, for example, the police opened fire on demonstrating school children in Soweto in 1976 most newspapers refrained from using the strong active sentence 'police shot and killed children in Soweto', opting instead for passive clauses such as "a 13-year-old African schoolboy, Hector Peterson, was shot dead" [699], "one pupil was killed during the shooting" [700], or "two men and a woman were shot dead (…) in a crowd looting a liquor store" [701]. In all cases the shooters are completely absent from the articles. The subject position is in all three cases left to the victims, attaching the action to them, as if it were an attribute of these people or the result of something they had done. [702]

Another common way to de-emphasise agency is through nominalization. Nominalization enables the writer to describe actions using a single noun and at the same time turns processes and activities into states and objects. For example, in the description of the events in Uitenhage on 21st March 1985 as a "shooting" [703]. A full sentence – 'someone shot somebody in Uitenhage' – is turned into a single noun. This serves to obscure the context of the event because the 'where', 'why', 'how' and, most importantly, the 'who', the persons involved in the shooting, are completely deleted and their identities are irrecoverable even if we reconstruct the full sentence. This way, the newspaper avoids ascribing responsibility for the action described. [704]

---

[697] The Argus (23rd May 1983 a: 1)
[698] The Argus (23rd May 1983 b: 1)
[699] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[700] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 b: 2)
[701] The Star (19th June 1976 a: 1)
[702] van Dijk (1988 b: 11) and Reah (1998: 87)
[703] The Argus (22nd March 1985 (several editions): 1), Daily Dispatch (23rd March 1985: 1) and Cape Times (23rd March 1985 a: 1)
[704] Kress (1983: 129)

An even more striking example is the following sentence from *The Natal Mercury* of 17th June 1976: "Drunkenness and hooliganism took over from the students' protest earlier in the day, which led to bloody clashes with the police and a number of dead." [705] This remarkable string of nominalizations actually manages to hide more information than it conveys. We are not told who the drunken hooligans were, why the students were protesting, what the clashes with the police were all about and, most importantly, how "a number of dead" came about. But the non-critical reader will quite easily find the intended meaning - hordes of drunken blacks were put back in their place. The rest really did not matter to a white South African reader in 1976.

As this example shows, nominalization has another effect that can easily be used to serve an ideological function: It gives the things described an air of absoluteness that a verb phrase cannot match. Actions can be reversed, whereas objects are difficult to change. For example, if we say that the apartheid government was banning the ANC or the black consciousness movement, the event described appears a lot more temporary and reversible than if we had talked about a ban of the ANC. [706]

4.3.2   To Speak or not to Speak – Quoting

Before moving on to an analysis of the imagery used in newspaper reports on violence, I want to briefly touch upon the question of news sources and quoting. Far from being free of ideology, the choice of persons and organisations that are given the opportunity to voice their views directly, and the way these views are put across, carry important implications for the meaning of the overall article. If it is done in the context intended by the speaker, being quoted is a privilege because it gives credibility to the statement expressed and emphasises the importance of the person or group expressing it. And more often than not, the people with the greatest direct access to the media are also covered in a favourable way. [707]

News practices promote the coverage of people, organisations and institutions in positions of economic, political or social dominance and power. Ease of access is often given as one of the main reasons. Journalists have to generate news quickly and continuously and therefore rely heavily on existing and accessible news sources, such as political institutions, the police, big companies and, of course, other news media. However, while such institutional constraints may be important for choosing what topics are reported, they do not explain why they are generally viewed from an establishment point of view. Many non-dominant groups, such as trade unions or student federations, are well organised and produce an equally predictable stream of press releases. Their representatives are frequently more accessible than those of

---

[705] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976: 1)
[706] Fairclough (1992 a: 182-183), Kress & Hodge (1979: 19-23), Potter (1996: 182) and Trew (1979 a: 108-110)
[707] Altheide (1976: 180-181), van Dijk (1989 a: 112-113), Fairclough (1992 a: 110) and Sornig (1989: 100)

political parties or big businesses, and, as was the case with the student representatives in Soweto during the 1970s, they are often more cooperative when it comes to setting dates for interviews or press conferences. Still, these sources are generally shunned by the mainstream media. The newspapers rarely report from their point of view and their requests and actions are frequently discredited in the reports. [708]

During the apartheid years, the English language press drew heavily on official sources, such as the wire service of the South African press Association (SAPA) or the Bureau for Information. But it was at times of conflict, that their reliance on the government was greatest, and even the more critical papers printed state-supplied information, claiming that one-sided information was better than none. [709] But many did not even look for alternative sources. Most newspapers made no attempt to interview the students involved in the 1976 uprising or the civic leaders of the 1980s, let alone ordinary black people who made up the majority of the victims of apartheid. Instead, they sought out comment from government representatives, homeland leaders, members of the judiciary, police and army, and occasionally white civilians who had witnessed certain events. [710] As Hugh Lewin, a former journalist and commissioner for the TRC, observed with a measure of frustration about the crime reporting in *The Star*: "It quotes the police, it quotes police sources, it quotes Vlok [then Minister of Law and Order], it quotes Intelligence sources, it quotes nobody else." [711]

This had more to do with their standing in society than with ease of access. For one they could exert pressure on newspapers, either through legislation or by means of withdrawing support or limiting access to information. [712] More importantly though, institutions and persons with what Hartley called "representative status" [713] are accepted as authoritative sources precisely because of that status. They are assumed to represent the ideas of the majority and are thus granted the privilege to define reality. Their output is often reprinted with relatively little editing by the individual journalists. Their common sense categories, their interpretations, and their language are largely taken over by the newspapers. [714] Or, as Karl Marx put it: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." [715]

An example that Mike Tissong told the TRC is indicative of this state of affairs: When six young men died in Duduza township after their hand grenades had exploded prematurely, he received a tip that the supposed MK operative who had supplied them was in fact an agent for

---

[708] van Dijk (1998 a: 189), Chomsky (1989: 77-78), Mail & Guardian (14th June 1996 a: 2), Gans (1979: 80 and 119-125), Altheide (1985: 11) and Bignell (1997: 92)

[709] Patten (1997: 45-47) and Gerald Shaw in an interview with the author, 22nd May 2002

[710] Manning (1987: 155), Merrett (1994: 84-85) and Frederikse (1987: 223)

[711] TRC (16th September 1997: Craig Kotze, 12)

[712] Gans (1979: 270), van Dijk (1989 a: 114) and Herman & Chomsky (1988: 34)

[713] Hartley (1982: 105)

[714] Hall et al. (1978: 58), Herman (1992: 12), Bignell (1997: 92), van Dijk (1989 a: 112), Hartley (1982: 105-106) and Fairclough (1992 a: 110)

[715] Karl Marx, 1846, *The German Ideology*, quoted in Tucker (1972: 136)

the secret service. He wrote a story about how the security police had infiltrated the Duduza cell in order to kill the young activists. Unfortunately, his superiors at *The Star* did not seem to like what they read and passed the story on to their (white) crime reporter. He obtained the official police version of the events and rewrote the article into a story of a 'mystery blast' that had killed poorly trained terrorists. [716] Today we know that the man who had supplied the grenades was Joe Mamasela, an askari working for Vlakplaas. The murders had been approved by the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, probably with full knowledge of President P. W. Botha. [717] So how could a big newspaper like *The Star* be misled in this way? It certainly did not help that the crime desk was headed by Craig Kotze who later admitted to having been a police spy [718], but the deciding factor was that his superiors were just too stuck in the mainstream mindset to even consider Mr. Tissong's story. [719] When I asked him about his newspaper's attitude during the apartheid years Johann de Villiers, the senior executive editor of *The Star*, told me:

> "We would go out and we would get information from the police, which was the official information. And then obviously they [the black reporters] would collect information from the struggle side. And quite often these two things were totally, diametrically opposed. And you had to sometimes make a decision, what you carried. And they said that we were too hooked into the official side of things. We finally addressed this thing through a system, which we did in the 80s, of saying "they said and they said". (…) We would say: "The police said." And then we would quote the official statement by Colonel so-and-so. And then we would say: "They said." And then we would give them a UDM leader to see what they said." [720]

Quite plainly, *The Star* described by Mr. de Villiers is an entirely different paper than that of Mr. Lewin and Mr. Tissong. He seems to be convinced that his paper's reporting was well balanced between official sources and the "struggle side". I very briefly surveyed (this was by no means a scientific content analysis!) 30 issues of *The Star* in my corpus and found that I must agree with the latter two gentlemen. The UDF is not an organisation that is generally spoken to, but rather a clear example of someone that is talked about. I am sure that my small sample did not help, but I saw none of their leaders quoted, while plenty of government officials voiced their opinion. It is true that, due to media restrictions, many opposition leaders could not be quoted, but in many cases the censorship laws served mainly as an excuse for the media to exclude the voice of the oppressed. [721]

---

[716] TRC (17th September 1997: Mike Tissong, 2)
[717] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 3, Para 389-398
[718] TRC (16th September 1997: Craig Kotze, 5)
[719] Merrett & Saunders (2000: 463)
[720] Interview with the author, 25th July 2002
[721] Marinovich & Silva (2000: 74), Mail & Guardian (14th June 1996 a: 3) and Mail & Guardian (18th July 1997: 2)

I also think that Mr. de Villiers' mistaking the UDM, a political party that only emerged in 1997, with the UDF, a civic organisation that was founded in 1983 to coordinate the grassroots struggle against apartheid and dissolved in 1991, is indicative of the attitudes of the majority of mainstream South African journalists. I heard similar mistakes as well as quite obvious racialisms such as 'brown people' several times during my interviews. Many white journalists were, and are to this day, oblivious to the pervasiveness of racism in their thinking. This had clear effects on their reporting. They knew that they had to give some attention to the events in the townships, but, like most white South Africans, they were just not interested in the what, the why and the how of it all. In reality, they were quite content not to have to leave the cultural mainstream and venture into the unknown territory of extra-parliamentary politics. After all, many of the agreements they reached with the government over the use of leaked and unofficial information were voluntary. [722]

Moreover, despite their professing to balanced reporting, some English papers would print government allegations of ANC involvement in violence, even though they knew that they would not be allowed to print the organisation's reaction. [723] For example, in 1984 *The Star* published allegations that former SACP leader Joe Slovo had killed his wife, in order to end an unhappy marriage. Today we know that this accusation was untrue; Ruth First was assassinated by Vlakplaas. But back then anything sounded possible. And because he was a banned person, Slovo could not be given a chance to deny the allegations. And as in the case of the killings in Duduza, *The Star* managed to get itself misled by the state propaganda machinery. The Western diplomatic source who had supposedly supplied the information on Slovo, later turned out to have been Craig Williamson, a security police spy. [724]

There were exceptions, and I should not suppress them. In 1976, Oliver Tambo and David Sibeko of the PAC addressed the United Nations and, as the previous Minister of Justice had exempted speeches at the UN from the no-quoting laws, newspapers now had an opportunity to relay their views. Unfortunately, in the light of the Soweto Uprisings, the current Minister, J. Kruger, warned the press that he had "not given my permission for publication" [725]. Only the *Cape Times* defied the ban – and got away with it. [726] In 1980, *Die Transvaler* was fined 75 Rand for quoting Thabo Mbeki. In 1984, the *Cape Times* was taken to court for quoting Donald Woods, the exiled ex-editor of the *Daily Dispatch*, and *The Star* was fined for publishing a quote by ANC leader Oliver Tambo saying that he could not be quoted. [727] In

---

[722] Babs Abba Omar in an interview with the author, 5th June 2002, Berger (1997: 3), TRC (16th September 1997: NPU, 5) and Merrett (1994: 86)
[723] Akhalwaya (1988: 25) and Merrett (1994: 85)
[724] Merrett (1994: 101), TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 3-4) and Business Day (19th September 1997: 1)
[725] Quoted in Martin (1997: 28)
[726] Heard (1991: 185-186) and Martin (1997: 28-29)
[727] Merrett (1994: 101), Heard (1991: 186-187), TML (Unknown: Criminal Charges, 2) and Martin (1997: 55-56)

1986, the *Sunday Star* and the Durban edition of the *Sunday Times* published interviews with Winnie Mandela. Both papers received warnings from the government. [728]

The most famous case of defiance occurred in 1985, when on 4th November, the *Cape Times* published an interview that editor Tony Heard had conducted with Oliver Tambo in London on 30th October. It was the first interview with an ANC leader to be published in South Africa since the organisation's banning. [729] The police reacted predictably by confiscating the tape and arresting Heard, who was later charged under the Internal Security Act. More shocking was SAAN's reaction. Publicly the board of directors tried to polish its liberal credentials through Heard's brave act of defiance. Privately, however, SAAN's Managing Director, John King, sent him a letter of reprimand. In 1986, the *Cape Times* was fined 300 Rand. Charges against Heard were dropped, but his relationship with the newspaper's management had been permanently damaged. A year later he was fired as editor. [730]

But not all quotes by banned persons we find in the press were published in defiance of the ban. If it suited them for propaganda purposes, the government occasionally cleared selective quotes for publication, or it quoted banned persons in its own publications and subsequently permitted the press to publish such quotes. In these cases, the speaker was either discredited, or his/her words were used to give credence to opinions he/she does not share. [731]

For example, when shortly before the 1987 parliamentary elections anonymous propagandists sent postcards depicting a cartoon necklacing and quoting ANC leaders to thousands of people worldwide, the *Sunday Times* was allowed to reprint it (see fig. 16).

Figure 16: Free necklaces for everyone (Source: *Sunday Times* (29th March 1987: 21))

---

[728] Martin (1997: 63)
[729] Heard (1991: 195-205), Merrett (1994: 138) and Shaw (1999: 306)
[730] Heard in an interview with the author, 17th May 2002, Heard (1987: 9-10), Heard (1991: 215-221) and Duodu (1986: 8-9)
[731] Fairclough (1992 b: 200-201), Riggins (1997: 11) and Sornig (1989: 100)

The image on the left shows a car tyre with candles on it like a birthday cake and on the right is a gory drawing of a burning person with a hammer and sickle next to him. The text reads:

> "THE ANC
> A CELEBRATION OF DEATH
>
> **'We want to make the death of collaborators so grotesque that people will never think of it.'**
> … ANC spokesman Tim Ngubane at California State University, October 10, 1985.
>
> **'The strategy of burning sell-outs seems to have paid out well in the ultimate end.'**
> …Voice of Freedom broadcast, October 7, 1985
>
> **'With our boxes of matches and our 'necklaces' we will liberate this country'**
> … Winnie Mandela, April 13, 1986
>
> Execution by fire has claimed 800 lives in the past two years. Innocent victims are burnt to death with gasoline-soaked tyres around their necks."

The accompanying article, titled "Anti-ANC card riddle" with a sub-header "Slick artwork shows the horrors of 'necklace' killings in gory detail" [732], explains that this card was sent out worldwide in an attempt to discredit the ANC and that no one knows who it came from. To this day we do not know who was behind this sick joke, but it certainly served the cause of the government very well by scaring the white electorate into coming out in favour of the NP at an unprecedented rate.

Similarly, the South African Press Agency (SAPA) would occasionally carry quotes of banned persons with the explicit remark that the government had cleared them for publication. However, these were generally taken out of context and cast the ANC in a poor light. [733] For example in February 1985 Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange authorised the SAPA to send out an interview that Oliver Tambo had given to a Harare newspaper. Tambo had stated in no uncertain terms that apartheid had to end and that the only way to bring it down was through armed struggle. The editor of SAPA explained: "The request was granted, since Tambo lived up to his local image." [734]

Today the situation has obviously changed. The newspapers frequently quote sources critical of the government and, as I will further elaborate in chapter 4.6.4 b, the victims of violence. However, this does not mean that they now quote in an objective or balanced way. No newspaper can ever achieve that. Accordingly, the South African press still seek out those sources that confirm their views and tends to disregard all others. But in this it no longer differs from the press anywhere else in the free world.

---

[732] Sunday Times (29th March 1987 b: 21)
[733] Tyson (1990: 71), Pogrund (2000: 164) and Merrett (1994: 101)
[734] Quoted in Martin (1997: 57)

4.4 Characterising Violence – The Structure of the Message System

Now that we are aware of the possible hidden meanings behind certain journalistic choices, it is time to take to a closer look at the content of news reports on violence and find out exactly how violence is portrayed. Here we find that once again the time at which an article was published plays a crucial role in determining its content. At first look this is not surprising. A development as far-reaching as the end of apartheid is bound to be reflected in the collective consciousness of a country.

However, the changes that the reporting underwent cannot merely be described in any straightforward political terms such as a shift from pro-apartheid to pro-democracy. The position of the English press in South African society was never that easy to define. Rather, as I believe I have shown in the previous chapters, they constituted a kind of extra-parliamentary opposition to the NP, but never fully rejected the principle of racial segregation and stratification. Accordingly, although the reporting after 1994 reflects the altered self-image of the newspapers and the changed extra-medial reality, the relevant changes were much subtler and took place on the deeper structural level. In the present chapter, I will attempt to uncover this structure and clearly show its changes in order to prepare the ground for an evaluation of the images placed on top of it. I will first look at what acts are covered in the reporting on violence and what relationship there is between them, and then try to discover who is involved in this violence. Throughout, I will also pay attention to how these events and people are evaluated and from what point of view. This should provide me with a satisfactory picture of the structure of news reports in the South African press at any given time.

4.4.1 From Politics to Crime – What is Violence?

a)   Acts of Violence Covered During Apartheid

During the apartheid years, most of the violence to get any serious attention in the press was political, which, as I mentioned above, was defined largely as violence against the state. State violence, if it was acknowledged at all, was generally presented in terms of 'strength', 'force' or 'law and order' or, in the case of the more critical papers, as 'police brutality' or 'abuse of power', but never as 'political violence'. There was, however, more to political violence as defined by the media than to that defined by the NP. Much to their credit, the English press largely resisted the government's attempt to depoliticise the black population's struggle and in their reporting labelled the fighting between the various political groups in the townships – the UDF, AZAPO and Inkatha – as incidents of political violence.

Crime, on the other hand, was largely ignored. Occasionally, a court reporter's story would get published, but they generally focussed on the trial proceedings rather than the crime. And while it is understandable that a news organisation would put relatively little effort into

gathering such minor news, this practice served as an important filter on the reporting of violence. As early as 1973, the British Sociologist Stanley Cohen observed:

> "[In] South Africa where *overt* political unrest and protest is low, "ordinary" crime and delinquency, especially violence is extremely high (e.g. one of the world's highest homicide and execution rates) but the public definition presents exactly the opposite balance." [735] (Italics in original.)

In some cases this under-reporting was the result of conscious choices on the part of the editor. Gerald Shaw, for example, told me:

> "I don't know whether it was a national policy, but the *Cape Times* began to not report … violent crime. I mean in the main road Rondebosch here, there would be an armed hold-up at a steak house, and it wouldn't be reported in the *Cape Times*. Or if it was, it was reduced to a couple of paragraphs." [736]

Instead the newspapers focussed largely on such things as 'riots', 'unrest' or 'faction fights' among the black population. In doing so, they often obscured rather than emphasised the political origins of the conflicts. My point is probably best illustrated using an example:

> "**Flaming night**
>
> Riots rage – Army on standby
>
> Troops were on standby outside of Soweto last night while thousands of angry Africans set fire to buildings and cars after a day of violence and death." [737]

This is the headline and the lead of the *Rand Daily Mail*'s main story about the Soweto Uprisings. Let us now compare this to an article published in 2002 in the *Cape Argus* about commuters in whose anger with the poor service of the rail company boiled over:

> "**Rioting commuters attack trains**
>
> Chaos reigned this morning as rioting broke out at Mabopane and Saulsville railway stations, with at least one building set alight and vehicles stoned." [738]

If we look at the two side by side, it is impossible to distinguish which of the events described had political motivations and which was the result of purely criminal behaviour. The term 'riot' provides readers with a rough idea of what happened, but it does not give them an explanation why it happened. This is provided by short accounts later in the articles: "The rioting was triggered off by a clash between police and pupils who were demonstrating against enforced instruction in Afrikaans." [739] And: "This morning's actions followed an incident yesterday evening when angry commuters vented their anger about train delays on a

---

[735] Cohen (1973: 124)
[736] Interview with the author, 22nd May 2002
[737] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[738] Cape Argus (11th April 2002: 3)
[739] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)

Metrorail motor coach and two coaches at the Bosman Street station." [740] The fact that the first incident was not so much the result of a 'clash', but of an intrinsically violent political system and its 'shoot-to-kill' policy can be silently ignored without the reader feeling that he/she is being presented with incomplete information.

Moreover, terms like 'riot' and 'unrest' group completely different acts together, with the result that they often have no definable meaning at all any more. Just a quick scan of my material for example produced an amazing array of 'unrest incidents':

> "Unrest
>
> Two people were reported injured when their cars were pelted," [741]

wrote *The Argus* on 3rd June 1980, and provides us with our first type of 'unrest-related' violence: stone throwing. On 26th March 1986 the *Cape Times* described the 'unrest' after the shooting in Uitenhage:

> "The deaths of two Uitenhage residents who were attacked by a mob wielding pangas have pushed the unrest death toll since Thursday to 31 in the Eastern Cape where several incidents of arson were reported yesterday." [742]

Thus, we have our second kind of 'unrest-related' violence: mob attacks. Like stone-throwing, these would rise to prominence in the reporting about violence in the townships becoming almost the prototypical 'unrest-incident'. The *Pretoria News* of 16th June 1986 enlarges our repertoire of 'unrest incidents' even further with this report:

> "A total of 22 people have been killed and 77 wounded or injured in unrest incidents since the declaration of the state of emergency last week.
>
> The worst casualties occurred in the Durban beachfront blast on Saturday night when three people died and 69 were injured.
>
> Of the other 19 deaths, 15 were killed in "black-on-black" incidents while four were killed by security forces, according to weekend reports released by Bureau for Information spokesmen." [743]

The article speaks of a number of different things – the bombing of a Durban café, "black-on-black" violence and the killing of four people by the security forces – but takes all of them to be "unrest incidents".

So what is 'unrest'? I would personally say that it is more a cognitive and linguistic category than an event in extra-linguistic reality. It is confusion, chaos, and disorder; it is the opposite of 'peace'. It is violence so to speak. Yet the two are not synonymous. Unrest is largely a black phenomenon (only the police shooting was perpetrated by whites) and it is neither

---

[740] Cape Argus (11th April 2002: 3)
[741] The Argus (3rd June 1980: 3)
[742] Cape Times (26th March 1985: 2)
[743] Pretoria News (16th June 1986: 3)

organised, nor target-oriented. As Jeremy Gordin put it: "The sub-text always used to be that the savages are at it again."[744]

The term 'unrest' had some added advantages for the newspapers and the government. The newspaper liked 'unrest' because, at least for a while, it provided them with a good and easy story. They knew it was happening, they knew where and they had the government's 'unrest reports' as an easy source. term was also welcomed by the state – in fact it is not really clear who first created the label, the media or the government – because it had the effect of reducing the violent appearance of the individual incidents described while at the same time exaggerating the size of the area affected by the violence. For example, when the *Pretoria News* writes that "15 were killed in "black-on-black" incidents"[745] the reader tends to see less violence than he/she would if the article had reported 15 unrelated murders. Conversely, the "deaths of two Uitenhage residents"[746] written about by the *Cape Times* give the reader the impression that all of Uitenhage is in turmoil without having to give any further details.

Moreover, the newspapers often included phenomena in the categories of 'riot' or 'unrest', which really did not have anything to do with the violence described. Examples include looting during riots or the criminal activities of 'tsotsis' in the shade of the Soweto Uprisings. This led to a substantial blurring of the line between political acts and crime with the result that white readers soon saw all forms of 'unrest' as criminal behaviour. Thus, while the cover-terms 'riot' and 'unrest' were still seen as forms of political violence, their political background was lost. Instead they were now explained with the black population's natural predisposition to criminal behaviour. Just a quick look at the headlines after 16th June 1976 shows how closely the concept of 'riot' is linked to the theft of white property:

"BURNING, LOOTING"

(*The Star* 17th June 1976 (Stop Press Edition), main headline, p. 1)

"ROADBLOCK SET UP ON LOUIS BOTHA",

sub-headline: "Killing and looting in Alexandra"

(*The Star* 18th June 1976 (City Late Edition), main headline, p. 1)

"BLACK BACKLASH",

sub-headline: "2 looters beaten to death"

(*The Star* 19th June 1976 (City Late Edition), main headline, p. 1)

"Pupils loot vans at Orlando roadblocks"

(*Rand Daily Mail* 17th June 1976, p. 6)

"Newsmen roughed up as students grab cameras"

---

[744] Interview with the author, 31st July 2002
[745] Pretoria News (16th June 1986: 3)
[746] Cape Times (26th March 1985: 2)

(*Rand Daily Mail* 17th June 1976, p. 6)

    "Police guard white suburbs",

    kicker: "90 dead, 1000 injured as riots and pillaging sweep Reef"

(*Rand Daily Mail* 19th June 1976, main headline, p. 1)

    "Pillage as beer and blood flow"

(*Rand Daily Mail* 19th June 1976, p. 1)

    "Mobs on rampage in East Rand townships"

(*Rand Daily Mail* 19th June 1976, p. 2)

    "Looting and Death in Alexandra"

(*Rand Daily Mail* 19th June 1976, p. 3)

    "VIOLENCE FLARES AGAIN IN SOWETO",

    kicker: "Stoning, looting, burning, bid to march on hospital"

(*The Argus* 17th June 1976 (City Late Edition), main headline, p. 1)

    "Looting, burning as riots continue"

(*Cape Times* 17th June 1976, main headline, p. 1)

    "SOWETO EXPLODES",

    sub-headline: "A day of deaths, burning, looting"

(*The Natal Mercury* 17th June 1976, p. 1)

    "Mob on the rampage"

(*The Natal Mercury* 17th June 1976, p. 2)

Looting or rampaging were not the main themes in the reporting, but they enjoyed a certain degree of prominence that would forge in the heads of uncritical readers a close association between riots and looting. This was method was not only employed by more conservative publications such as the *Natal Mercury*. Even the *Rand Daily Mail*, which otherwise tried to be slightly more critical of the police, gave ample attention to the criminal aspects of the events. There was one exception though. Among the newspapers I surveyed one stood out for its lack of sensationalism: the *Daily Dispatch*. The leading stories were not unlike those of other newspapers, but some smaller articles were strongly critical of the government and even lent a voice to the extra-parliamentary opposition.

Before I leave the time of apartheid behind, I must briefly pause to describe what forms of violence got little or no attention in the press at that time, as the subjects that are taboo can say just as much about the newspapers' priorities and the culture that they are part of as those that are widely covered. As I mentioned above, crime of all kinds was seriously underreported during the apartheid years. Only the most spectacular cases made the papers, generally tucked away somewhere on the inside pages. Moreover there was rarely ever an article about a violent incident that had just happened. Most of the reports were either about arrests or about

court cases and convictions of criminals. This created an impression that crime was under control at all times. It was not something that just happened and was not dealt with. If a violent crime took place, the police were shown to be on it and the courts were functioning well by prosecuting the accused and punishing them for what they had done. Unsolved crime was almost non-existent. Jeremy Gordin confirmed my findings:

> "I'm talking about crime, and quite serious domestic crime, domestic violence (…). So, but I don't think that … I think very little of that, I know very little of that was reported. OK. So, you got very little of that. You got more horrific crimes reported, if it was black-on-white violence. I'm talking about criminal violence now." [747]

Mr. Gordin touched on three other subjects that got fairly little attention. One was criminal violence among blacks. The newspapers seemed only interested in odd little incidents that illustrated the savageness of young township dwellers. The true extent of crime and victimisation among the black population was never really a topic. Equally little attention was given to black crime against whites. This surely had something to do with the fact that, due to the separation of residential areas and the SAP's heavy-handed policing, this was a fairly rare occurrence. However, considerations of reader interests and politics certainly played a role. Too much attention to such attacks might have caused white readers to worry too much and react by not buying the papers anymore, as happened after 1994.

Domestic violence, too, was only rarely reported and, if it was covered, it was defined in a very narrow way. Strikingly, the term 'domestic violence' did not appear in any of the papers in my sample before the end of apartheid. I came across a few articles about men appearing in court for having killed or injured their wives and/or children, and even found the word 'abuse' in a headline in the *Cape Times* ("Wife abuse No 2 crime in M Plain" [748]), but 'domestic violence', marital rape and child abuse were non-existent as far as the media were concerned. Moreover, the overall image that emerged from the reporting was that violence in the home was mainly perpetrated by men who had snapped under stress but were otherwise entirely peaceful people. This idea is encompassed perfectly in a headline from *The Argus* of 12th June 1986 above an article about a man who had killed his wife and her suspected lover: "Solomon 'not a violent man'" [749]

The newspapers displayed a similarly nonchalant attitude towards whites who assaulted their black compatriots. The practice of 'kaffir-bashing', a much-loved past time among rural whites, was completely ignored by the press and violence on farms, in mines, and in private homes received next to no attention. Researchers who conducted a survey for the Institute of

---

[747] Jeremy Gordin in an interview with the author, 31st July 2002
[748] Cape Times (8th November 1984 a: 10) – Note that this is about crime in a coloured area!
[749] The Argus (12th June 1986: 5)

Criminology at the University of Cape Town in 1991 found only 33 press reports during the previous five years about cases where farmers had been charged with assaulting or murdering workers. [750] My own work revealed a similar degree of underreporting. My whole corpus of newspapers before 1990 contained only one article on the subject. On 16th June 1976, the Morning Final Edition of the *Rand Daily Mail* carried a small article on page five titled "Wood splintering 'led to death'" [751]. It described the case of a man with an Afrikaans name, who had hit an unnamed "worker" with a plank for dropping a piece of wood. The worker later died of the injuries. No further information was given.

Finally, there was the subject of state violence. As I said above, violence perpetrated by the agents of the state did not fall under the category of 'political violence', but was instead mostly presented as 'strength' or 'use of force'. This label, however, was only used to describe security force action in the townships and, to a limited degree, the SADF's raids into neighbouring countries. But as we have seen in chapter 2, there was much more to government violence than that. Torture, the killing of detainees by the police and prison personnel, the activities of the numerous death squads, the government-sponsored vigilante violence, or the kitskonstabels' reign of terror in the townships were not covered by such terms. In fact, from what I could see, they were barely covered at all.

High-profile cases, such as the death of Steve Biko, could not be completely ignored, although even Biko's murder did not get the attention or the critical attitude it deserved. Most newspapers only carried the story for one or two days, none called it a 'murder', and all but the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Daily Dispatch* relied on government statements and reactions from overseas politicians for their coverage. Less prominent cases of torture or killings of detainees were largely ignored. Some of the more critical newspapers did occasionally point out the appalling behaviour of South Africa's law enforcement agencies and prison personnel, but their voices were few and far between, limited by the strict rules on reporting from prisons and easily countered by such stories as the *Natal Mercury*'s "Torture occurs in SA but 'claims are exaggerated'" [752].

The same was true of the violence perpetrated by the kitskonstabels. Cases such as the 'Trojan Horse Incident' were reported, but their day-to-day crimes remained hidden. Vigilante violence on the other hand was dealt with entirely differently. The violent deeds committed by the government's black surrogates, be they the witdoeke in Crossroads, Inkatha-aligned hostel dwellers on the Witwatersrand, or 'conservative' vigilantes such as the A-Team, received quite a bit of attention. However, the victims' and witnesses' reports that police, soldiers,

---

[750] Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 26) and Marinovich & Silva (2000: 7)
[751] Rand Daily Mail (16th June 1976: 5)
[752] The Natal Mercury (23rd April 1986: 14)

white people with painted faces, or people wearing well-polished army boots were involved in the violence, or that the police had protected the attackers against township residents were not mentioned until after the unbanning of the ANC. [753] Before 1990, vigilante violence was covered under the broad heading of 'black-on-black' violence or inter-ethnic strife.

And last, but not least, we have the death squads, which were persistently ignored by the mainstream press. It is hard to assess today whether they did this out of caution or ignorance. A former manager of the Argus Group argued for the latter when he told me: "We did not suppress information we just didn't know what was going on." [754] Others, on the other hand, openly admitted to having known of state sponsored killings and either having disbelieved their sources or having done nothing about it. Ken Owen for example admitted:

> "I couldn't bring myself to think that they [the government], … were bloody murderers. And I couldn't link them up with … I thought that the evil began lower down at the level of the police. We knew that the police kept beating up people. But I thought that they were doing this unlawfully. And so, I, I didn't believe the 'third force'. I was very sceptical about it. That was a grave mistake I made." [755]

In my opinion this statement stands as an indictment of the entire English language press. If Owen, who was one of apartheid's fiercest critics in the mainstream media, had heard about the violence but rejected the information as ill-founded rumours, I cannot imagine anyone in the commercial press being interested in such contentious stories.

b)   Acts of Violence Covered After 1994

The mainstream newspapers' approach to violence changed with the elections in 1994. Political violence more or less disappeared from the pages of the daily press. Only the most spectacular cases, such as the sudden increase in violence in KwaZulu Natal before the 1999 elections or the series of right-wing bombings in Gauteng in November 2002, made the headlines. Instead, the newspapers were full of stories about crime. Murder, rape, robbery, assault, car hijackings also and gang violence became favourite new subjects. Police violence, too, received a lot of coverage, as did violence against police officers. This new approach to violence is probably best illustrated by an example. In 1997, the London *Economist* ran a story on crime in South Africa and used a daily round-up of violence in Johannesburg taken from page two of *The Star* as an illustration of the problem:

> "two women raped at gun-point in a hair salon; a bank robbed by five armed men; an elderly woman robbed at gun-point in her home; an unidentified dead body found in

---

[753] See for example Pretoria News (6th September 1990: 1), The Star (6th September 1990: 1) and Cape Times (14th September 1990 b: 2)
[754] Interview with the author, 13th March 2002
[755] Interview with the author, 30th May 2002

the street; security guards robbed by armed gunmen; two more security guards robbed at gun-point; one policeman shot dead; a man found murdered in his home; a couple robbed at gun-point in their home: a man robbed at gun-point; one dead body found; another dead body found in a park." [756]

Despite its simplifying nature this summary is very helpful in two ways. For one, it illustrates the difficulty people – even media professionals as we can see – have distinguishing between text and reality. The *Economist* quotes *The Star* (a prime example of explicit intertextuality by the way) not in order to make a point about its reporting of violence, but in order to illustrate the phenomenon itself. The media text is thus seen as proof of the existence of the problem. The second way in which the report helps me is that somehow, even without trying, it hit the nail on the head. It shows that violence as portrayed in the South African newspapers in the late 1990s consisted of criminal acts committed by nameless, faceless perpetrators in public places, or by intruders into helpless victims' homes. I could not have summed-up the newspapers' approach any better even if I had tried.

Obviously, this is not the full extent of violence in South Africa today. The newspapers today still have a number of blind spots when it comes to reporting violence. Political violence within the black community, for example, has by no means stopped. It has, however, nigh on disappeared from the news. [757] The *Mail & Guardian* was the only paper in my survey that regularly covered incidents of political violence that did not traverse the colour line. [758]

White employers who assault their black staff are also still fairly safe from the media. Only the most severe cases are reported. The ongoing racism and racial violence on South African farms and in the country's mines is not generally highlighted. The same goes for racially motivated attacks in every day life. In my entire sample I only found two articles about racist such incidents. One was the killing of a black man by a "white businessman" [759], which was reported only in the *Mail & Guardian* of 17th May 2002. The other was the appearance in court of five white men accused of beating a black teenager to death in the Northern Province, which was widely covered in the press throughout the duration of the trial in 2002. However, in this case, background information and historical analyses were sorely lacking.

For example, in an article on 1st February 2002 *The Star* describes the events, explains the perpetrators' explanations for having attacked the young man and quotes their racist slurs. It does not investigate the victim's story (apart from calling him a "suspected poacher" [760]) and does not go into the issue of racism in general. Even the more victim-centred article in *The*

---

[756] The Economist (13th December 1997: 18)
[757] For accounts of the levels of political violence in 1994-1999 see for example Hamber (1999: 3) and in 2002 see for example (US Department of State (2003: 2-4)
[758] See for example Mail & Guardian (12th April 2002: 8) and Mail & Guardian (26th April 2002: 8)
[759] Mail & Guardian (17th May 2002: 12)
[760] The Star (1st February 2002: 1)

Herald on 20th April 2002, which covered the last day of the trial that saw the conviction of two of the men, does not explain the background of the crimes in South African history and racism. They are merely described as individual events. The papers presuppose that the reader will know of the tension between poor blacks and white farmers without realising that they will see this conflict merely from their own side. Thus, a wealthy white person will understand the accused's anger with poachers who trespass onto their property and cost them money. Many poor blacks on the other hand will have no sympathy for wealthy racists who reserve all the land for themselves while black children starve. And the superficial reporting of the press certainly did nothing to further people's understanding for each other. [761]

Similarly, while there were numerous reports about acts of violence in the townships, readers were not generally made aware of the overall context within which they were committed. As Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo pointed out in their work on news values, long-term developments and general states of affairs do not lend themselves to being made into news stories; events on the other hand do. [762] Accordingly, newspaper readers are told that the townships are fairly violent places, but they receive very few explanations as to why.

One last type of violence that is only now beginning to receive the attention it deserves is domestic violence. Child abuse, spousal abuse, and assaults on elderly family members, especially in the white community, were only scarcely reported during the mid-1990s. This was partly due to the fact that domestic violence did not appear in the crime statistics as a separate offence. Listing incidents in other categories served to hide the extent and lethality of domestic violence and helped conceal domestic violence from the probing eyes of the press, for other crimes frequently make the headlines when the statistics are released. [763]

The newspapers really woke up to the problem after a number of high profile cases of child rape in late 2001 and early 2002. Since then the papers have frequently reported cases of domestic violence and, unlike with many other forms of violence, have spent some time and effort to try and investigate the reasons behind the individual acts as well as the overall extent of the problem. However, despite this substantial shift in focus, by and large, violence was still described as something that happens mainly in public places or was perpetrated by outsiders who had invaded the private homes of their victims. Violence perpetrated within the private home by members of the same household, or close friends and family members, was proportionately underplayed. [764]

---

[761] The Herald (20th April 2002: 3)
[762] Galtung & Ruge (1965: 64-71) and Lang & Lang (1981: 675)
[763] Bollen et al. (1999 a: 1)
[764] Simpson (1996: 2)

4.4.2 Of Incidents and Patterns – A Look at the Relationship Between the Acts of Violence Described

The present sub-chapter is meant only as a brief insert, an explanation of an aspect of the reporting on violence that needs to be given if we are to properly understand the message conveyed as a whole. It is the question of how the newspapers contextualised the violence they described.

a)   1976 to 1992: A Series of Violent Incidents

During the apartheid years and the early 1990s most newspapers confined themselves to merely describing individual incidents of violence. Even during the mid-1980s when the townships were in constant uproar, the press wrote of 'riots', 'unrest incidents' or 'shootings'. This separated the individual acts from general history and obscured the fact that they were mere symptoms of the underlying violent system of apartheid. Neither their context nor the connections that existed between them were examined, and the incidents were not scrutinised. This way, readers were not given an adequate framework for understanding the reports and inadvertently misinterpreted them. [765]

When, for example, after the initial outbreak of violence in Soweto in June 1976, several other demonstrations across the country ended in bloodshed, the newspapers carried such headlines as "More riots in Soweto" [766], "Widespread rioting in Pretoria areas" [767], "Killing and looting in Alexandra" [768], and "Fresh riots erupt" [769], insinuating that the riots were somehow distinct incidents confined to certain geographic areas and unrelated to each other. There were a few headlines, such as "50 dead as riots spread" [770] and "54 dead as riots spread" [771], that portray the events as linked. However, the true connection between them, namely that what was happening in the townships were not isolated incidents of violence, but a countrywide uprising by the oppressed population that was violently put down by the state, was never openly addressed. No matter how hard critical journalists tried to address this problem, the overall focus was on the isolated incidents while the failures and crimes of the government were greatly underplayed.

A similar picture emerges when we look at the reporting during the 1980s. There was a lot of talk about "incidents of arson" [772], "unrest incidents" [773], "incidents of unrest" [774] and the

---

[765] Frederikse (1987: 221)
[766] Daily Dispatch (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[767] The Argus (21st June 1976 a: 1)
[768] The Star (18th June 1976 a: 1)
[769] The Star (21st June 1976 b: 1)
[770] Daily Dispatch (18th June 1976: 1)
[771] Cape Times (18th June 1976: 1)
[772] Cape Times (26th March 1985: 2)
[773] Pretoria News (16th June 1986: 3)
[774] Sunday Times (29th March 1987 a: 2)

like, with the occasional reference to those having been reactions to police brutality, but no general indictment of the violent system of apartheid as a whole.

The newspapers still maintained this approach to violence for a while after the unbanning of the ANC. For example when in 1990 two men started randomly attacking commuters at Johannesburg's Jeppe station, the newspapers talked of a 'random massacre' and the like. The articles were all fairly similar in pointing out that there was no motive, no explanation and no sense to the violence – and that the people involved were black. Both the *Pretoria News* and *The Star* for example wrote:

> "Two unknown gunmen opened fire on a crowd of commuters at Jeppe station in Johannesburg, killing five people and injuring at least 14 in what has been described as a motiveless and senseless attack.
>
> Four of the dead were women. Both the gunmen and their victims were black." [775]

And the *Cape Times* reported:

> "Nine people were shot dead and 27 injured in random massacres here last night as bands of men opened fire on commuters and township residents.
>
> - Five commuters died instantly when two black men opened fire on a crowd at Jeppe railway station. Fourteen were injured, eight critically.
>
> - Four people were killed in Soweto's Naledi Extension when the occupants of a minibus fired at people in the streets and into homes. Thirteen were injured.
>
> At Jeppe the gunmen struck without warning. The victims were all black.
>
> Police spokesman Colonel Frans Malherbe said two men walked up to a crowd of commuters at Jeppe station and opened fire with two handguns "without rhyme or reason", killing four women and a man." [776]

b)   The Emergence of Crime Waves after 1992

The old view of the violence as consisting of a series of individual and inexplicable incidents slowly began to change in 1992, when the violence escalated on the trains on the Witwatersrand. Now the newspapers started questioning the official truth that each incident represented an isolated case. [777] They were neither the only ones nor the first ones to do so. The alternative press had written about 'taxi wars', 'death squads' and the 'third force' since the early 1990s. [778] However, back then their views were considered too radical for mainstream discourse and their explanations were shunned. It took most of the commercial press a few years, a huge body of evidence as provided by the alternative newspapers, and the

---

[775] Pretoria News (7th September 1990: 1) and The Star (7th September 1990: 1)
[776] Cape Times (7th September 1990: 1)
[777] Electronic Mail & Guardian (29th November 1996 b: 3)
[778] See for example Work in Progress (1st December 1991: 9-13), Weekly Mail (8th June 1990: 9) and Vrye Weekblad (17th November 1989: page unknown)

Goldstone Commission to accept that the ongoing violence was somehow connected. Only then did they take on the terminology of the alternative press. Thus, to anyone who relied exclusively on the mainstream media for information, these wars and feuds would have appeared to be a new phenomenon. We have here a clear example of crimes being defined on the basis of what is going on in the newsroom, not in extra-medial reality.

A similar development took place in the reporting about crime. What before 1994 had been reported as a small number of unconnected incidents now turned into what the *Mail & Guardian* of 18th April 1997 called "the crime wave besetting South Africa" [779]. This is not to mean that the newspapers' approach to crime reporting changed radically during the mid-1990s. The impression of an ever-growing crime problem was not created through in-depth analyses and reports about the historical context of the individual acts or the socio-economical situation in the country, but mostly by the sheer number of crimes reported and the way they were approached by, and presented in, the newspapers. As I have already explained in chapter 4.2.2 d, after the 1994 elections the press turned its attention away from political violence and increasingly turned the spotlight on crime. If we compare the newspapers during the early 1990s with those of 1994/95, it is easy to get the impression that, since the end of apartheid, South Africa has turned into a country overrun by violence and crime. [780]

This, however, is not all there is to the South African crime wave(s). It is only the first and most general step. The specific ways in which the newspapers approached violence and crime also influenced the creation and appearance of these waves. Journalists did not, as Mr. de Villiers said, simply report "everything we could get our hands on" [781]. If they had done this, every newspaper would have ended up the size of an encyclopaedia and would have been unmanageable for readers. Editors were faced with huge amounts of reportable stories every day and had to somehow make a choice. And in this they were guided not only by audience demands and accessibility of sources, but also by what Galtung & Ruge have termed "consonance" [782]. They frequently concentrated on a particular theme and presented individual items in groups that reflected their choice.

For example, after the rape of a nine-month-old baby in Upington in October 2001 the newspapers produced a string of stories on baby and child rape. "Babies in front line of new war" [783] the *Sunday Times* wrote. "Please daddy, don't rape me" [784] the *Cape Argus* pleaded. "Limpopo policeman accused of raping his kids" [785] the *Mail & Guardian* said. And there are

---

[779] Mail & Guardian (18th April 1997: 1)
[780] Shaw (1996 c: 168)
[781] Interview with the author, 25th May 2002
[782] Galtung & Ruge (1965: 67)
[783] Sunday Times (9th December 2001 b: 15)
[784] Cape Argus (24th June 2002 b: 5)
[785] Mail & Guardian (5th April 2002: 3)

many more stories of the same sort to be found. Soon enough, such an increase in the reporting led people to believe that South Africa was facing a wave of child rapes. The BBC for example reported in October 2002, "South Africa is in the grip of an unprecedented increase in the most despicable crime - baby rape" [786]. Scientific evidence on the other hand shows that the phenomenon of child and baby rape was not new. [787]

Focussing on one subject was only possible if the newspapers could be relatively certain that readers would not get bored by it though. Child rape was certainly striking enough to keep people interested for a while. Other, more mundane crimes, however, were not. Thus, if an editor decided to pick up a more common theme he/she had to find a different way of making it interesting. The strategy here was similar to that described above, except that the themes were created to be used only once, in one issue of a paper, and then be dropped again. Much like the classification of the violence in the townships during the 1980s as 'unrest', individual acts during the 1990s were thus subsumed under such headings as "a spate of armed robberies" [788], "schoolboy shootings" [789] or "the growing wave of bank robberies" [790].

The second example is a good case in point of the construction of a crime theme in the press. On 12th June 2002, *The Star* printed what at first look appeared to be one article under the headline "Schoolboy shootings stun suburbs" [791] (see fig. 17).
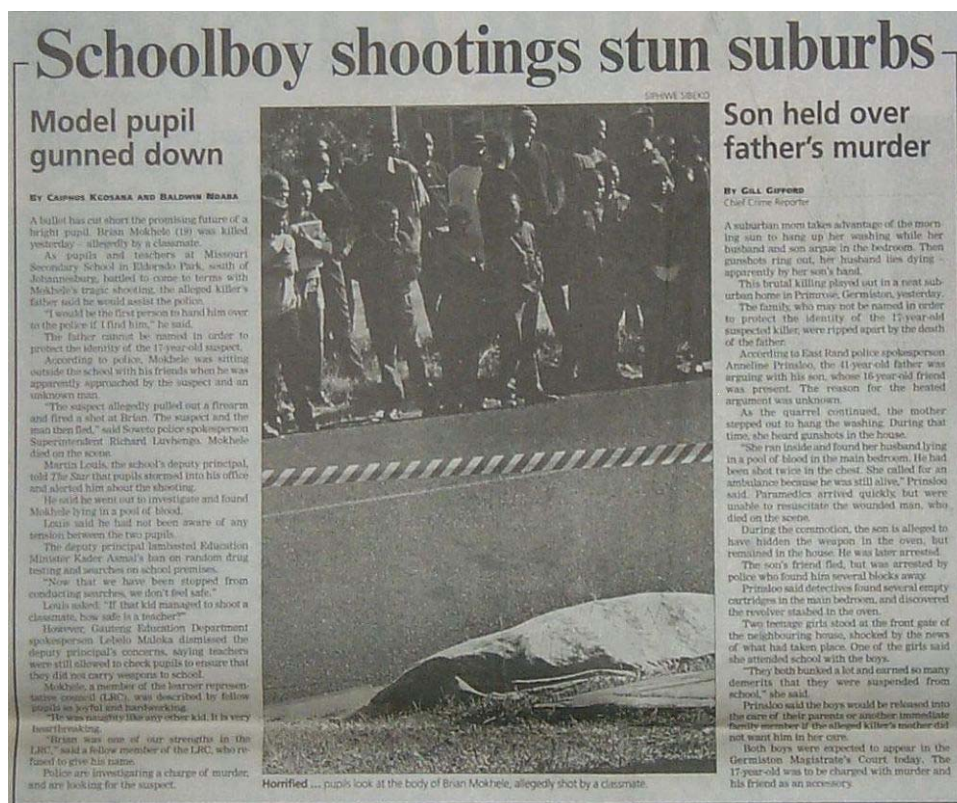
Figure 17: Shooting spree or media phenomenon? (Source: *The Star* (12th June 2002: 2))

---

[786] BBC (14th October 2002: 1)
[787] SAIRR (2001: 1), Lewis (1997: 1-2) and Simpson et al. (1997: 1-2)
[788] Cape Argus (24th June 2002 c: 7)
[789] The Star (12th June 2002: 2)
[790] Mail & Guardian (18th April 1997: 1)
[791] The Star (12th June 2002: 2)

Only when we begin reading does it become clear that what seems like two sub-sections are in fact two separate articles, "Model pupil gunned down" [792] and "Son held over father's murder" [793], written by completely different authors about entirely unrelated incidents. The first article describes the shooting of a 19-year-old pupil in the township of Eldorado Park by one of his classmates. The second is about a 17-year-old boy from Primrose, a suburb of Germiston, who gunned his father down during an argument in their home. Their only link was that they were both committed by teenagers on the same day.

Sometimes the paper took this approach even further, addressing a whole theme in one article under such headlines as "Four die violently in city over the weekend" [794] or "Police night of madness". [795] The former was an article in the *Cape Times* of 29th April 2002 that reads more like a listing of everything unpleasant that happened in the area during the previous two days:

> "Police spokeswoman Nina Kirsten said the body of an 18-year-old man was found with multiple bruises in an open field in the Joe Slovo settlement in Langa. She said he was allegedly beaten to death after he stole from a resident.
>
> The body of Kurt Malan, 17, of Kewtown, Athlone, was found with eight bullet wounds yesterday.
>
> One man died and another was injured when shots were fired at their vehicle in Beacon Valley, Mitchell's Plain, on Saturday. Ricardo Jackson was shot in his left hand. Frederick Samuels was hit in his buttock and died on the way to the hospital.
>
> A Kuils River man bled to death after suffering multiple stab wounds. No arrests have been made.
>
> Six armed men fled with R 190 000 after robbing the Grassy Park Hotel in Victoria Road on Saturday." [796]

As in the case of the "schoolboy shootings", the individual incidents have nothing in common except that they all happened within the right time frame for publication. A slightly critical look will, however, reveal a pattern that might explain why, out of all the incidents of violence that were reported to the police that weekend, these five were chosen for publication: They all involved men and they all happened in black areas. Accordingly, they not only fit the papers' schedule, but also their and, as I intend to show in chapter 5, the general public's view of what violence is like in South Africa.

The second example cited above is the headline to an article that appeared in the *Cape Argus* on 1st February 2002. Again the theme, policemen caving in under pressure, is introduced in

---

[792] The Star (12th June 2002: 2)
[793] The Star (12th June 2002: 2)
[794] Cape Times (29th April 2002: 4)
[795] Cape Argus (1st February 2002: 1)
[796] Cape Times (29th April 2002: 4)

the headline. It is further refined in the sub-headline "One dead, one shot, one disarmed". [797] And again the article links three incidents that were de facto unrelated – one officer's suicide, one officer's taking his family hostage and one officer's attempted suicide – and rolls them into one. That is not to say that they might not have had a common origin, but according to the article they did not. The dead officer had financial problems, the hostage-taker did complain about work-related stress, and the third man was overwhelmed by the recent deaths of two close friends (and had supposedly complained to colleagues about a lack of career chances for white officers). So once again the reader is left with an impression of a series of cases that are connected on the surface when in fact there were three distinctly separate incidents that might have had a common structural cause.

Sometimes the newspapers were even less subtle about creating their themes and left even less of the actual process of meaning making to the reader. In those cases, rather than just relying on the power of suggestion, the newspapers quite openly called their theme a 'wave'. On 24th June 2002 the *Cape Argus* for example talked of a "wave of at least six armed robberies" [798] to describe incidents that had happened between Friday and Sunday in places as far apart as Green Point and Kraaifontein. Strangely enough the paper quotes a policeman as having ruled out that this was the work of a gang, but gives no information as to why such disparate incidents would constitute a "wave".

4.4.3   The Who is Who of Violence

a)   Apartheid, the Time of Collective Identities

As I have shown in chapter 3, one of the most striking characteristics of the system of apartheid was that, despite its supporters' claims to be staunch anti-communists, the basic social unit was not the individual but, just like in Marx's views of society, the collective. Apartheid, or separateness, was not the separation of individuals but the separation of groups. White South Africans had a clear self-image as whites in general and Afrikaners or English speaking South Africans [799], supporters of the NP or its liberal opponents, members of certain religious groups, inhabitants of a certain provinces and so on in particular. Their individual identities frequently took the backbench to these group identities.

This understanding of the world was clearly reflected in the newspapers' reporting of violence. People were not seen as individuals, but as members of a group – as government employees, ANC members, protectors of law and order, terrorists, communists or freedom fighters, as black, coloured, Asian or white. The violence was therefore not described as acts

---

[797] Cape Argus (1st February 2002: 1)
[798] Cape Argus (24th June 2002 c: 7)
[799] The ambiguity of the term, South African, but at the same time English and therefore rooted in Europe, reflects a split in this group's identity. Most of them do not see themselves as Africans, however, in conversations with expatriate South Africans in Europe I was frequently told that they felt foreign there and that South Africa would always be home to them.

committed by individuals against individuals, but as a kind of group action. Unrest, riots, uprisings, 'black-on-black' violence, the war on terror or public-order policing, none of the violence commonly reported in the newspapers could be performed by individuals.

The focussing on group identities was encouraged by the authorities, for it clearly played into their hands. For one, it deprived the opposition movements of a way to create heroes who could give their struggle a public face, as Che Guevara had done in Latin America. On the other hand, the representatives of the apartheid state were absolved from individual responsibility for the acts of violence they had committed if they had acted in their function as upholders of law and order. [800]

Along with the binary opposition described in chapter 3.3, such collectivist thinking had a profound impact on how the violence was lexicalised. Obviously, violence perpetrated by members of the in-group was described entirely differently than that involving the out-group. The media tried, as far as possible, to absolve the in-group from any violent actions, while blaming the out-group for as much violence as possible. In-group violence was thus downplayed in relation to out-group violence, which was frequently over-emphasised.

A good case in point is the reporting of killings. If someone had died as a result of security force action, the events were generally described in the passive voice, which served to mask the link between the actors and the act ("Man killed as police break up boycott mob" [801]). In some cases, the physical agents were deleted altogether and grammatical agency was placed on the victims ("Shock, grief at death of Biko" [802]). Deaths brought about by opponents of apartheid on the other hand were frequently described in the active voice with a clear emphasis on the agent ("Mobs take over" [803]).

Furthermore, while violence perpetrated by opponents of the government was always described in the most shocking terms possible, while the language used to describe actions by the proponents and supporters of apartheid was what Steytler has called "laundered" [804]. The former were described using strongly emotional terms such as "assassins" [805] and "terrorists" [806]. The violence committed by agents of the state on the other hand was linguistically minimised. They "neutralised" [807] or "eliminated" [808] their enemies, they "opened fire in self defence" [809], or had, at worst, "killed" [810] someone.

---

[800] Butchart et al. (1998: 5), Tomaselli (1991 a: 22) and Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1)
[801] The Natal Mercury (14th December 1985: 16)
[802] Cape Times (14th September 1977 b: 2)
[803] The Star (17th June 1976 c: 1)
[804] Steytler (1990: 118)
[805] Rand Daily Mail (12th September 1977: 1)
[806] The Natal Mercury (25th May 1983: 1), Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 b: 1) and The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)
[807] The Argus (23rd May 1983 a: 1)
[808] Cape Times (11th June 1986: page unknown)
[809] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[810] Rand Daily Mail (22nd March 1985 b: 2)

Accordingly, if the reports talked of people having been murdered, it was safe to assume that the perpetrators had been opponents of the government and the victims were either whites or blacks who had collaborated with the state. Black civilians and members of the liberation movements on the other hand were killed or, at worst, shot. For example, when Don Mattera, a journalist for *The Star*, wrote in the caption for the photograph of Hector Petersen that a child had been "murdered", he was reprimanded by his superiors. "They insisted that I write, "killed"." [811] On the other hand, when Melville Edelstein, a white official for the West Rand Administration board, was beaten to death by black children on the same day, no one at *The Star* questioned Peter Bunkell's tribute stating that he had been "murdered". [812]

Similarly, on 14th June 1986 the Bureau for Information stated in one of its daily 'unrest reports': "Unfortunately seven people were killed. One person was killed when a police patrol was attacked. In black-on-black violence, six people were murdered." [813] This statement appeared unchanged in many South African newspapers. [814]

The newspapers' language was not the only thing affected by the general thinking in binary oppositions. The impact went further than that. The reliance on group-identities profoundly influenced the choice of incidents reported and created a specific schema for viewing violence. It was seen as a fight between two forces facing each other on a battlefield, which by no means reflected the true situation in the country. Every day, thousands of South Africans fell victim to violence that had nothing to do with group affiliations, such as rape, assault, and murder. However, such acts did not fit in the conceptual mould of 'violence' at the time, and therefore received little to no attention in the press. [815]

This pattern of reporting violence had one important consequence: The articles focussed largely on the perpetrators, making the violence appear victimless. If victims were mentioned at all, they were generally whites who had been injured or killed by opponents of apartheid, or white victims of crime. Blacks who had died at the hands of the police or the government's black surrogates were generally not quoted or shown in pictures, and were largely absent from the texts. Journalists preferred formulations that did not imply victimisation such as 'died' to alternatives such as 'were shot' or 'were murdered' (see for example "Biko died after hunger strike – Kruger" [816] or "10 die in Eastern Cape weekend unrest" [817]), and picture editors

---

[811] Quoted in Hopkins & Grange (2001: 100)
[812] Hopkins & Grange (2001: 100)
[813] Quoted in The Guardian (14th June 1986: 1) and Martin (1997: 65)
[814] This choice of words was not unique to press reports. Official literature made use of the same terminology. Du Preez for example describes the Defiance Campaign as follows: "The campaign started on 26 June 1952, and serious rioting started in Port Elizabeth where four Whites were murdered and nine Blacks killed. In Johannesburg the police shot and killed three Blacks and wounded four. In Kimberly, (…) thirteen blacks were killed and seventy-eight injured. In East London two Whites were murdered and eight Blacks killed." (du Preez (1982: 211-212))
[815] Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 6)
[816] Cape Times (14th September 1977 a: 1)
[817] Rand Daily Mail (25th March 1985: 1)

generally chose photographs of the perpetrators (in the case of crowds for example) or of the scene of the violence after the fact (in the case of burning buildings or vehicles). [818]

The reasons for doing so were diverse and depended on the skin colour of the people involved. If the victims were black their identity was generally of no importance to white readers, so they were omitted to make room for real news. Moreover, during the state of emergency, victims of state violence could not be named by law as the government wanted to take away the sympathy the English speaking population felt for them as underdogs in the political conflict. Also, there are indications that pro-government media tried to rob the black population of their right to see themselves as victims. [819] The reasons for not showing white victims were quite different. Apartheid had frequently been portrayed as the only defence against chaos and mayhem and showing white victims of violence too often would have undermined this image. As a result, readers might have got the impression that the NP was losing control or was not able to protect whites.

There was, however, one exception to this rule. If the violence had been perpetrated by members of the liberation movement, or could otherwise be blamed on 'terrorists', showing their victims helped reinforce the old stereotypes of a ruthlessly violent out-group while at the same time eliciting support for the state's heavy-handed reaction. In these cases, following the same rationale that prompted the state to allow detailed reports about ghastly acts of township violence despite the emergency regulations, the victims of supposed 'terrorist' attacks or, to a lesser extent, 'black-on black violence', were not only given ample attention, but were frequently put at the centre of the reports. As Herman & Chomsky put it, it was "as if a commissar had instructed the media: "Concentrate on the victims of enemy powers and forget about the victims of friends."" [820]

Besides discrediting the liberation movements and giving the in-group a feeling of cohesion, this also served to fuel the white population's siege mentality, which was supposed to aid the NP's consolidation of power. [821] As *The Star* commented on 14th August 1988, at the height of the state of emergency, about a bomb blast at Hyde Park Corner, a rich Johannesburg shopping area:

> "This blast, in one of the country's richest shopping centres, brings the war to the Northern Suburbs. It also brings home to the people in our upper echelons the reality of South Africa, and makes us conscious that we live in a society which is terrorised." [822]

---

[818] Simpson (1996: 2-3)
[819] Dennis Pather (11th April 2002) and Babs Abba Omar (5th June 2002) in interviews with the author, ANC (1997 b: 13) and TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 50
[820] Herman & Chomsky (1988: 32)
[821] Haysom (1990: 75)
[822] The Star (14th August 1988) quoted in Cock (1990: 45)

This short quote leaves no doubt about the perceived divisions in South African society. "We" are under attack, "we" are "terrorised", and the terror is not coming from within our own ranks. It is brought to us from the outside.

During the apartheid years, another group stood out through its absence: The observers, that is, the newspapers themselves. The readers were meant to take the place of the real-world spectators giving them a feeling of having been there and experiencing the reported event. Besides making the reporting more interesting, and thereby increasing sales, this has the effect of rendering the newspapers' involvement in shaping the symbolic acts invisible. By using the terminology of the official discourse, quoting in-group sources and describing the events with the help of commonly recognised themes, the reporter steps into the background and takes with him the report's ideological slant. The readers are given the impression to not be looking at an expression of a certain worldview, but at a mirror image of reality. They recognise the categories used in the reports and, because they were formed from within the same culture, their experiences in every-day life confirm their existence. Thus the things represented obtain independence from the media representing them and enter the realm of common sense. This helps naturalise the status quo, and propaganda is more readily accepted by its recipients because it is not recognised as such. [823]

The legal situation changed a lot at the end of the state of emergency and with it the range of things that could be published. However, this did not set in motion the kind of ideological revolution that the opponents of apartheid had hoped for. Many whites did not change their worldview even in the face of massive proof that it was inadequate to deal with everyday life in their country. This influenced the newspapers' editorial choices. Naturally, the press publish those stories that promise high sales, a category that more often than not is made-up of what Galtung & Ruge have called "olds" [824], namely relatively predictable, easily understandable items. In South Africa, this meant that the newspapers maintained their old descriptive patterns for years after the end of apartheid, thus extending the old ideas' lifespan into the new era. Only slowly did any new ideas on violence emerge, and those that have, still draw heavily on the old imagery. [825]

b)   The TRC and After: The Time of the Individual

The change in the newspapers' approach to violence was really set in motion by the TRC. I would not go as far as Commissioner Hugh Lewin and say that the TRC has "changed the nature of story-telling in South Africa" [826], but it certainly introduced a few new concepts to

---

[823] Lynch (1999: 9), Lewis (1994: 24), Kress (1985: 72-73), Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 193) and Fairclough (1992 a: 87)
[824] Galtung & Ruge (1965: 67)
[825] Ferreira da Rosa Ribeiro (1995: Summary, p. 2) and Tomaselli et al. (1987: 24)
[826] Lewin (1998: 1)

public discourse. For example, as John van Zyl, former editor of SABC TV news rightly pointed out, the term 'gross violation of human rights' did not exist in the media before the TRC took up its work. [827] Also, in their reporting of the TRC, the newspapers were more prepared than at any other time to abandon their drive to be totally objective, to be an invisible messenger so to speak. They were, as Garman put it, "saying "I" more freely and without censure" [828].

Moreover, the specific aim of the commission was to give the victims a voice and the newspapers went along with this approach in their reports. [829] Thus, for the first time, they were given a platform to publicly express their feelings, thoughts and worries. During the TRC's sessions, they could face their tormentors on neutral ground, meet them as equals, and try to understand, to forgive or to condemn. Their dignity, which was taken away by the anonymity of their suffering, could now be restored by the media. [830]

This led to an apparent change in editorial policy towards all people involved in violence. No longer were they hidden behind group identities, but were now generally portrayed as individuals committing acts of violence against other individuals (see chapter 4.6.4 a for more details). This seemingly positive development should not be viewed without suspicion, though. While it is commendable that the victims were finally brought out of the obscurity of apartheid-style reporting, and while it is true that blacks were now finally portrayed as individuals in the white press, neither step should be seen purely as a victory for humane journalism, but also as a continuation of courting the old prejudices among the old target readership. Behind the individual cases with their individual faces, the old binary opposition of identity and alterity remained intact. And while the two groups were no longer blacks and whites facing each other on the political battlefield, but rather the forces of good against evil, the groups themselves had not changed. They were merely re-labelled to fit the new language of political correctness. [831]

This can be proven by looking at the choice of incidents reported. During the transition period the newspapers focussed mainly on violence among blacks. Whites were rarely shown to be target of violent attacks. There are three possible reasons for this. One option is that it reflected the situation in the real world. While this is certainly true, I do not believe this to be the cause for the new approach to the reporting, as nothing had changed compared to the years before. Blacks had been victimised disproportionately for decades and the newspapers had never paid any attention to the fact. The second possibility is that it was a way of reaching out

---

[827] TRC (15th September 1997: John van Zyl, 7) and Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 49-50)
[828] Garman (1998: 2)
[829] Lewin (1998: 2)
[830] Hugon (Unknown: 2), Tutu (1999: 33), Lewin (1998: 2) and Simpson & van Zyl (1995: 7)
[831] Rauch (1993: 2)

to the previously ignored section of the population. I find this scenario a little more likely, for more black faces in a newspaper meant more sales in the townships, which in turn boosted the newspapers' circulation figures. However, even this factor should not be overestimated. Blacks were still economically weak and thus of no real interest to advertisers. To risk losing white readers for gaining black ones was not a good business strategy even in the years after the end of apartheid. This only became a factor after 1994 when the newspaper houses realised that it would be important for them to adjust to the new order. [832]

In my opinion the stories were chosen as part of an attempt to maintain white hegemony in South Africa. They gave the suffering a human face that readers could, at least remotely, relate to without actually making them feel threatened. It was like saying 'there are many people who fall prey to violence in our country, but don't worry too much, you are not among them'. This, however, already included the next line of thought, namely: 'You are not among them yet. Vote for the party you have successfully entrusted your security with for the past decades and you will be fine. However, if you switch to the other side, you will give power to the perpetrators of violence and god only knows what will happen then.' And surely enough, after the image of the new in-group of good sufferers besieged by the forces of violent evil was solidly established in the white readers' mind, more and more articles described black violence against whites, thus symbolising the advancing threat. [833]

Another clear indication for a continuation of the old stereotypes is the evil out-group, that of the perpetrators of violence. While no longer at the centre of attention, they are still very much talked about. During the period before the elections, the out-group were not, as they should have been in a completely free and fair press, the politicians who had erected the violent structure of apartheid, the soldiers and policemen who continued their futile fight against ordinary people in the townships well into the 1990s, the homeland leaders, the community councils or the vigilantes and street gangs who, under protection from Pretoria, had built-up powerful fiefdoms where violence was the norm and they alone were the law. These groups seemed to be absolved from any responsibility by the newspapers' continued silence about their misdeeds.

Only the white right wing whose attempt to stop the election wreaked havoc on South Africa seemed to have fallen from grace and was now demonised as part of the evil out-group. They, however, were still only portrayed as deviants, as strays from the in-group who, with the right response from the authorities, could be brought back into the mainstream. They were not the norm among violent criminals. This stereotype was reserved for young black males. [834]

---

[832] Daily Mail & Guardian (2nd December 1998: 3)
[833] Shaw (2002: 51)
[834] ANC (1996 b: 25), Retief (2002: 198), Posel (1989: 272) and Segal (1991: 20)

Blacks in general and young black men in particular continued to be seen as intrinsically violent and violence was portrayed as a mainly black phenomenon. [835]

The newspapers' attitude towards violence only really began to change in the new millennium. However, the transformation was moving slowly. In order to get a better idea of the situation, I counted the number of reports about violence in a randomly chosen cross-section of newspapers from 2002 [836] and coded them according to the skin colour of the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) [837]. Of a total of 44 articles on violence, 17 gave no indication of the skin colour of either the perpetrator or the victim. The remaining 27 were weighed heavily towards blacks. 16 had black perpetrators (b-b: 5; b-w: 4; b-?: 7) and 11 had black victims (b-b: 5; w-b: 2; ?-b: 4). Whites by comparison were the perpetrators in only six cases (w-w: 4; w-b: 2; w-?: 0) but the victims in nine (b-w: 4; w-w: 4; ?-w: 1), that is, 20.5% of the total and 40.1% of the cases where skin colour is known.

A few things should be said to explain these results. Firstly, the *Cape Times* did not carry a single story about violence on the day I picked, which partly reflects their editorial policy, but is also a factor that reduced the total number of reports. Secondly, whites are shown to be the perpetrators of violence in 13.6% of all reported cases (27.3 of those where skin colour is known), but only made-up around 10% of the population. This should not be interpreted as anti-white bias in the press, though. On the contrary. In my opinion it has more to do with their continuing focus on all matters pertaining to the white population. *The Citizen* for example did not carry a single report about violence that involved blacks, neither as perpetrators nor as victims.

Of the two cases where whites had committed violence against blacks one was a short article in the *Cape Argus* about the search for the suspects of the right-wing bombings in Soweto in November 2002 [838], which did not actually mention the identities of the victims. Only one, an article in the *Daily Dispatch* about a group of white rugby players who had been found guilty of beating to death a black teenager [839], actually showed white violence against blacks (see fig. 18). Moreover, the impact of the two articles was reduced by their size and location. Both were relatively small, tucked away relatively far inside the paper and had no images to accompany them. [840] This stood in stark contrast to, for example, *The Sowetan*'s coverage of the rugby players' trial and sentencing (see fig. 19).

---

[835] Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161), Frederikse (1987: 220-221), Segal (1991: 20), and Rauch (1993: 4)

[836] The Star of 23rd April and 21st May, the Cape Argus of 24th June and 12th November, The Citizen of 11th April, the Natal Witness of 12th April, the Daily Dispatch of 18th April and the Cape Times of 11th November

[837] B = black (in the non-apartheid sense), w = white, ? = unknown

[838] Cape Argus (12th November 2002: 6)

[839] Daily Dispatch (18th April 2002: 5)

[840] I should, however, point out that a fairly large story about the men's sentencing was published on page three in *The Herald* on 20th April 2002. It was illustrated with images of the victim's and the one of the perpetrator's parents and a lot more attentive to the victim and his family's reaction to the verdict as well as to the reaction of the South African public in general. (The Herald (20th April 2002: 3))

Figure 18: Racist violence in white… (Source: *Daily Dispatch* (18th April 2002: 5))

Figure 19: …and black – not quite the same thing! (Source: *Sowetan* (19th April 2002: 1))

Of the articles that made the front page, three had black perpetrators (b-b: 1; b-w: 1; b-?: 1), one had a white perpetrator (w-w), and in two cases the perpetrator was unknown (?-?: 1; ?-b: 1). I think it is therefore still safe to say that as far as the total number of reports go, column inches and overall attention (expressed for example through images, the time-span an event is covered and the position of a report within the paper or on a page) dedicated to the subject, violence against whites is overplayed while violence perpetrated by whites, especially against blacks, remains severely underreported. [841]

Furthermore, there is a clear difference in the reporting on different individuals, which can be traced back to the groups they belong to. With the exception of reports about the TRC, the articles generally do not allow the perpetrators of violence to speak for themselves. They are denied the power to define themselves, and are instead constructed by the outside force of the writer or so-called 'expert' sources, such as the police, government officials and academics. This reduced the complexity of the acts and made it easy to push them into the easily understandable one-size-fits-all mould of the crime story. However, it tends to rob them of their context and therefore their meaning, and clearly signals a lack of interest in the causes and possible ways of tackling violence other than the formulaic mantra of more police and tougher sentences. [842]

4.5   A Few Words About Framing

Now that we know exactly what the newspapers defined as violence at any given time in South African history and we are also familiar with all those involved in the violence, it is time to move on to the actual discourse analysis of the newspaper reports. However, before we can find the code used to report violence, we need to answer a slightly broader question: In terms of what concepts was violence lexicalised? Let me explain.

People do not simply perceive the world as it is. This would be physically impossible for they would be overwhelmed by a multitude of incomprehensible impressions devoid of meaning. In order to make any sense of our experience, we have to lend structure to it. This is most easily achieved through the use of what has variously been called 'frames' or 'narratives'. In his influential work *Frame Analysis*, Erving Goffman defined frames as "principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them" [843]. Thus, frames should be understood as ways of talking, and therefore thinking, of certain subjects. Frames are extremely important for any form of news reporting because they

---

[841] By comparison, the same count of articles in the City Press of 7th April, the Daily Sun of 16th July and the Sowetan of 5th November revealed the following ratio: b-b: 1; b-w: 0; b-?: 1; w-w: 0; w-b: 1; w-?: 1; ?-w: 0; ?-b: 3; ?-?: 5; total: 12. Thus, as far as the perpetrators go, blacks and whites each make-up 16.7% of the total and 57.1% of those whose skin colour is known. When it comes to victims, though, whites are not mentioned while blacks make-up 41.7% of the total and 100% of those cases where the skin colour is known.
[842] Frederikse (1987: 223)
[843] Goffman (1974: 10-11)

lay down the parameters for writing about a particular event. In doing so they remove most of the contradictions, mismatches and discontinuities that exist in all complex accounts of reality. An unknown enemy thus becomes a known challenge. [844]

The way these challenges are lexicalised in terms of a broader discourse is an important indicator of the culture that produced them, for those frames are not randomly chosen semantic fields. Each is meant to activate in the mind of the reader certain scripts (Graber called them "schemas" [845], Rumelhart uses the more common plural "schemata" [846], and van Dijk has termed them "mental models" [847]), defined by Fairclough as "stereotypical scenarios and sequences of events associated with them, which are part of the deeply embedded common sense of a culture" [848]. The scripts provide the background information about the world stored in people's memories and the frames used by the press serve as signals telling the audience which set of information is needed in a given situation. The ideological function of frames and scripts thus lies in their structuring reality. They aid in the formation of what van Dijk calls "situational models" [849], that is, mental representations of the type of situation described. For example, let us suppose that every one has certain mental scripts about the pattern and possible course of a demonstration. By choosing to describe one specific demonstration as a 'riot' as opposed to a 'peaceful march' the newspapers activate the corresponding script in their readers' minds, which helps them to better understand that one specific event described. [850]

While frames are present in all media output, they are particularly important in news reporting. The way the news is produced leads journalists to resort to the use of known formulae, choosing stories that have drawn public attention before and presenting them in known ways. The media tend to organise the world into stereotypical categories, which can be easily recognised by the audience and readily drawn on by writers of future stories. This is not only true for the definitions of a topic – that is, the question of what is covered by, for example, the term 'violence' – but also for the views and evaluations – that is, the question of how, for example, the term 'violence' is to be understood – of a topic. [851]

Both the definitions of a topic and its frames of reference are therefore very likely to be applied consistently through time. This has the effect that these categories eventually become naturalised, accepted as real by those who encounter them; and once they have entered the

---

[844] Kress (1985: 70-71), Altheide (1997: 651), Goffman (1974: 10-12), Fairclough (1992 a: 197), van Dijk (1988 b: 13 and 21), Snyder (1981: 183) and Trew (1979 a: 97)
[845] Graber (1984: 22-25)
[846] Rumelhart (1980: 33-40)
[847] van Dijk (1998 b: 26-27)
[848] Fairclough (1992 a: 196-197)
[849] van Dijk (1988 a: 146-147) and van Dijk (1988 b: 22)
[850] Gumpertz (1982: 21-22), Pan & Kosicki (1993: 60), Rummelhart (1980: 37), Früh (1983: 330), Kress (1983: 120), Harman & Husband (1974: 61) and van Dijk (1989 a: 104-105)
[851] Murdock (1973: 168) and Hall et al. (1978: 58-59)

realm of common sense, it seems that the subjects described cannot be seen any other way. All else becomes quite literally unthinkable. [852] And as we give little conscious thought to our beliefs in everyday life, we will generally act according to these linguistically built systems in most situations, which frequently leads people around us reacting in such a way as to confirm and validate our stereotypes. Thus, via the use of language, values and beliefs make the transition into the realm of the real, without the language users' conscious attempt at creating reality, and from there in turn influence future representations. [853]

Applied to my subject, this theory should mean that a number of key themes can be found in all South African press reports on violence. At first it seemed that no such universals existed. The reporting during the apartheid years appeared strikingly different from that after the first democratic elections in 1994. A thorough analysis, however, revealed a few items that were used across the board. These concepts were changing as far as their outward appearance was concerned, but their character and their message largely remained the same. True, the end of apartheid slightly ruptured this continuity. Such drastic changes of the political situation could not take place without being noticed in the media. And yet, some of the old concepts managed to slip into the new era. For example people's idea of what constitutes chaos and order has remained relatively unchanged. Also, as early as the 1970s, violence was presented as a largely black phenomenon. Instead of changing, this stereotype has actually been strengthened by the recent reporting and has since become an important aspect of white South Africans' fears of the black population. [854]

But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me instead now turn my attention to the frames used in the reporting of violence in the South African press.

4.5.1 Racial Difference

The concept of racial difference was, not surprisingly, of central importance for the news reporting before 1994. The whole ideological structure of apartheid was built on the premise that the deep-seated differences between people of different racial origins make a multi-racial society impossible to sustain. Peace among people, so the architects of apartheid claimed, could only be achieved through a strict separation of the races. However, besides reflecting this general worldview and supporting its rationale, the use of the 'racial differences' frame in the reporting of violence served a more specific and less lofty purpose. It was meant to keep the white population in power and the rest of South Africa available as cheap labour to sustain their comfortable lifestyle. This is not to say that the English press actively conspired with the

---

[852] Lewis (1994: 24), Sayer (1984: 51), Tomaselli (1996: 44-45), Sherizen (1978: 207), Goffman (1974: 24-25) and Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 3 and 10)

[853] Lippmann (1991 (1922): 11), Lynch (1999: 9), Grace (1987: 3-4 and 120-121), Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161), Snyder (1981: 184 and 193) and Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 145-146)

[854] Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161), Retief (2002: 197-198), Segal (1991: 20), and Rauch (1993: 4)

government to maintain apartheid. What I mean is that they were trapped in the official discourse of the day and did not notice the negative connotations of their reporting. So, despite their repeated claims to oppose the division of everyday life along racial lines, through their reporting on violence the press actually naturalised the view that humanity was divided into distinct racial groups that were intrinsically different from each other. [855]

One of the most obvious indicators of this frame was the racial designations that newspapers used to describe people. They served as a quick indicator of how to categorise people and thus how to interpret the situation described. Numerous examples from all newspapers (even the most progressive ones used racial designations in their reports) and all time periods (they were in use until 1990) can be found. I will give just a few examples to make my point:

- "A White man was dragged from a West Rand Board vehicle, beaten with stones, clubbed with sticks and left dead. (…) The students ordered the Black drivers out of the vans without injuring them." [856]

- "A White man was seriously injured when his car ploughed into a telephone pole after being stoned by a mob in a township near Parys." [857]

- "A young Black woman who tried to smuggle an arms cache into South Africa from Swaziland at the weekend was arrested by the South African Police at the Golela border post in Natal." [858]

- "Five commuters died instantly when two Black men opened fire on a crowd at Jeppe railway station. Fourteen were injured, eight critically." [859]

A number of things should be said about racial designations. For one, note that the words 'Black' and 'White' are capitalised. This was not uncommon during apartheid and should be viewed as more than just a matter of style. Capitalisation is rare in the English language and is generally reserved for proper names. Thus for a writer to capitalise the adjectives black and white must have a reason. In my opinion it was done to express the absoluteness of these properties. I find myself vindicated by a statement of a former manager of the Argus Group made to emphasise his papers' neutrality and objectivity: "We used nationality – Afrikaner, English, black and so on – rather than terms such as 'terrorist' or 'freedom fighter', we gave no social information that might have polarised the readers." [860] Clearly, to him these so-called "nationalities" were absolute and as such free from ideological connotations.

However, there was more to it. Racial designations were not applied equally across the board. While whites were generally named in the articles, blacks stayed anonymous. For example on

[855] Posel (1989: 263)
[856] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 b: 2)
[857] The Argus (22nd March 1985 d: 1)
[858] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1986: 2)
[859] Cape Times (7th September 1990: 1)
[860] Former manager of the Argus Group in an interview with the author, 13th March 2002

16th June 1976 *The Star* informed readers that "The death toll in today's bloody Soweto rioting had risen to at least six this afternoon, including two Black pupils and two White policemen. Another 40 people were taken to hospitals." [861] Then the article briefly sketches the events and elaborates on the victims. The dead are not identified beyond their skin colour, profession and age. The injured on the other hand are listed by name:

> "Mr P J Smart, a township manager, who suffered multiple injuries in the stone-throwing; Mrs J Thompson (concussion); Mrs P Kemp (fractured hand); Mrs S Carruthers (minor abrasions); and Mrs J Beatlie (minor abrasions)." [862]

But what about the remaining 35? Something Johann de Villiers said to me might explain: "When I started here we would say: "Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bloggs were killed in a motor accident and ten other people." And the ten other people happened to be black, because you didn't bother to…"" [863] And he would be right in this case, too. The other wounded happened to be black so *The Star* just didn't bother.

This brings me to my second point. Race was not only a matter of difference, but was frequently associated with value judgements as well. In connection with violence this meant that, in general, whites were shown as being attacked, being protected by the police, being ready for dialogue (for example in the case of the PFP), or wanting peace. What stood in their way was the political conflict between the government, who from the point of view of the English language press occupied a strange position almost outside the in-group but not really inside the out-group, and the representatives of the out-group. That out-group was associated with such acts as rioting, unrest, stoning, burning, looting, pillaging, rape, and many more. As we can see, the violence perpetrated by the out-group occupies a huge semantic field compared to that of the in-group, which basically consists of the odd sjambokking, teargas throwing and shooting, most other violent action is described in non violent terms, such as 'crowd control' or 'dispersing a gathering'. This again serves to emphasise the difference between the violent out-group and the largely peaceful in-group.

One would expect the 'racial differences' frame to be slowly phased out of use during the early 1990s and to disappear completely after 1994. This, however, did not happen. On the contrary, during the early 1990s racial difference received a boost in the shape of a concept that had been created during the late 1980s: that of 'tribalism'. Consider for example the following article that appeared under the headline "'The fighting makes us feel like men'" [864] in the *Cape Times* on 13th September 1990:

---

[861] The Star (16th June 1976 d: 1)
[862] The Star (16th June 1976 d: 1)
[863] Interview with the author, 25th July 2002
[864] Cape Times (13th September 1990 a: 5)

"The eight middle-aged Zulu hostel-dwellers share one pot of steamed corn for dinner. Afterwards they plan to get drunk in a beer hall. And perhaps later they'll go out and kill a few Xhosas.

Dormitory senior and acknowledged seer Joseph Dhladhla scoops his fingers through the stiff, bland porridge.

"It used to be that we would just eat here and then drink in the hall. But now our blood is up."

Dhladhla, 58, did not come to his hostel in Soweto to fight. Neither did an estimated 150 000 other residents of the migrant-worker hostels dotting Johannesburg's townships, which have become the centres of savage factional violence." [865]

This is just one in a series of reports during the 1980s and 1990s that portrayed the conflict between hostel dwellers and township residents as basically one between different ethnic groups, mainly between Zulus and Xhosas.

One important instrument in this pseudo-anthropological drive was the term 'faction fighting'. Somehow, the expression must have struck a cord with white South Africans – journalists and readers alike – because after its emergence in the early 1980s, it was increasingly used to describe any kind of tension among the black population, regardless of the individual context. Soon such diverse phenomena as political tensions among the black population, the violence perpetrated by government-sponsored vigilantes, and the taxi wars that emerged as part of the 'third force' became labelled as 'faction fighting'. If we consider, for example, the following passages from four different articles:

- *The Star*'s headline of an article on violence in rural Natal:

   "THOUSANDS OF ZULUS AND PONDOS CLASH IN CHRISTMAS OF BLOOD

   53 die in faction fight" [866]

- The *Cape Times* on the government's reaction to the slaughter in Crossroads:

   "Mr Le Grange said the police would act strongly whether witdoeke or comrades were involved.

   He said he was not prepared to allow one faction to think it could take the law into its own hands." [867]

- The *Sunday Times* on the murder of two people in Natal:

   "Two people were killed and a number of others wounded in various incidents of unrest throughout the country this week.

---

[865] Cape Times (13th September 1990 a: 5)
[866] The Star (26th December 1985: 1)
[867] Cape Times (13th June 1986 b: 2)

Mr Vivian Mamba of KwaMashu near Durban was killed by a group of Black youths on Monday. On Thursday Mr S Dube was killed in Claremont, also near Durban.

The deaths were believed to be related to the ongoing violence between political factions in Natal townships." [868]

- The *Cape Times* on a shootout among taxi drivers on the Cape Flats:

"Gun battles between feuding taxi factions erupted at the Nyanga bus terminus yesterday for the second time in 48 hours." [869]

When considered independently, none of these cases is particularly remarkable. In fact, the use of the term 'faction' seems to make sense. In each case we have two factions of some larger group – Africans, inhabitants of Crossroads, Natal township dwellers and taxi drivers – involved in a violent fight over land or resources.

This, however, does not tell the whole story. If we look at all four together, and take into account the historical context and the context of their production (the first three were written during the state of emergency), an entirely different picture emerges. First of all, all four incidents described were politically motivated. The "clash" in the first article was motivated by the apartheid government's drawing of homeland boundaries which entailed the expulsion of a large number of people from the land they had previously inhabited, because it was assigned to the other group. The attack on Crossroads was motivated by the witdoeke's aim of helping the police rid the area of anti-apartheid fighters. The third incident is an example of deaths resulting from Inkatha's government-sponsored onslaught against supporters of the ANC and finally, the fourth is an example of 'third force' violence. However, the way the incidents are described makes them seem virtually non-political. I say 'virtually', because one is described as violence between "political factions". Still, the term 'faction' places each of them firmly into the realm of Volkekunde's culture-nature-complex in an attempt to explain the fighting. It is as if to say where there are factions, they will necessarily fight. No further explanation is required for the reader to accept the information as complete.

This leads me to my next point. This de-politisation of the incidents was not done by accident or out of a lack of interest for black politics. What we have here is not even a case of black politics. With the exception of the first item, we are in fact looking at perfect examples of the apartheid state's campaign of terror against the black population. The witdoeke, Inkatha, and a number of taxi companies received financial support and weapons from the Pretoria regime to fight their dirty war for them. The NP used these surrogate forces precisely with the aim to conceal their involvement in the violence from the white population. And despite what they may say about fairness and non-racialism, unlike the alternative press, the mainstream papers

---

[868] Sunday Times (29th March 1987 a: 2)
[869] Cape Times (14th September 1990 a: 2)

colluded with the government in hiding the truth. By using the term 'faction fight', they turned a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed into one among the oppressed. Violence was thus made into a black phenomenon, which played into the hands of those who wanted to maintain the status quo in the face of a changing world. 'Keep whites in power,' it insinuated, 'lest they come for you next'. [870]

None of what I have just said explains the continued use of the term after 1990 though. Why would the media continue to work within the apartheid discourse? I think that it was partly because it served the interest of their target audience, but the main factor was surely their belief in the existence of such things as tribes and races in extra-linguistic reality. The media consumers and producers who had been socialised into the world of apartheid South Africa believed that ethnicity was an integral part of their black compatriots' identity, just as whiteness was an integral part of theirs. After fall of political apartheid they could not simply shed their point of view from one day to the next. They had to get used to the thought that everything they had accepted as real was suddenly considered an illusion, an errant belief, a wrong interpretation, and that they had been so easily fooled by the creators of this mirage without harbouring even the slightest suspicion. It therefore took some time before the new situation was accepted as reality. [871]

This process is still not complete today. I must admit that I was shocked and amazed to find racial designations in some newspaper articles as late as 2002. For example in an article about the murder trial of five (white) rugby players who had murdered a (black) teenager (see chapter 4.4.3 b for more details), *The Herald* wrote: "The large, peaceful crowd that gathered outside the court mostly welcomed the black judge's decision." [872] One could argue that in a case where racism was the subject of the trial, the skin colour of the judge would be important information for assessing his decision. On the other hand, a truly colour-blind country should have enough trust in its judiciary to see judges as colour-less and their decisions as expressions of the law, not of their race.

Similarly, when an unnamed woman was robbed in Knysna 11th April 2002, the regional *Knysna-Plett Herald* of 18th April told readers: "Two black men, who were later identified on the bank's security surveillance cameras, followed her from the bank and then approached her." [873] Why would the skin colour of the robbers be of any interest to the readers? It is not because the police are seeking the suspects. "Thanks to superb police follow-up work and the fact that their registration number was known, the two thieves were arrested in Plettenberg

---

[870] TRC (17th September 1997: Don Mattera, 7)
[871] Thornton (1994: 11), Trew (1979 a: 106), Tomaselli et al. (1987: 24) and TRC (15th September 1997: John van Zyl, 2)
[872] The Herald (20th April 2002: 3)
[873] Knysna-Plett Herald (18th April 2002: 5)

Bay at 15:00 on the same day." [874] In my opinion, the reason is the same as during the apartheid years. As Tony Heard's explained:

"Our guideline about race was if it isn't highly relevant to the story, … in most cases we would just take it out. And it just enraged sort of suburban whites who just wanted to know if it was a black guy. Then they could forget about it." [875]

Such extreme examples of racialism in the press are rare these days. Yet, even after the English language press by and large abolished the use of racial designations, they continued to portray racial differences. Other information, such as the names of the perpetrators (as well as the victims) or the location where the violence had occurred, were a clear indication to the skin colour of those involved. [876] Consider for example the following lead article from *The Star* of 17th May 2002:

" 'You deserve the death sentence'

They terrorised the suburbs, now the courts are expected to show no mercy

The day of reckoning has arrived for a pair of serial killers whose murder and robbery rampage had people living in terror for nearly a year.

Sentencing was expected today in the Johannesburg High Court trial of Simon Majola and Themba Isaac Nkosi, who were convicted yesterday of 37 crimes between them, including the murder of eight people by throwing them into Bruma Lake.

(…)

Majola (34), of Mofolo, Soweto, and Nkosi (23), of Vosloorus on the East Rand, were found to have robbed people of cash, jewellery and cellphones in Rhodes and Bezuidenhout parks and Bruma, all in Eastern Johannesburg.

(…)

"Five to six years ago, the state would not have hesitated to ask for the death sentence," said the prosecutor, advocate Herman Broosryk, in argument for sentencing.

(…)

At the peak of the pair's activities, the lake was drained after a number of bodies were found floating in it.

The adjacent shopping centre suffered a decline in patronage and talks of closure started doing the rounds.

---

[874] Knysna-Plett Herald (18th April 2002: 5)
[875] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002
[876] Mike Tissong explained to me that this is not an accident, but the result of more or less conscious editorial decisions. "The violent crime is still associated with blacks," he told me. (Interview, 16th July 2002)

"They attacked people in the safety of their cars. They preyed on defenceless people in early evenings or late at night. The court has to protect society and ensure that these people should not live in society again.

"The brazen attitude of both accused showed complete contempt for the laws of the land and they cannot be allowed to roam freely in society," said Broodryk.

"Rhodes Park is now inhabited by career criminals. Peace-loving people cannot visit the park unless they want to be attacked by the likes of the accused."

(…)" [877]

At first sight, this seems like a simple account of a day in court. However, if we scratch the surface a little, an image emerges that is dominated by the concept of race and in which value judgements are made about the different races. Thus, what we have above is a clear example of South Africa's new kind of subtle racism. So let's get scratching.

When looked at critically, the article reveals a binary opposition, which without too much digging and interpreting can be described as 'the suburbs' versus 'those who terrorise the suburbs'. Let us first have a closer look at the suburbs. The article describes an idyllic scenario of parks, lakes, shopping centres and relative wealth (cars, jewellery, cash and cellphones). This is the world of the in-group, *The Star*'s addressees, their home turf, everything they know. Now, through the events described in the article, this world is being "terrorised" and its "peace-loving" inhabitants are attacked by outsiders. They are coming from the townships – Soweto and Vosloorus – the world of the out-group, foreign, unknown and feared. The victims, who in this article remain unnamed, in my opinion to make it as easy as possible for a wide variety of real-life readers to identify with them, are used to symbolise the in-group. Yet, there are indications of who they are. They are residents of the area around Bruma or visitors to the nearby parks and shopping mall, both factors which point at them being white, middle class people. The out-group by contrast is very clearly defined: Young black males from the townships. This point was not lost on the readers, either. One lady (not knowing that I was in fact investigating the press) told me: "The papers are not allowed to report skin colour anymore so now they report in what area this is all happening." [878]

Now to the value judgements: The in-group is described in positive terms as "peace-loving", "defenceless" and in need of protection from the courts. The out-group is not even made-up of people. There is talk of "the pair" and "serial killers", but not 'men' or 'people'. They are encroaching on the world of the in-group, annihilating its "safety", threatening "society" as a whole. And their actions are described more in terms reserved for wild animals. They were on the "rampage", "attacked" people, "preyed" on them and must not "roam" free. To me the

---

[877] The Star (17th May 2002: 1)
[878] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002

message of the whole article is no different than that of any one during the apartheid years. The perfect world of white South Africans is under threat of being destroyed by black savages.

4.5.2 War

P.W. Botha's ascent to power in 1978 brought the military into politics and the rhetoric of 'total onslaught' into public discourse. The media could not escape the all-encompassing draw of the new war frenzy. Soon a new way of speaking and writing about violence emerged that I will call the 'war' frame. This was applied not only in the reporting on South Africa's attacks against its neighbours, but also slowly took over the domestic sphere. While during the Soweto Uprisings the dominant theme was one of chaos and mayhem, during the 1980s there was increasing talk of wars, battles, and defence.

The 'war' frame was mainly used to describe two entirely different conflicts: On the one hand it was used in the reporting on the government's fight against the liberation movements and the popular uprising in the townships, and on the other it surfaced in articles on the violence among different 'factions' – be they political, ethnic or occupational – in the townships. The 'war' frame was thus intimately linked with the 'racial differences' frame: The reality created by the latter was a prerequisite for the existence of the former. If there are no races or factions, there can be no war.

Let us look at a few examples of the 'war' frame in use. On 22nd March 1985, the day after the shooting in Uitenhage, the front page of the *Daily Dispatch* carried a small article on the front page above this main story titled "2 ANC men killed, arms cache found":

> "Police have shot dead two men – identified by the Commissioner, General Johan Coetzee, as "trained ANC terrorists" – after hand grenade and gun battles in the Eastern Transvaal.
>
> Five "terrorist collaborators" were also arrested and a cache of hand grenades, limpet mines and AKM rifles and ammunition was discovered." [879]

Although the protagonists of the story are the police rather than the SADF, the overall impression is one of a war going on. There are hand grenades, gun battles, mines and arms caches, hardly the stuff of everyday law enforcement. The position of the article in close proximity to the one about the shooting, which three times talks about how police opened fire in self defence, again a term that is closely related to the 'war' frame, serves to further reinforce its message: South Africa is under attack by a hostile force (the ANC) which is dangerous, heavily armed and uses surrogates (terrorist collaborators, or, in the case of Uitenhage the crowd) to help their cause. However, as the article also shows, there is nothing

---

[879] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 b: 1)

to fear from this 'total onslaught' because the country was protected by a strong and determined police force. The "ANC men [were] killed", the "arms cache [was] found" and the ""terrorist collaborators" were also arrested" – the perfect outcome of a 'total war'.

When used in this context, besides giving people a familiar way to conceptualise violence, the 'war' frame helped emphasise the distance between the non-violent in-group and the violent out-group that was cast in the role of an external enemy.

The 'war' frame had an entirely different function when it came to describing the violence among the black population. *The Argus*' front-page article in the Stop Press Edition on 20th June 1986 about the witdoeke's destruction of Crossroads is a good example of the application of the 'war' frame to this scenario:

> "The ominous pall of smoke blotting out the sun stained the sky to the Gordon's Bay coast.
>
> Flames leapt as new fires broke out in huts deep in the camp. Jets landing at nearby D F Malan airport were barely visible through the smoke.
>
> A war was raging in Crossroads.
>
> There were all the grim features of a conventional battle zone – teargas, gunfire, military and police vehicles, a Red Cross flag and helpless refugees clinging to salvaged possessions.
>
> Entering from one of the entrances off Lansdowne Road, we were beckoned by about 70 men wielding long sticks and kerries.
>
> They appeared to be controlling the flow of the traffic into the camp and most wore white rags around one arm – the sign of the "witdoeke", conservative township elders.
>
> (…)
>
> Several Casspirs and Buffels about 400 metres away, opposite New Crossroads, made occasional forays along the rubble-strewn road.
>
> A few minutes later about 300 youths wielding sticks burst out of the squatter camp into Lansdowne Road. Some were no older than nine or 10.
>
> They headed towards an advancing group of township elders. We watched the first exchanges of volleys of stones.
>
> Then … terror. From the elders' ranks several shots were fired and the youths sprinted frantically away.
>
> Screaming women abandoned their possessions. Red Cross staff jumped into their van and raced off as the youths hurtled by.
>
> Amid the chaos came a bizarre addition to the drama. A convoy of about 10 military police motorcyclists, sirens wailing, escorted an SADF car carrying several officers through the battle zone.

Meanwhile several youths had stopped their retreat and stood their ground, ducking and weaving as half-bricks whizzed about their heads from both sides – some thrown by elders at a range of no more than 20 metres.

In a series of brief, vicious Kerrie confrontations the "witdoeke" were forced back.

As they retreated Casspirs and police vans moved up.

A yellow van stopped near the hastily regrouping youths and a senior officer ran towards us. Youths started throwing rocks at the van. Policemen with shotguns jumped out and the youths fled into the shantytown."

(…)" [880]

The use of the 'war' frame in this article is, I think, undisputable. Even the author him/herself admits that he/she is describing a war. Battles, gunfire, Casspirs and Buffels, among other things, leave no doubt about that. Still, something is different than in the articles above. We will find no in-group for the reader to identify with other than the "we" of the author (although the out-group is quite visible in the headline "The day they blotted out the sun"), only very little information who is fighting whom, and no clear explanation why they are fighting or who is winning. There is a distinct impression of chaos. On the other hand, after a closer look, a sort of order emerges among those involved in the events. We have four clearly identifiable parties: The security forces and the Red Cross who are portrayed as outside forces, neutral in the war and with a mandate to aid and protect. The two warring groups are described as "township elders" and "youths", both of whom are associated with more or less negative terms ("wielding sticks", "terror", "chaos").

Moreover, the article combines the 'war' frame with that of 'racial differences'. There is, for example the pseudo-anthropological term "township elders", an attempt to link the township population with some imagined African tradition, for no one speaks of 'suburb elders'. We also once again find that whites are shown to be the bringers of peace to a world wrecked by the primitive blacks' natural tendency to fight. So, together these two frames once again serve to obscure the political dimension of the fight as well as the government's direct involvement in it. The questions I asked above – who is fighting, why are they fighting and who is winning – become unimportant because the answers have become clear within the presented logic. Blacks are fighting, because it is in their nature and no one will win for an end to the fighting is against their nature. Thus the press avoided saying that the apartheid regime's black lackeys are fighting a community that is active in the struggle against apartheid because success would mean power to them. And at the moment, the state may be winning individual battles, but they are losing the war.

---

[880] The Argus (20th May 1986: 1)

The war-frame continued to be used frequently during the period of transition, mainly in the descriptions of violence among the black population. For example the violence between hostel dwellers and township residents became increasingly lethal during the early 1990s, the newspapers frequently portrayed the events as a war between Zulus and Xhosas. The *Cape Times* of 13th September 1990 is a good case in point. The first edition carried an article titled "'The fighting makes us feel like men'" [881], in which eight hostel residents in Soweto explained why or how they got involved in violence. One passage read:

> "So when for reasons still unclear the vicious battles flared up on August 13 between the migrant Zulus and Soweto's predominantly Xhosa residents, Dhladhla explains: "We decided to fight like men because the fighting makes us feel like men … if we want to fight again later, we will.
>
> The violence has killed some 600 people." [882]

The main story in the second edition was an article titled "Horrific attacks erupt on Reef" [883] which again deals with the subject of inter-ethnic violence.

> "In one of the most horrific attacks since the upsurge of violence on the reef this year, 25 Zulu migrant workers were reportedly hacked to death at the Vusumuzi hostel in Tembisa yesterday by a group of men believed to be Xhosas.
>
> One man was decapitated." [884]

This is supplemented with a smaller article on the same page titled "Speaking Zulu cost man's life". The next day, the paper carried an article on taxi violence on page two which donned the sub-header "Factions in gun battle" [885].

Similarly, when photographer Ken Oosterbroek was killed by a stray bullet in violence-torn Thokoza, most newspapers portrayed him as a casualty of war. "Top newsman dies during gun battle" [886] *The Natal Mercury* wrote. "Photographer killed in Rand hostel battle" [887] the *Cape Times* had to say. And *The Star* even made Oosterbroek's death the main story the next day. "Oosterbroek among slain" [888] they wrote in one edition with a sub-headline "Running gun battles as National Peacekeeping Force troops and hostel dwellers clash in Thokoza" [889]. Another edition [890] put it slightly differently, but stayed true to the war frame: "Photographer slain in action" [891].

---

[881] Cape Times (13th September 1990 a: 5)
[882] Cape Times (13th September 1990 a: 5)
[883] Cape Times (13th September 1990 b: 1)
[884] Cape Times (13th September 1990 b: 1)
[885] Cape Times (13th September 1990 c: 1)
[886] The Natal Mercury (19th April 1994: 1)
[887] Cape Times (19th April 1994: 1)
[888] The Star (19th April 1994 k: 1)
[889] The Star (19th April 1994 k: 1)
[890] Unfortunately the editions that day were not named so that I have been unable to establish which came first.
[891] The Star (19th April 1994 a: 1)

The war-frame survived even after the 1994 elections when those politically motivated 'battles' died down. The opposing enemies were – as far as socio-economic and ethnic background goes – surprisingly similar to those that had fought the township battles of the 1980s and 90s. War was still being waged on two fronts in South Africa. On the one hand there were the conflicts among the black population, such as gang fights and vigilantism, and on the other hand there was the (granted, no longer white) establishment's fight for peace and order and against crime and violence. Both kinds of battle are for example present in the *Cape Argus'* front-page sub headline in the City Late Edition on 17th May 2002: "Blitz begins after 37 die in battles" [892]. This theme is repeatedly taken-up and leads the reader through the article towards the preferred reading like a red thread. Here are just a few examples (note the similarities to the reporting from the apartheid years):

> "By 5am, **army trucks** had rolled into Lotus River, Grassy Park and Parkwood Estate. (…) released gangsters were trying to link up with former girlfriends, some of whom lived in **areas controlled** by rival gangs. (…) In Mitchell's Plain 11 people died in gang **warfare** (…) [page break, continued on page 5] a police patrol **came under fire**. (…) the Six Bobs gang (…) **entered the Jester Kids' territory** several times this week opening fire from passing vehicles. (…) houses were being shot at and furniture damaged by gang **war**." [893] (My emphasis.)

4.5.3 Counter-Terrorism / Anti-Communism

This frame, in its totality as a fight against terrorism and communism, is clearly an apartheid phenomenon. In the eyes of the government, the ANC was a terrorist organisation that, aided by South African communists as well as the Soviet Union, had unleashed a ruthless campaign of violence on South Africa. This opinion was shared by the country's press – English and Afrikaans. As I have already elaborated in detail in chapter 4.3.1 a, ANC fighters were frequently referred to as 'terrorists', even when alternative terms would have been equally or even more appropriate. [894] Some editors tried to excuse this choice using some form of 'guideline' that was meant to help them distinguish terrorists from non-terrorists. Raymond Louw for example explained his paper's policy to me in an interview:

> "The English press did not classify everything as acts of terrorism. They, they described the bombing, for instance, of Amanzimtoti, they described that as an act of terrorism, because they described anything where violence was used against civilians as acts of terrorism. (…) The other ones, we tended not to use the term guerrilla, but

---

[892] Cape Argus (27th May 2002: 1)
[893] Cape Argus (17th May 2002 a: 1 and 5)
[894] Jeremy Gordin in an interview with the author, 31st July 2002, Brewer (1986: 138) and TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 6)

we talk about attacks, and we didn't describe them as terrorist attacks on police stations, and that sort of thing. Those were placed in a different category. (…) The Magoo's bomb, McBride's bomb in Durban in Magoo's bar, we described that as an act of terrorism. I still believe it is. And the, the blowing up of the police headquarters, the air force headquarters in Pretoria mainly because it wasn't only directed to the headquarters, but also people in the street who were killed." [895]

However, such explanations do not stand up to scrutiny. If we look at the de facto use of the term 'terrorism', we will find that no distinctions were made between acts that were aimed at military targets and those that hit civilians. In fact, the English press used 'terrorism' as a cover term for anything from sabotage ("A planned onslaught" *The Argus* wrote regarding the 1980 bombing of SASOL, and above that carried a kicker: "Sasol chief blames terrorists" [896]) to ANC attacks on military targets in South Africa ("Attack latest in tapestry of terror" [897] the *Cape Times* said of the bombing of the air force headquarters in Pretoria in 1983), to illegal border crossings ("Mr Vlok also said a group of "trained terrorists" was hiding in Mozambique waiting to infiltrate South Africa," [898] *The Argus* told readers in 1988) and the township uprising ("Urban terror increases dramatically in SA" [899] *The Star* warned in 1985). Even the children of Soweto were at times described as being involved in acts of terror ("Survivors tell of terror ordeal" [900] *The Natal Mercury* titled a story about two white men who had been attacked in the township on 16th June 1976).

The role of this frame in the communication strategy of the apartheid government is easy to explain. The terms 'terrorism' and 'communism', just like their stand-ins, 'the ANC' and 'the SACP' are what Lakoff & Johnson have termed "personification" [901] metaphors, that is, they are used in language as if they were in fact a person. Consider for example the use of the words 'ANC' and 'SACP' in the following newspaper headlines: "We sabotaged plants – ANC" (sub-headline) [902]; "SADF units blast ANC in Gaborone" [903]; "Revolutionary forces much stronger, says SACP" [904]. Similarly, in an article titled "'No one will stop me'", the *Sunday Star* published the following sentence:

"President Botha said the demonstrators were communist-inspired. He claimed that a Moscow-backed Communist Party based in London had the African National

---

[895] Interview with the author, 19th July 2002
[896] The Argus (2nd June 1980 d: 1)
[897] Cape Times (23rd May 1983: 2)
[898] The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)
[899] The Star (23rd December 1985: 3)
[900] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 d: 5)
[901] Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 33)
[902] The Star (2nd June 1980 c: 1)
[903] The Star (14th June 1985: 1)
[904] Pretoria News (13th June 1986 b: 5)

Congress under its control. Now they had started infiltrating the new movement, the UDF (United Democratic Front)." [905]

To many readers it might seem absurd to refer to these examples as personifications of a conceptual entity, but if we look at the terms grammatically, we will see that while they are closely linked to people, they do not in fact denote persons themselves. We cannot meet the ANC in a restaurant, nor can we have a conversation with the Communist Party. We can only meet communists or talk to ANC members. Thus, if the newspapers had wanted to be precise, they would have written things along the lines of 'We sabotaged plants – ANC leadership' or 'SADF units blast homes of ANC members in Gaborone'. So why did they choose not to?

The use of these terms in official discourse in South Africa served two purposes. Firstly, it helped to rob the struggle against apartheid of its human face, for how can we ask, 'Who is terrorism?' and secondly it gave the state (another example of personification) a visible enemy which was easily demonised by reference to a culturally salient category. [906]

The above-said is true even when actual persons were written about. As none of the leading members of the liberation movements could legally be quoted, 'the ANC' and its brothers-in-arms remained nameless and faceless "Red threat" [907], "diabolical (Marxist) forces" [908], "communists" [909], "ANC terrorists" [910], "ANC insurgents" [911], "ANC members" [912] and the like, who were generally associated with negative character traits or actions. The *Pretoria News* for example explained why a state of emergency had to be declared as follows:

"Mr. Botha said violence had also increased in white areas.

The largest increase, however had occurred in black communities where violence had been imposed on "decent members of the black community by faceless so-called 'comrades'."

This action, encouraged by the ANC and its followers, had made the burning of innocent people who disagree with them a daily occurrence.

It was clear that black revolutionaries did not enjoy the support of the majority of blacks. The revolutionaries therefore resorted to methods of intimidation to gain control.

The government had, after thorough consideration and with due regard for the economic, political and security implications, taken certain security actions." [913]

---

[905] Sunday Star (24th March 1985: 20)
[906] Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 33-34)
[907] Weekend Argus (21st May 1983 b: 3)
[908] The Natal Mercury (16th June 1986: 1)
[909] Weekend Argus (21st May 1983 c: 3)
[910] The Natal Mercury (25th May 1983: 1)
[911] The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)
[912] The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)
[913] Pretoria News (13th June 1986 a: 5)

And *The Natal Mercury* was even more straightforward about its attitude towards the liberation movements. After a car bomb exploded outside Durban's Magoo's and Why Not bars on 14th June 1986, the newspaper exclaimed in an opinion piece on the front page: "No time for despondency" [914]. The last section of the article reads:

> "We reject Mr. Pik Botha's despondent talk of having to accept 'poverty' and a 'lowering of standards' as the price of resisting 'the diabolical (Marxist) forces'.
>
> They must be put down, hounded and brought to justice like the cowardly mad-dog bombers whose gutlessness has them prey on unsuspecting innocents and whole latest iniquity brands them for what they are." [915]

Government supporters hoped that such reporting would get people to see the ANC, the SACP, Soviet communism, and terrorism as synonymous and learned to fear them/it as a dangerous adversary, whose defeat justified certain political and military actions on the part of the government, and demanded support and sacrifices from them.

4.5.4 Law and Order

Law and order played a major role in public discourse during the apartheid years. At first that seems understandable. In the face of what they saw as a violent onslaught it must have been natural for the authorities to take order as the one way to restore their control over the population. At second sight it is not quite so straightforward. As Gans pointed out:

> "Order is a meaningless term unless one specifies what order and whose order is being valued. For one thing, there are different types of order; a society can have violence in the streets and a stable family life at home, or public peace and a high rate of family instability. Also, what order is will be judged differently by different people. To the affluent, the slums will appear orderly as long as there are no disturbances and crime does not spill over into wealthy districts; but for slum dwellers, order cannot exist until exploitation, as well as crime, is eliminated." [916]

This input is very valuable to the present discussion, for the term 'order' was in fact very narrowly defined in South Africa. In NP-speak 'order' was not primarily the opposite of 'disorder', but rather of violence. As President Botha declared in May 1986:

> "[T]he Government is adamant to maintain order. People who perpetrate violence must take note that if they do not renounce violence, they will inevitably face the full power at the disposal of the state, which has not nearly been applied to the full." [917]

---

[914] The Natal Mercury (16th June 1986: 1)
[915] The Natal Mercury (16th June 1986: 1)
[916] Gans (1979: 56-57)
[917] P.W. Botha, 15th May 1986, quoted in Bureau for Information (1986: 27)

Obviously, the "people who perpetrate violence" that Botha was referring to were neither the security forces, who were not using 'violence', but 'power', nor petty criminals, wife beaters or abusive employers. No, his warning was aimed at political activists who used violence to achieve black liberation. Order and disorder/violence were judged not by what was happening in the private sphere of the individual, but by the events in the streets. The newspapers generally accepted this view and, in their reporting, placed the emphasis on public forms of violence such as 'disturbances', 'public violence', 'riots' or 'unrest'.

The opposite of these – 'order', 'force', and 'power' – all fell into the realm of the state, and violence therefore soon became associated exclusively with the opponents of the state. Representatives of public institutions, such as policemen, soldiers, or prison officials, are by definition seen as non-violent. What they are shown to be doing with their sjamboks, teargas and guns is the exact opposite of violence: the restoration and maintenance of order. Even in the most critical newspapers, there are no specific expressions that describe police violence in terms of the 'unrest' – 'order' scale. Some newspapers, such as the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Cape Times*, did at time point out the security forces' violent behaviour [918], but even they generally did not portray it as irrational or chaotic.

The closest thing to a 'cop unrest' I found was the front page of the *Cape Times* of 25th October 1985 (see fig. 15 in chapter 4.3.1 b). The main headline "Chaos in City centre" [919] on its own would not strike me as extraordinary, but if we look at the whole page, a different picture emerges. In the other two headlines ("Bo-Kaap violence: Police shoot pupil" [920] and "Police beat, arrest press" [921]) the policemen are in the grammatical agent position of sentences that describe negative action, a rarity during the apartheid years. Moreover, with one exception, all images show the police in action, again underlining their real-world agency. If we view the main headline against this background it is more than easy to find the meaning 'Police cause chaos in City centre'. Moreover, the article cites witness to the police violence as saying:

> "They went up and down the street behaving like children.
>
> Nobody seemed to be in charge. I saw them whipping people who were trying to get out their way. How can they be allowed to act like that, their behaviour was appalling." [922]

Such language was at that time generally reserved for the actions of the black population, so, while the page seems (and is) far from revolutionary in its portrayal of the police, it did stand

---

[918] See for example the Rand Daily Mail (18th June 1976 b: 39) and Cape Times (25th October 1985 a: 1)
[919] Cape Times (25th October 1985 a: 1)
[920] Cape Times (25th October 1985 b: 1)
[921] Cape Times (25th October 1985 c: 1)
[922] Cape Times (25th October 1985 a: 1)

out against the majority of newspaper reports, which generally attempted not to antagonise the authorities for fear of repercussions.

When describing police violence, the newspapers normally did not make any reference to the randomness of the security forces' actions or their attacks on non-violent protesters or uninvolved bystanders. We read sentences such as "Police used tearsmoke and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd estimated at between 150 and 200 youths and the road was temporarily closed." [923], "Rubber bullets, tear-gas used as unrest continues" [924] or "Police used tear-gas to disperse the stone-throwers. No injuries were reported." [925]. This is in stark contrast to the descriptions of violent township dwellers. Even in behaving violently, the policemen are portrayed as acting calmly, thoughtfully and purposefully. They do not 'fire rubber bullets', 'throw teargas' or 'whip' people; they "use" teargas and rubber bullets "to" achieve something, a construction that implies clearly planned, goal oriented behaviour. And there is always a justification for their actions: "the crowd", "unrest" or "stone-throwers".

The same image emerges when we look at the coverage of the shooting in Uitenhage in March 1985. While most newspapers I surveyed were critical of the police and their actions – *The Star* talked of "police brutality" [926] and quoted "witnesses" [927] who deny that the police had warned the marchers before shooting and the *Rand Daily Mail* called the events a "bloodbath" [928] – when it came to reporting the 'facts' they generally offered just the explanation for the events that the government wanted people to see. The *Daily Dispatch* for example wrote:

> "**17 dead in Uitenhage**
>
> Le Grange: police fired in self-defence
>
> Seventeen people died and 19 were wounded when police opened fire in self defence on a crowd of between 3 000 and 4 000 near Uitenhage yesterday, the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, said yesterday." [929]

By the next day, many papers did start questioning this official version of the events. But at the same time they continued to provide the government with a platform with voicing its views. For example, in an article in the *Cape Times* titled "'Not a peaceful crowd of mourners'" the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, is quoted as saying:

> "The fact that many people were armed with stones, sticks, bricks and even petrol bombs makes it clear that they were not a peaceful crowd of mourners on their way to a funeral." [930]

[923] Daily Dispatch (1st October 1984: 1)
[924] The Argus (22nd March 1985 d: 1)
[925] The Natal Mercury (2nd March 1990: 3)
[926] The Star (23rd March 1985: 1)
[927] The Star (22nd March 1985: 1)
[928] Rand Daily Mail (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[929] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[930] Cape Times (23rd March 1985 b: 4)

As pressure mounted from Britain and America (but also from the English language press) on the South African government to address the discrepancy between accounts from residents and the police, and to clarify what had happened in Uitenhage, the following reaction from Botha was published (admittedly tucked away on the inside pages) by the *Sunday Star* under the headline "'No one will stop me'":

> "President Botha told Americans at the weekend that he was determined to maintain order in South Africa and nobody in the world was going to stop him.
>
> He was answering a question during an interview on the ABC television programme "Nightline" about the killing of 18 black people in Langa on Thursday." [931]

Thus, the shooting of 18 (or more) unarmed people was actually a case of maintaining order. Police violence committed in the act of duty remains unseen from the point of view of the 'law and order' frame. [932]

As far as Gans' second category – the eye of the beholder – is considered, white South Africans certainly fit the description of the wealthy. During the 1960s and to a lesser extent also during the 1970s, the townships used to be seen as good places for Africans to live. The Soweto Uprisings made the first dent in that theory when it became clear to whites that the township population was in fact terrorised – not by the government, though, but by the liberation movements. One young man told me:

> "You know, the army had to go in. The people there were terrorised by their own people. The comrades, you know what they did? When people tried to go to work they would be nacklaced, because, you know, there was a strike. And they set-up checkpoints at the taxi ranks and search your bags. And when you went to white shops like Pick'n Pay, they would make you eat the stuff right there. Drink oil and dish soap! So people were just terrorised and afraid all the time. They needed us." [933]

This view became widespread during the 1980s and 1990s as South Africa's black ghettos became identified with chaos and mayhem, or to quote the *Pretoria News* (who in turn directly quoted P.W. Botha), "violence had been imposed on "decent members of the black community by faceless so-called 'comrades'."" [934]

The 'law and order' frame was slowly phased out after the 1994 elections. The term 'order' had become too strongly associated with, and defined as, the opposite of political strife to be of any use after the transition to democracy. 'Law', however, was still both untainted and very much useful. It was thus repackaged as the opposite of crime to form the centre of a new frame, that of 'law enforcement'.

---

[931] Sunday Star (24th March 1985: 20)
[932] Trew (1979 a: 114-115)
[933] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004
[934] Pretoria News (13th June 1986 a: 5)

4.5.5 Law enforcement

The most noticeable development in the reporting about violence in South Africa since the 1994 elections has been a shift in attention away from politics and towards crime. This change of focus has had a big impact not only on the kinds of events covered, but also on the way they were presented. One important change was that in news sources. Before 1994, violence had mainly been covered by reporters in the field who supplemented their own material with police reports, press conferences, court proceedings and the public relations output of various government departments, especially during the state of emergency. Due to the nature of the incidents covered, journalists could go and see the action for themselves, visit the townships, witness the violence and talk to those involved. Crime is generally not available for coverage like that. It comes unannounced, happens relatively quickly and the perpetrators do not tend to stick around to give interviews later. Criminal violence is therefore generally covered after it has already happened.

This calls for a different approach. Journalists can no longer just walk the streets in the hope of witnessing a crime or finding a new crime scene. They have to go to where they are sure to obtain information about it – the courts and police stations throughout the country. Thus, what I said about the reporting of criminal violence during the apartheid years now became true for most violence: It was filtered through the eyes of the criminal justice system, whose point of view the journalists make their own. Law enforcement and court officials are quoted more often than the people who were directly involved in the violence, and their views and decisions as well as the evidence presented to them are often reported as fact. And while the testimony of victims and expert sources (such as scientists or NGO workers) is at times used to supplement the court report, the perpetrators are generally not given the right to explain their side of the story. The readers' perspective onto violence is therefore exclusively that of the socio-cultural in-group of the newspaper, ordinary citizens and their protectors.

The newspapers' view of the police also changed substantially. They morphed from soldiers in a war against terror or enemies of the people into a community-oriented organisation with a mission to serve and protect all citizens of South Africa. In accordance with the new attitude newspapers portrayed the policemen as being part of the community, being among the people and working with and for them. Where previously the press had spoken of "police action" [935], "control" [936] and police who had "opened fire" [937], they now talked of "police work" [938], and detectives who are "investigating" [939] crimes and "arresting" [940] suspects.

---

[935] The Star (17th June 1976 a: 3) and Cape Times (17th June 1986: 2)
[936] The Argus (21st June 1976 b: 1) and Natal Mercury (16th December 1985 a: 2)
[937] The Star (24th December 1985: 3) and Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[938] The Star (12th July 2002: 1) and Knysna-Plett Herald (18th April 2002: 5)
[939] Daily News (12th April 2002 a: 2) and The Citizen (9th April 2002: 3)

In doing so they are now in agreement with the government and the police themselves who, after the end of apartheid, have undergone a substantial change in self-perception and perceived mission. They have metamorphosed, as Malan put it, "from a police force to a police service" [941]. This included a complete demilitarisation of ranks and symbols and a new philosophy of "community policing" [942] and a renaming of the Ministry of Law and Order into the Ministry of Safety and Security.

Photographs underwent a similar change. Policemen were no longer pictured in camouflage or riot gear, standing around military vehicles. They were shown wearing ordinary police uniforms or even civilian clothing (see for example fig. 62 in chapter 4.6.4 b) and were either among the community, comforting victims, or at work on a crime scene (see for example figs. 20 and 30).

police officers lead two criminals into a police van after they were caught attempting to rob a funeral parlour in Orlando west. The robbers shot the shop's owner and fled after being persued and caught by residents.
Picture by PETROS RAPULE

Public helps in arrest of would-be robbers

By CECIL MOTSEPE

MEMBERS of the public yesterday assisted in the arrest of two Soweto youths after an attempted robbery at a funeral parlour in Orlando West.

A 56-year-old undertaker, Jeffrey Sibanyoni, was shot and wounded.

Khosi Ludonga, a reception-

ist at the undertakers, said the suspects approached her at the entrance under pretext that they had a dead relative.

One of them suddenly pushed her into the premises and demanded cash at gunpoint.

Mr Sibanyoni was shot when he tried to intervene.

Ms Ludonga said the suspects

ran away, giving her a chance to call for help.

An eyewitness, Vincent Dladla, and other community members gave chase and arrested one suspect, recovering a 9mm pistol.

Police found the second suspect and another pistol was recovered.

Figure 20: The new police service at work (Source: *The Citizen* (2nd July 2002: 6))

This new approach to violence has had serious consequences for crime reporting in general. As several journalists told me during our interviews, after 1994 the media "religiously reported everything we could get our hands on." [943]. After a while a kind of fatigue with the subject set in, though. Nowadays only the most gruesome crimes are made into big stories. In 1999 the *Sunday Times* even admitted in an article on rape in South Africa:

[940] Mail & Guardian (28th June 2002: 5) and Cape Argus (6th December 2001 a: 3)
[941] Malan (1999: 2)
[942] SAPS (Unknown b: 1)
[943] Johann de Villiers in an interview with the author, 25th May 2002

"News organisations have an economic imperative report only that which is likely to sell their product. And, in the face of media saturation with normal, standard rape cases, only the very extraordinary make the news." [944]

As a consequence non-violent crime rarely made the headlines, which led to the phenomena of crime and violence largely converging in people's heads. This blurring of the terminological boundary in turn brought two further problems. On the one hand, it has made the ongoing violence appear much worse than it is. If all crimes are violent, so the argument goes, then a high crime rate must mean that there is also a large risk of falling victim to violence. This, however, is misconceived, for non-violent crimes such as theft, pick pocketing and fraud constitute a big portion of crime in South Africa. On the other hand, it has led people to underestimate the rate of violence that occurs in the private sphere and is not reported either to the authorities or in the newspapers, namely domestic violence, child abuse and the corporal punishment of domestic staff and other workers. Violence has come to be equated with unknown outsiders. [945]

4.6   Images of Violence

Now that we have fought our way through all necessary background information needed for understanding South African news reports, it is finally time to turn to the analysis of the code used by the country's English language press to describe violence. First, however, I should utter a note of caution. What I am about to describe are merely the intended readings, that is, the meaning intended by the text's producers. While reading the following sub-chapters, one should always keep in mind that opposing decodings of any text are not only possible, but happen quite frequently. Still, as far as I could tell during my own research, the majority of white South African newspaper readers tended to find the intended meaning in the texts, especially during the apartheid years. The general public rarely left the path of mainstream thought and thus remained untouched by ideological revolutions. [946]

Accordingly, it is safe to assume that at any given point in time the majority of South African English speakers would have understood violence to be exactly as I have described it in the past sub-chapters. During the apartheid years and the early 1990s, it was seen as composed of individual events, motivated by politics and perpetrated by groups, while since the 1994 elections it has been perceived as a symptom of the country's omnipresent crime problem where individual perpetrators commit violence against individual victims. This way of portraying the world has had an impact on the imagery used to describe violence.

---

[944] Sunday Times (4th July 1999: 2)
[945] Hamber & Lewis (1998: 2) and Tutu (1999: 176)
[946] Wodak (2002: 15)

During the apartheid years in particular the reliance on presenting society as split naturally between a good in-group and a bad out-group, while focussing exclusively on the perpetrators of violence, created a dilemma for the newspapers. How do you talk about violence? Or rather, who is committing it? The in-group, namely the white population, was considered to be civilised and peaceful. If the press had admitted that whites used violence to reach their political goals, they would have presented their readers as politically intolerant and no more civilised than the supposed savages they were trying to keep in check.

Also, the apartheid government saw itself as a protector of law and order and could therefore under no circumstance be shown to be violent. This would have put the state at the same level as the supposed terrorists in the liberation movements. The NP would then surely have lost the white voters' support. [947] Naturally, this was not supposed to happen. As the chief of the SADF stated in a memo titled *Guidelines on Statements in Respect of Responsible Reporting*, which stated quite clearly: "[T]he least said, the better" [948]. However, keeping all information about its engagement in the townships under wraps was not in the interest of the government. Officials knew that the public would find out about the uprisings one way or another, so they might as well release the information in a way that would reassure people that they were still very much in control. [949] This also prevented a head-on collision with the English press because, even though they accepted a certain degree of government interference, they would not have accepted a blanket ban on reporting from the townships.

The way out of this bind was easier than it seems at first sight. The key lay in phrases like 'black-on-black violence' and 'law and order policing' which condensed complicated and emotionally laden concepts into simple terms that provided an easy way of referring to things from a certain perspective. They were generally drawn from popular myths and as such fit in perfectly the public's view of the world. Such seemingly common-sense designations link the depicted event with the historical knowledge of a culture, thereby helping the reader to understand and interpret the given situation in terms of culturally universal values. For example, while violence was decried as an expression of instinct-driven behaviour that should have been left behind on a lower level of cultural development, it was also seen as a sign of power and control. Thus, depending on whether the reports portrayed the demonised black resistance or the widely demanded show of government force, different myths were drawn upon to explain the violence as either instinct-driven madness or protective force. [950]

Violence perpetrated by whites was generally portrayed as a form of self-defence against an external danger. To reinforce this image the apartheid government's involvement in the

---

[947] TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 50 and Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161)
[948] Quoted in Frederikse (1987: 211)
[949] Jackson (1993: 145)
[950] Butchart, Hamber, Terre Blanche & Seedat (1998: 2), Rauch (1993: 3) and Posel (1990: 158-159)

violence in their own country and in the rest of Africa was continuously denied. Similarly, white violence outside the realms of the state, such as the attacks by right-wing movements or white anti-apartheid fighters, as well as extra-legal violence perpetrated by the agents of the apartheid government, was either ignored or portrayed as an aberration from the norm. For the same reason criminal violence among whites and white abuse of black domestic staff and farm hands was not given much attention either. A white skin and violence were supposed to appear incompatible. [951]

Instead, violence was presented almost exclusively as a black phenomenon. However, as I have already mentioned, not just any black person committing violence was seen as a violent black. [952] This image was reserved for those who had been constructed as the 'other', the enemies of the state. In line with this idea, violence committed by black people who stood on the side of the apartheid state was played down or de-politicised with the help of such terms as 'black-on-black violence'. True black violence was associated with something completely different: anarchy and chaos as embodied by the fight of the liberation movements. In the government's eyes they were uncivilised terrorists who tried to overthrow law and order in a most brutal way, and hand the country over to the forces of destruction. [953]

One would expect the content of the articles to have changed substantially after 1990 and it certainly did in parts. Suddenly many previously white newspapers began showing black faces and reporting from the townships. However, angle of the reports remained largely the same. Many newspapers did not even try to get closer to the roots of the problem of violence, either analytically or physically. As they had done for the past hundred years, the decision-makers remained in their mostly white offices in the white areas and viewed the outside world through the filter of their own worldview. This was the perspective from which they judged and modified the articles brought in by reporters in the field. Accordingly, the symbols used in the reports remained largely the same and the old images were merely adapted to fit a few new scenarios. [954] A few have actually been phased out, mainly because their referent in extra-medial reality has disappeared. And in order to cope with the new emphasis on crime, a number of new ones have been introduced. In all, though, the code used to describe violence has not changed any more than the structure of the message system as a whole.

I have structured the following sub-chapters according to this structure. In sub-chapters 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 respectively I will be dealing with the images of in-group and out-group violence that were constructed during the apartheid years, and trace their developments through to the

---

[951] Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 26), TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap, 3, Para 66, Louw & Tomaselli (1989: 33), Reeves (1960: 949), Posel (1990: 154-155 and 171) and Potter (1975: 165-166)
[952] Simpson (1993: 2)
[953] Tomaselli et al. (1987: 24), Simpson (1993: 2), van der Spuy (1990: 94) and Frederikse (1987: 212)
[954] Simpson (1997: 1), Skjerdal (1997: 5), ANC (1996 b: 25) and Segal (1991: 20)

present day. Sub-chapter 4.6.4 is dedicated to any new symbols that emerged after the transition to democracy [955]. This should give the reader a comprehensive understanding of what violence means to South African journalists today and how this meaning came about.

4.6.1 State Violence: From 'Our' Strength to 'Their' Abuse of Power

The job of presenting the state violence from a positive angle was given mainly to the pro-government media, especially the SABC. [956] The English language press played only a subordinate role. Touting the government's victories was against their idea of an independent press. However, the NP could at least count on their silence about the violence it committed against its own citizens. Even if the journalists occasionally wrote about the police and army's violent behaviour in the townships, they were regularly censored by their managers before the newspaper was published. [957]

The only reports to reach readers were those that stayed within the government prescribed boundaries of thinking. Quite often state violence was not mentioned at all. Instead, the papers only portrayed the violent enemy in the hope that this would give the impression that they had included images of the state's strength in the report as well. Due to people's belief in the duality of all things, showing one side of the metaphorical medal automatically implied the existence of the opposite. [958] This way, government violence could be kept quiet without giving the impression of weakness and "the war being waged behind the myriad images of protest has gone unnoticed by vast numbers of South Africans" [959].

The reports were, for example, frequently accompanied by conflicting visual signs, such as photographs of symbols of black violence. By showing a picture of a group of blacks, the newspapers implied potential violence and an accompanying text could then describe their (frequently violent) dispersal by the police as prevention of violence. This way, the police were shown in a good light and the state's strength could be portrayed without ever having to describe the violence committed by its representatives. The much more powerful pictorial representations of black violence also pushed the actual news to the background. The only thing that remained in people's heads in the end was the images of violent blacks. [960]

If the newspapers felt that a more direct approach was needed, but they still did not want to talk about 'state violence', they reminded their readers that the ongoing violence was confined solely to black South Africa and that their homes were worlds away from this chaos. Thus the

---

[955] I decided against giving a specific cut-off date because I believe that there really insn't one. The changes happened over several years starting with the end of the state of emergency in 1990. They dragged out at least until the TRC took up its work in 1996, and some aspects of the news reporting are still evolving today.

[956] TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 16-19 and 56 and TRC (15th September 1997: Johan Pretorius, 10)

[957] Akhalwaya (1990: 52) and TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 50

[958] Lynch (1999: 9-10), Cock (1990: 68), Tomaselli et al. (1987: 134), TRC Report, Vol 5, Chap 6, Para 98 and Posel (1990: 154-155)

[959] S. Davis, 1987, *Apartheid's Rebels. Inside South Africa's Hidden War*, quoted in Cock (1990: 68)

[960] Cock (1990: 65), Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1), Simpson & Vogelman (1989 a: 2) and Rauch & Storey (1998: 8)

concept of 'law and order' became a central feature of official discourse. [961] As President Botha declared in a television interview on 25th March 1985: "I am going to keep order in South Africa and no one is going to stop me keeping order." [962]

The meaning of this expression is explained in a commentary by the Canadian secret service:

> "Within South Africa until recently, the use of the term "law and order" has generally meant the maintenance of white-minority rule and those government policies supporting racial segregation or apartheid. Basically interchangeably with the term "internal security", it referred in essence to insuring the security <u>and</u> prosperity of the white population in South Africa." [963]

This concept always came into use when it was impossible to not at least mention the state violence. In such cases the state's successes against 'communists' and 'terrorists' were glorified, and it was emphasised that the government's strength had prevented them from committing acts of violence. Any violence the state used in such cases was described as not only permissible, but necessary to keep the danger in check. [964] The journalists remained as vague as possible in their description of the events and their language was very sober, at times even scientific. The situation in the townships was portrayed as a problem to which a solution was being offered, or they talked of the violence in terms of duties and responsibilities, such as the state's mandate to protect its citizens and the security forces' call to restore order. [965]

For example, Lieutenant-General Venter, Chief Deputy Commissioner for the South African Police, stated after the Soweto uprisings: "If we don't do anything, the rioters will run amok burning, looting, killing and injuring innocent people." [966] This quote was printed in full in the *Rand Daily Mail* on 21st June 1976. [967] And a few years later in a re-assessment of the events around 16th June 1976, the *Sunday Tribune* gave ample space to Brigadier Visser, the Divisional Commander of Police in Soweto, to voice similar opinions:

> "Naturally force had to be met with force. (…) Suddenly this erupted among a minority who took control and the community was scared either to oppose them or stop them." [968]

This shows that, in their attempt to present their own civilisation as peaceful, the media removed references to violence from the descriptions of government action. This strategy meant that at times incidents of state violence, which had previously been denied, suddenly had to be confirmed. In most cases the newspapers did not seem to be troubled by admitting

---

[961] Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 185)
[962] Quoted in Posel (1990: 160)
[963] Henderson (1990 a: 2)
[964] Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 2) and Rauch (1993: 2)
[965] Posel (1989: 270)
[966] Quoted in Brewer (1986: 79)
[967] Brewer (1986: 79)
[968] Sunday Tribune, 2nd March 1980, quoted in Brewer (1986: 78)

that their own reporting had been misleading. All that counted was the here and now, the immediate propagandistic effect of the symbols of the state's strength. [969]

In order to portray government violence in the right way the newspapers used a number of symbols which were based on popular ideas, constructed by repetition and condensation, and then came to symbolise state violence in the later reports. [970] The police and the military in particular moved to the centre of attention. The members of the SAP and the SADF were taken to be the pillars on which the civilisation rested, as protectors of order and as islands of calm and superiority. People (black and white) in uniform were therefore an important symbol for the violence of the state. An even more impressive sign of the state's strength and invincibility were military vehicles, such as tanks, Casspirs, 'buffels' (both armoured personnel carriers designed for the bush war) and army transporters. They therefore became the second important symbol for state violence. [971]

a)   Policemen / Soldiers

In the eyes of the apartheid government, the security forces constituted the first line of defence against the black threat in the townships. Thus, while they served as a symbol of violence what they really stood for was the concept of strength. Apart from a few exceptions, such as the *Cape Times* article cited above, newspapers portrayed the members of the SADF and the SAP in a way that implied order, control and a readiness to serve and protect. This was achieved using a number of different means, which I will elucidate further in the following sub-chapters.

Photographs

In photographs policemen and soldiers were rarely ever shown in motion. Most of the time police were standing and surveying an area (see fig. 21) or guarding a site (see fig. 22).

Figure 21: It is all under control now (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (18th June 1976: 6))

Very rarely, around the beginning of the period under investigation, we could also see them taking aim with their firearms (see figs. 23 and 25).

---

[969] Butchart, Hamber, Terre Blanche & Seedat (1998: 3)
[970] Tomaselli et al. (1987: 26)
[971] Malan (1990: 110), Teer Tomaselli (1992: 211) and Posel (1990: 162)
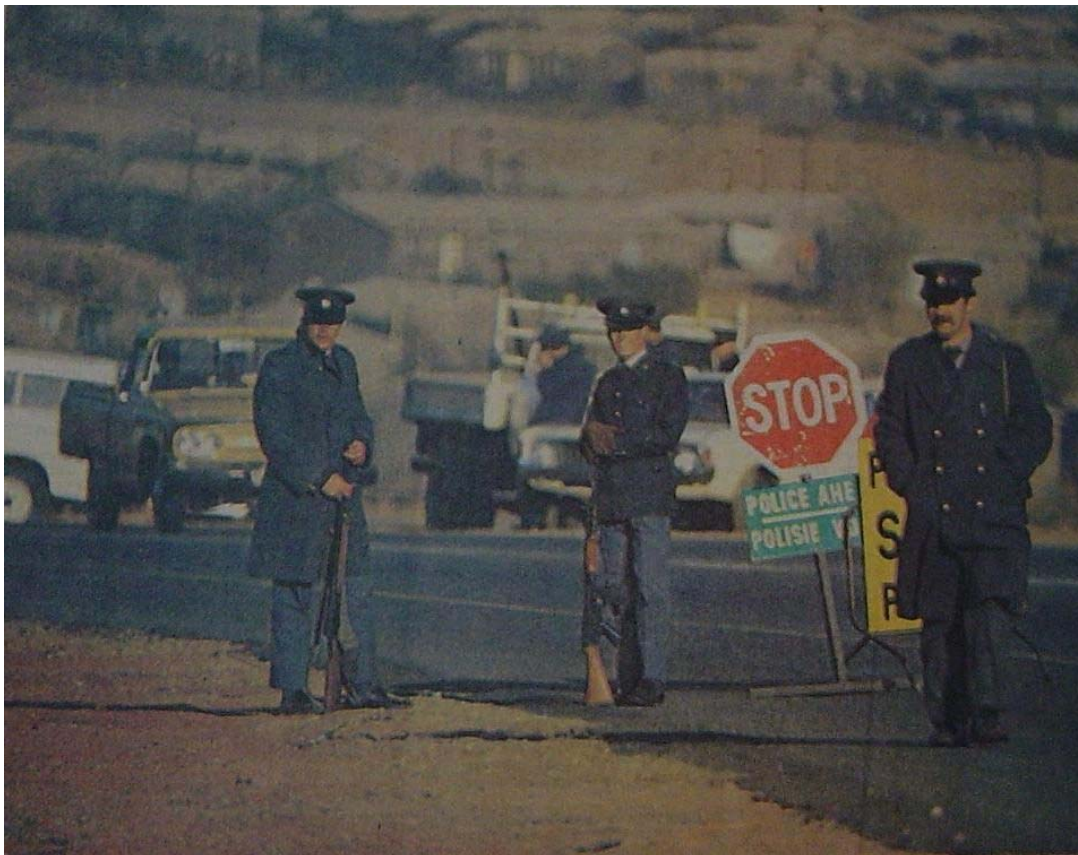
Figure 22: Cool, calm and collected (Source: _Rand Daily Mail_ (16th June 1977: 3))

The calm and orderliness of the police was frequently contrasted with images of blacks running around, seemingly headless, a combination that served to emphasise the difference between the two groups (see figs. 23 and 25).

Figure 23: Chaos and order side by side (Source: _The Star_ (17th June 1976: 25))

If policemen were depicted as moving, they generally appeared orderly, such as a marching battalion, and/or purposeful, for example in pursuit of fleeing black people or arresting demonstrators (see fig. 24).

Figure 24: Police patrolling Alexandra (Source: *The Star* (18ᵗʰ June 1976: 17))

By stressing the orderliness, controlled behaviour, and goal-oriented behaviour of the policemen and soldiers, the media once again emphasised the difference between them and the barbaric, wild, and uncontrolled blacks.

Another interesting point when it came to the security forces was that of groups versus individuals. On the one hand, policemen and soldiers were clearly identified as belonging to a certain group of people. Their uniforms obscured their individuality and marked them as agents of the state. Persons became symbols of a system, a system that continuously described itself as the protector of law and order. [972]

On the other hand, the police and army units were clearly a different kind of collective than the black crowds they were facing. As I indicated above, they were no uncontrolled mass of bodies. They were a well-organised, clearly structured assembly of individuals. They were orderly, they moved purposefully, and they rarely ever seemed threatening. This was achieved by a number of different means. Groups of policemen were generally depicted as smaller than

---

[972] Posel (1990: 163)

the crowds of black people they were facing. Also, in captions they were only seldom called 'groups of policemen'. Normally they were referred to as 'police' or 'soldiers', the 'army', or the 'security forces', and occasionally as a 'unit', a 'convoy', or a 'force'. The positive effect of these terms was further enhanced by their contrasting with such words as 'crowd' or 'mob' that were generally used to refer to the black protesters. For example *The Star* of 19th June 1976 carried a photograph on the front pages of its Stop Press and City Late Editions that showed two policemen facing a crowd of black students (see fig. 25).

Figure 25: Authority and mob rule, but who is who? (Source: *The Star* (19th June 1976: 1))

I will investigate the picture in a short while. At the moment my focus is on the caption:

"The bloody confrontations between mob rule and authority reached its peak in Alexandra township yesterday when police with R1 rifles came face to face with gangs armed with sticks and stones and using ineffectual dustbin lids as shields against bullets. Here, in a typical scene, Black teenagers jeer and taunt two policemen, who eventually chose to retreat." [973]

The description of the policemen is uniformly positive (if we agree with the government interpretation that facing children holding sticks and stones with R1 rifles is an appropriate response): They represent "authority", are carrying modern weapons and choose to retreat even in the face of jeering and taunting. They are a model force. Now, if we compare that to the description of the kids – mobs and "gangs" who are "armed" and despite using "ineffectual shields" somehow managed to impose their rule and dare to "jeer and taunt" policemen – this impression is strengthened substantially. Unlike the cops they are "armed", a fact that makes them seem a lot more aggressive. Luckily, they are equipped with "ineffectual" gear. Note also the use of the 'racial differences frame' by talking of the police, who in the picture are clearly identifiable as whites, as coming "face to face" (an action you cannot generally do with members of your own group – we generally do not come 'face to face' with our mother in the kitchen) with "Black" (capitalised) teenagers.

One question that the caption throws up is that of "bloody confrontations". What is the newspaper referring to? Surely not the events depicted, because there is no violence (or blood) involved. And yet it is described as a "typical scene". In my opinion what happened is that the editor felt that he needed to somehow make a reference to the numerous people who were killed in the Reef townships over the past few days, but did not want to openly accuse the police of having been the party responsible for those deaths. So they get mentioned – interestingly, under a headline that makes reference to black violence and above one that talks of the victims of a fracas – but no guilt is ever assigned for their killing.

Figure 25 illustrates another strategy the newspapers employed to dampen the impact of reporting about police violence. Photographs of policemen or soldiers were often taken from behind or from the side. The two angles differed slightly in effect, but both produced images favourable to the police. The first choice placed the cameraman, and by extension the reader, among the police. They were, as it has since the American invasion of Iraq become known, 'embedded' in the security forces. This spatial proximity reinforced the feeling of belonging and made it difficult to not view the police as members of the in-group. It also increased the impression of the police being the last barrier that stood between the approaching black crowds and the (white) reader. They were protecting the audience against an outside threat.

---

[973] The Star (19th June 1976 a and c: 1)

Moreover, if the police were seen to be with 'us' and protecting 'us', they could not be perceived as a threat to 'us', which is what they would have appeared to be had the photos shown them from the front, weapons ready to fire, seemingly aimed at the reader. Thus, even if the newspapers did not actively pursue as sinister a plan as I have accused them of in the last few paragraphs, by staying behind the police line, they could at least make sure that their readers would not get too worried about the events and start finding opposing readings, such as 'our government has a policy of killing its citizens'.

The second option, that of showing security force personnel from the side or from further away, is not about closeness and in-group bonds, but rather the opposite; it is about distance. Unlike in photographs taken from behind, these shots give the reader the impression of looking out at the events, surveying them. This, however, bears the risk that they may see violent police behaviour. This danger was reduced by not showing cops from the front or by moving further away from them. Their physical presence was reduced and the connection between the violence and its perpetrator was obscured (see figs. 21 and 26).

The reader was removed from the events, a distant observer who could not really make out any details of what was happening. As such the photographs actually provided merely the semblance of information, a sort of paint by numbers. A meaningful picture only emerged if readers used the accompanying text as a manual for assembling it. The effect of this strategy was quite striking as it combined the advantages of linguistic and visual communication while avoiding most of the pitfalls. The pictures provided the realism, the sense of having been there and seen for themselves what readers valued, but because of their not really depicting anything, they did not say what had just been witnessed. This task was left to the caption that supplied the unit with meaning. The result was that the reader was left with a feeling of having seen something that in reality they had merely read about.

Textual Elements

The textual elements of the reports generally worked in the same way as the photographs. They stressed the strength and determination of the policemen and soldiers while at the same time emphasising their restraint. For example *The Natal Mercury*'s lead story on 17th June 1976 told readers: "About 1 000 policemen with Sten guns, FN rifles and machine pistols were pinned down in Soweto last night as rioting mobs went of a burning and looting rampage." [974] Similarly, *The Argus* of 16th June 1976 wrote: "About 2 km away at Orlando police station a platoon of men in army fatigue uniforms, carrying teargas canisters and stenguns marched off down the hill to reinforce those at the Lipspruit." [975]

---

[974] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[975] The Argus (16th June 1976 b: 3)

And, on 16th June 1986, *The Argus* carried an article on the front page titled "At least 22 dead over past four days – official". In the second part on page three the newspaper quotes Leon Mellet as saying: "The security forces are in charge of the situation today and will be in charge tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow." [976] This statement makes absolutely no sense in the context of growing unrest that has killed 22 people in four days, unless we take it to mean one of two things. It is either meant to imply that, while blacks are killing each other, the security forces are in control of the situation in the country overall and will protect the white population and do everything to keep the level of violence among blacks at a minimum. On the other hand, it could also be understood to mean that the 22 dead are a sign of the security forces' control, their success in fighting communism by killing 'opstokers' (agitators) who cause trouble in the townships. Comments from other government officials, including President Botha himself, make the latter interpretation appear more likely, in which case the term 'control' can be taken as a euphemism for violence.

A similar idea is implied by the lead of an article that appeared in *The Star* on 19th June 1976: "A taut and uneasy calm has descended on the riot-battered Witwatersrand behind a powerful screen of security forces armed with automatic rifles and ready to shoot." [977] The positions in this section are clear: On the one side there is a (generally peaceful) white world that is inhabited by the newspaper and its readers. On the other side is a (generally agitated) black world, the "riot-battered Witwatersrand", which luckily is so far away from whites that they need to be told about the situation there. The two are separated by "a powerful screen of security forces", whose presence helps to maintain the calm on both sides. The stage for the remainder of the text is therefore set – it is a case of 'us' against 'them' and we are OK because we are protected behind a wall of policemen.

There are two key elements in this section that are of interest to the student of white South African culture – the "powerful screen" metaphor and the weapons. I personally find both very problematic. The former indicates that the divider between 'our' world and 'theirs' is opaque – it is a screen, not a window – and impenetrable, which should tell any critical reader that there is a distinct risk of cover-ups and lies on the part of those who control the screen and those who are allowed to peep beyond it.

The second sore point for me is the emphasis on "automatic rifles (…) ready to shoot". I am sure this sentence was not meant to elicit sympathy for the potential victims; otherwise it would be phrased differently. Consider for example the option of 'After days of street battles between children and police, an uneasy peace has returned to the townships of the Witwatersrand, as residents cower in their homes to avoid running-ins with the heavily armed

---

[976] The Argus (16th June 1986: 3)
[977] The Star (19th June 1976 a: 1)

patrols.' I believe that the real reason was to draw white readers' attention to an imaginary danger while at the same time reassuring them that they had nothing to fear all the time the cops and their guns were out there. To me it says a lot about a culture if the thought of men with automatic weapons walking the streets ready to shoot children singing songs is reassuring! And even if this intended meaning is not the one found by the readers – which according to my interviews it was – just the fact that anyone would think that it might me sufficiently positively valued by enough people to make the front page of what was then the biggest newspaper in Africa is indicative of South Africans' attitudes at the time.

Only very rarely did the newspapers mention that the police used violence as part of their strategy. If showing acts of violence committed by the custodians of the law was unavoidable, these were generally portrayed as acts of self-defence, or as measures taken to protect public order or the life and property of the white population. [978]

For example the *Rand Daily Mail* of 16th June 1977 published an article titled "'Police fired to save their lives'" [979], which was dedicated entirely to justifying why the police had shot at demonstrators during the commemorations of the Soweto Uprisings. The message is summed-up in the final sentence, a quote from one of the policemen involved: "If we had not opened fire property and cars would have been damaged and many people killed." [980] Similarly, on 8th September 1985, the *Sunday Tribune* published a story in which "A young national serviceman describes the anguish he faced serving on South Africa's 'home front'" [981]. The entire article is written in the first person, as if told by the young man himself. "When we first deployed for the unrest," he tells readers, "it was to protect a white suburb for the duration of a large (black) funeral procession." [982] And in the *Cape Times* of 17th June 1988, under the headline "Three women killed in shootouts with 'ANC'" [983], Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok is allowed to explain the casualties as follows:

> "The minister said the clashes occurred when police – "in the face of extreme danger and under difficult conditions" – confronted two heavily armed groups of "terrorists" near the Swaziland border." [984]

Obviously, no conflicting account or statement from the ANC was published. The emergency regulations were as strict as ever and Tony Heard, who might have attempted to bend them, had left the *Cape Times*.

---

[978] Louw & Tomasellli (1989: 38)
[979] Rand Daily Mail (16th June 1977: 3)
[980] Rand Daily Mail (16th June 1977: 3)
[981] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 b: 6)
[982] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 b: 6)
[983] Cape Times (17th June 1988: 1)
[984] Cape Times (17th June 1988: 1)

Another element which frequently appeared side by side with the self-defence myth was the strength-restraint dualism. See for example the lead article in the *Daily Dispatch* on 22nd March 1985 titled "17 dead in Uitenhage". The theme itself is introduced by the sub-header: "Le Grange: police fired in self-defence". At the centre of the page was a large image of indistinguishable vehicles (police vehicles the reader is told) in a township (Langa, the caption informs us). The article was fairly long so I will quote only a few passages:

> "Seventeen people died and 19 were wounded when police opened fire in self defence on a crowd of between 3 000 and 4 000 near Uitenhage yesterday, the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, said yesterday."
>
> (…)
>
> Police had been "forced to open fire" on a crowd armed with stones sticks, petrol bombs and bricks. The crowd was marching towards Uitenhage on the highway from Langa black township.
>
> They were led by a person dressed in black and carrying a brick. (…)
>
> "When the crowd was about five metres from the police the commanding officer fired a warning shot into the ground next to the leader.
>
> "It still had no effect and the police were suddenly surrounded and pelted with stones, sticks and other missiles including petrol bombs.
>
> "The police officer had no alternative but to order fire, in self defence. Three R1-rifles and some shotguns were used. The crowd retreated and firing immediately ceased. Six R1-bullets, 27 shotgun cartridges and 10 pistol shots were fired.
>
> (…)
>
> "Police later found traces of exploded petrol bombs as well as one unexploded petrol bomb. Fingerprints have been found on the petrol bomb."" [985]

We are here faced with a police force that, although greatly outnumbered, is hugely superior to the attackers (rifles as opposed to stones) while at the same time showing restraint in the use of force ("firing immediately ceased"). Moreover, they are not so much portrayed as an attacking power but rather as defenders of Uitenhage against the dangerous marchers from Langa township.

These quotes illustrate another method used by the mainstream media in order to make police violence appear in a positive light, particularly in comparison to violence committed by the liberation movements. Their actions were always described in an unemotional, neutral language. Terms like 'necessity', 'security', 'order' and 'protection' often dominated reports of government-sanctioned violence. By comparison, violence committed by blacks was

---

[985] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)

described using words like 'bloody', 'fighting', 'murder' and 'wild'. For example in an article on the Witdoeke's attack on Crossroads, *The Argus* of 20th May 1986 wrote:

> "A few minutes later about 300 youths wielding sticks burst out of the squatter camp into Lansdowne Road. Some were no older than nine or 10.
>
> They headed towards an advancing group of township elders. We watched the first exchanges of volleys of stones.
>
> Then … terror. From the elders' ranks several shots were fired and the youths sprinted frantically away.
>
> Screaming women abandoned their possessions. Red Cross staff jumped into their van and raced off as the youths hurtled by.
>
> Amid the chaos came a bizarre addition to the drama. A convoy of about 10 military police motorcyclists, sirens wailing, escorted an SADF car carrying several officers through the battle zone." [986]

Towards the end of the 1980s, some newspapers that had previously been content to just report the official version of the events did begin to take a more critical stand towards police violence. The article from *The Star*'s City Late Edition of 7th September 1989 that I dissected in chapter 4.2.2 c ("At least 4 killed, 100 hurt in Cape violence" [987]) is one example. However, it also shows that by the time the press woke up to the horrors of police violence, the laws restricting their reporting were so firmly in place that they did not manage to effectively change their symbolisms without changing their entire editorial policy and confronting the government head-on as the alternative newspapers were doing. And as this dissertation will show, few of them had the nerve to do it.

Numbers, Tables and Drawings

Another popular tool for playing-down police violence as well as for playing-up the violence committed by opponents of apartheid were statistics of all sorts. The weight of bombs, the numbers of mines used by so-called 'terrorists', the amount and types of weapons confiscated by the police or the number of 'terrorists' killed were often given. None of these were really of any importance to the reader or to the completeness of the story. Whether a building was destroyed by one or two limpet mines makes no difference to the result and in most cases the average reader would be in no position to judge the actual significance of the numbers. Is the killing of "Nine suspected ANC insurgents," [988] as *The Argus* of 17th June 1988 put it, a huge success or small fry? A civilian would not know.

---

[986] The Argus (20th May 1986: 1)
[987] The Star (7th September 1989: 1)
[988] The Argus (17th June 1988: 3)

The main point of the numbers was not to inform. Their use lay in what they symbolised: exactness, thoroughness and seriousness. They communicated to the reader that this was a newspaper that took its job seriously and checked all details before passing them on. In articles on police action, however, statistics often had exactly the opposite effect. Rather than helping to add precision, they helped disguise the pain and suffering caused by the policemen. Let us look for example at the front page of *The Argus* (City Late Edition) on 14th June 1985 (see fig. 26)

Figure 26: We blew 11 people to bits, including a 6-year-old boy – let's call that a military operation… (Source: *The Argus* (14th June 1985: 1))

We find a fairly sober display overall – an image of General Constant Viljoen, the Chief of the SADF, saluting, a map of Botswana, a relatively non-sensationalistic headline ("ANC targets hit") which implies precision and purposefulness. This cool, calm and collected package is topped by a kicker above the main headline that reads: "SADF raid on Botswana – 11 reported killed in mortar, hand grenade attack" [989].

There is no indication of the agony the victims (40 people were injured in the raid) and their friends and family had gone through. They are merely a blot on a map and a number. The media generally avoided giving any details that might have conveyed an image of suffering when reporting on police violence. In their reports about black violence on the other hand they virtually celebrated the symbols of pain, such as blood and wounds. [990]
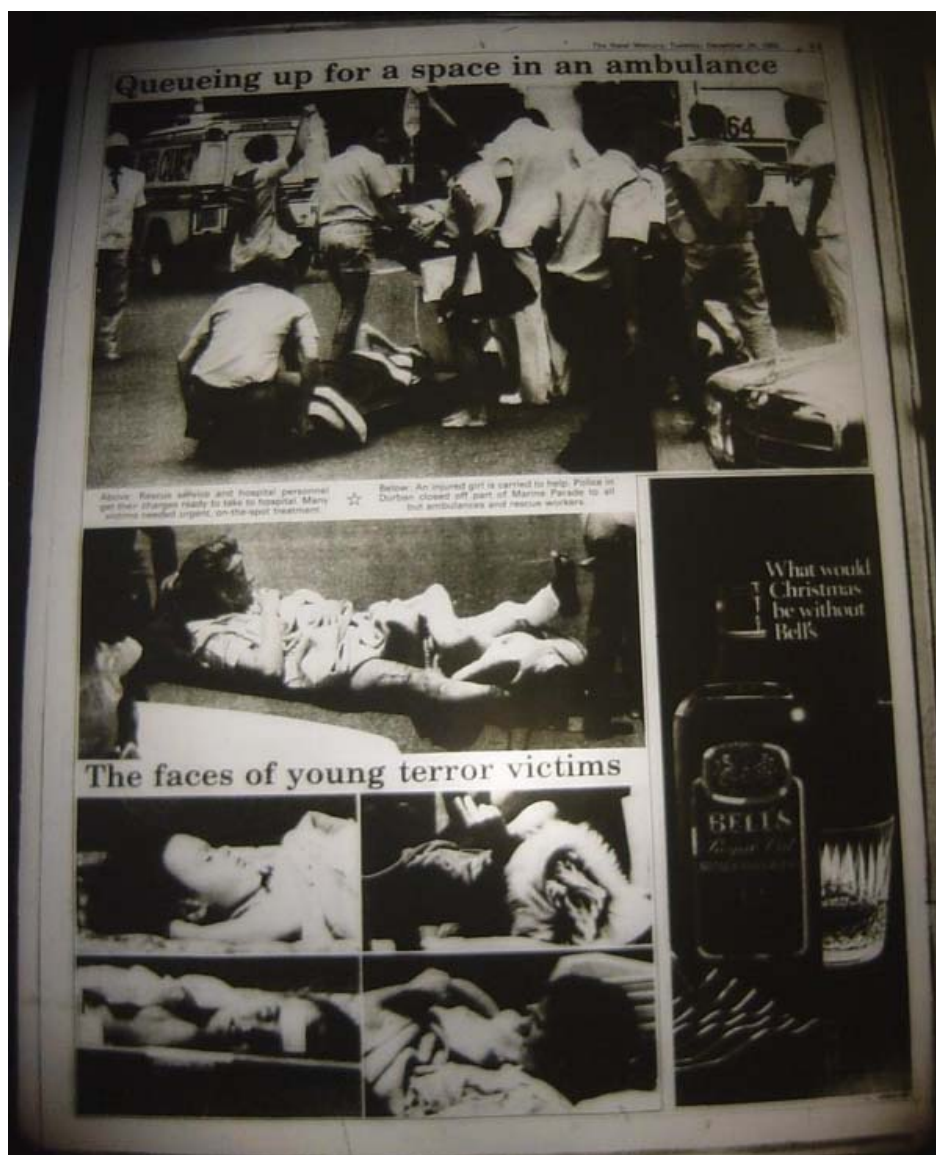
Figure 27: …they killed 5 people – only mindless savages could commit such an atrocity! (Source: *The Natal Mercury* (24th December 1985: 5))

For example the bombing of a shopping centre in Amanzimtoti in December 1985, which killed five people and injured 40 (thus on a crude head-count level causing less damage than

---

[989] The Argus (14th June 1985: 1)
[990] Hall et al. (1978: 9-10), Bell (1991: 203) and Posel (1990: 163)

the SADF raid), was universally condemned as "Urban terror" [991] or "Bomb atrocity" [992], widely covered in the news and illustrated with scores of photographs of people who had been injured in the blast (see fig. 27).

Policemen and Soldiers After 1990

After 1990, everything that had previously been a sign of government strength slowly turned into a symbol of brutal oppression. Most newspapers today describe the policemen of the apartheid state in the same terms that were previously used for black freedom fighters. And although many reports on the TRC amnesty hearings or trials of former policemen were dotted with modality markers like 'alleged' and 'supposed' that serve to reduce the impression of guilt [993], the symbol of the apartheid policeman has by and large changed its meaning, now standing for the exact opposite of what it represented before. [994]

This, however, does not necessarily show a different attitude towards the police in general. Instead, it is meant to draw a line under the old system to enable the new South African police force, the SAPS, to be seen as completely separate from the savage oppressors of the people. The general consensus was that the police represent the law, which unlike 'law and order' was still a positive term, and stability, and that they protect ordinary citizens.

Policemen thus still represent the strength of the government, which is pitted against those who sabotage the new order. Strangely enough, the reporting on policemen therefore often resembled that of the apartheid years. Strength, controlled behaviour and restraint were still quite often central to the image of the police.

This view can for example be found in the *Cape Argus* article about the day of the trial of the PAGAD members accused of murdering Rashaad Staggie. "Cool cop's order to hold fire 'stopped bloodbath'," [995] the headline reads and the article repeats several times the presiding judge's praise for the officer in charge at the site of the killing for not ordering his colleagues to shoot. "He probably saved many lives that night." [996]

The images of cops facing huge crowds of demonstrators were also still used occasionally. Figure 28 for example appeared on the front page of *The Star* on 16th July 2002 accompanying an article (which, incidentally, was smaller than the image) about a march by striking municipal workers in Johannesburg.

This article about the police clearing an illegal gathering in Delft is an exception though.

---

[991] The Star (23rd December 1985: 3)
[992] The Natal Mercury (24th December 1985: 1)
[993] See for example Cape Argus (7th May 2002 b: 2) and The Citizen (11th April 2002 b: 6)
[994] McCarthy (1998: The SAPS, p. 1)
[995] Cape Argus (7th March 2002: 2)
[996] Cape Argus (7th March 2002: 2)

Figure 28: Wage negotiations South African style (Source: *The Star* (16th July 2002: 1))

Generally, these days the communities where the police do most of their work – the poorer areas of the cities, the townships, and the informal settlements – are no longer portrayed as the enemy. "The communities are supporting us, and 30 people recently signed up as police reservists," [997] a Grassy Parks police spokesman states in an article on gang violence in the *Cape Argus* on 17th May 2002. And in the New South Africa this support is mutual.

Figure 29: To serve and protect (Source: *Cape Argus* (24th June 2002: 1))

---

[997] Cape Argus (17th May 2002 a: 5)

For example, in *The Argus* report of the shooting of five petrol station attendants in Cape Town, the main photograph shows a policeman lending support to the brother of one of the deceased (see fig. 29). The other two images show policemen on the scene of the crime (see fig. 62 in chapter 4.6.4 b) – a signal that they are there any time they are needed.

All this, however, was not so much a symbol for violence anymore because most police action described in this way was indeed as you would expect in any free country of the world. At times the officers had to resort to violence, or what Max Weber would call legitimate force, to prevent or contain crime, but most of the time their weapons stayed in their holsters. And this is where the catch lies. As we have seen in chapter 2, the police have not completely changed their way. Allegations of police violence against suspects or detainees still surface often enough to be a cause of public concern, as is the amount of crime committed by police officers. And with the restrictions on what the newspapers could report gone, they now fulfil the role of public watchdog and exposed malpractice in the force, as well as the wrongdoings of policemen and women whilst off-duty.

For example, when a former police officer in the Northern Cape town of Postmasburg went on a wild shooting spree on 1st July 2002, killing four people and injuring nine, the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* gave the incident, and the subsequent court proceedings, prominent coverage for several days. "Mayhem in NC as ex cop runs amok" [998] the paper exclaimed on its front page on 3rd July. "'I saw bodies falling and I thought my time had come to die'" [999] it says on page three. And on 5th July it carried, among others, an article about a victim titled "'The gunman looked right into my face'" [1000] (see fig. 30).

---

[998] Diamond Fields Advertiser (3rd July 2002 a: 1)
[999] Diamond Fields Advertiser (3rd July 2002 b: 3)
[1000] Diamond Fields Advertiser (5th July 2002: 8)

Figure 30: A cop who lost the plot (Source: *Diamond Fields Advertiser* (3rd July 2002: 1-3 & 5th July 2002: 2))

And on 18th July *The Star* published a box on page two, which united four articles on police improprieties under the headline "Law and Disorder":

- "Learning to lie the SAPS way" [1001]

  about corrupt officers in two Gauteng police stations inciting people to make false affidavits;

- "Uniformed officers 'caught drinking'" [1002]

  about two Pretoria officers who were asked to make a statement with regards to a recent accusation that they had been drinking alcohol while on duty;

- "Cop held for tourist robbery" [1003]

  about a Johannesburg officer who was arrested in connection with the robbery of a group of Taiwanese tourists;

- "Dog unit head out for using 'K'-word" [1004]

  about a dog-unit commander in the Western Cape who had been found guilty by a disciplinary hearing of using the word 'kaffir' in a telephone call to colleagues.

And while the police are only described as acting violently in one of these incidents, all four denounce improper or illegal conduct by policemen. However, I am not sure whether the robbery should really be placed alongside the others. In my opinion this is another classic case of *The Star* constructing a crime wave, where none exists in extra-linguistic reality.

[1001] The Star (18th July 2002 a: 2)
[1002] The Star (18th July 2002 b: 2)
[1003] The Star (18th July 2002 c: 2)
[1004] The Star (18th July 2002 d: 2)

More importantly, though, such examples show that the policeman has finally lost his symbolic power once and for all. Stories of police violence or crimes committed by policemen are no longer used to convey a hidden message. Their meaning is now their immediate content, or at most, as is the case in *The Star*'s box, the failings of the police as a whole.

b)   Police Vehicles and Military Vehicles

During apartheid, police vehicles were a normal feature on any township road. They served two purposes: On one hand they were part of the state's attack on the revolting blacks. They were used for transporting troops into unrest areas, protecting them from attacks while they were there and clearing passages that were closed to policemen on foot. On the other hand, they served as a signal to the township population that they were facing a greatly superior opponent. This symbolic power of armoured vehicles was not lost on newspaper editors either. Due to their size and seeming invincibility Casspirs, Hippos and Buffels were a perfect tool for conveying a message of government strength and control to the white population. [1005]

Photographs

Pictorial representations of police vehicles were very similar to those of the security forces. Just like soldiers, armoured vehicles were meant to denote strength, power and security as well as strategic military thinking, methodical planning and restraint. To this end they were mostly depicted standing, which was intended to denote self-control and order (see fig. 33). When they were moving, it was generally in clearly distinguishable formations (see fig. 31) or as individual vehicles (see fig. 32). They were rarely coming towards the reader and no close-ups were used in order to prevent them from appearing as a threat. [1006]

Figure 31: The security forces on the job in Soweto '76 (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (19th June 1976: 2))

[1005] Posel (1990: 162)
[1006] Meli (1990: 150) and Posel (1989: 269-270)

Figure 32: Patrolling Crossroads '86 (Source: *The Star* **(11th June 1986: 1))**

Due to their impressive size and threatening appearance, using pictures of military vehicles in articles could be quite problematic. One only has to be slightly critical of the government to find opposing readings – or what I assume to be opposing readings – of the symbolism. It really depends largely on the caption whether a picture communicates 'government strength' or 'abuse of power', 'police brutality', and 'excessive force'.

The government was well aware of this danger and therefore restricted the pictorial representation of armoured vehicles during the state of emergency. The newspapers, too, knew of the potential dual use of the Casspirs. In my view figure 33, which was published on the front page of the *Rand Daily Mail* on 22nd March 1985 to illustrate the lead article about the shooting in Uitenhage, is an example of a newspaper knowingly using a strongly ambivalent symbol in the hope that readers will find the opposing meaning. The caption only informs readers that they are looking at a Casspir and a "sneeze machine", but the main headline "17 dead in East Cape bloodbath" [1007] works as an indicator that these vehicles were somehow involved in the violence.

Figure 33: The strength that ended in a bloodbath (Source: Rand Daily Mail (22nd March 1985: 1))

[1007] Rand Daily Mail (22nd March 1985 a: 1)

Textual Elements

Textual representation of armoured vehicles bore none of the risks associated with images. Therefore, in articles they often took a prominent role as the first line of defence against the encroaching 'Swart Gevaar'. For example on 8th September 1985, the *Sunday Tribune* published a report under the title "Target Kraaifontein as youths stone and bomb white homes in Cape suburbs" [1008], in which it describes how a white suburb was saved by a Casspir from an attack by a group of black protesters.

> "White suburbs have come under attack for the first time since the unrest flared up a year ago," the article begins.
>
> "This week the surges of violence in the Cape peninsula spread out of the coloured and black areas and into the suburb of Windsor Park.
>
> Shouting youths swept on to the highway in the Kraafontein area, outside Cape Town, blocked the road with burning tires and obstacles and then stoned and petrol-bombed neighbouring houses in the white suburb.
>
> Yvonne Hoareau was alone at home at about 8.45pm. She had just finished bathing when she heard the next-door neighbour's dog barking.
>
> "I went out the front door and they were out in the road dancing among the flames. They pointed at me and were laughing and shouting," she said.
>
> She came inside just as a brick smashed through the front window of the house.
>
> Seconds later another brick hit the front door." [1009]

The newspaper then continues to describe, for several paragraphs, the plight of other residents who had been besieged by the mob. One lady by the name of Mrs. Emerich tells readers of how her son had fired shots to defend them.

> "Then the police arrived, parked a Casspir in the highway and they ran away," said Mrs. Hoareau." [1010]

With this the account of the trouble ends and the reader gets another look at the life of ordinary whites who live in fear in the Western Cape. But the overall message is clear: The out-group is slowly but surely trying to invade 'our' lives and if it weren't for 'our' police and their strength they would overrun 'us'.

Military vehicles had a another, related function in the reporting of events in the townships themselves. In those circumstances they were meant to show the difference in strength and behaviour between the violent black population and the whites who had come to 'pacify'

[1008] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 c: 19)
[1009] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 c: 19)
[1010] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 c: 19)

them. For example in *The Argus*' first report of the witdoeke's attack on crossroads, we read of how armoured vehicles were used to this end.

> "As they retreated Casspirs and police vans moved up.
>
> A yellow van stopped near the hastily regrouping youths and a senior officer ran towards us. Youths started throwing rocks at the van. Policemen with shotguns jumped out and the youths fled into the shantytown." [1011]

Here, the Casspirs and police vans are not only a symbol for the government's strength as a tool to emphasise the violence of the black youths. The newspaper does not, like above, say 'don't worry, we'll protect you from them', but rather 'support us because they need us to keep them from killing each other'. This was one way of arguing for a continuation of apartheid by pointing at the devastating effects that a lifting of all controls on the black population would have.

Every once in a while journalists openly used the shorthand constructed to support the government's position, to do precisely the opposite. An example of this strategy is the following quote from a Soweto resident in the *Sunday Star*: "In our streets, one day it's all right. The next day you can cross the street when a Casspir comes round the corner, and you'll die. It's like Beirut." [1012] Policemen are not mentioned in the text. Their presence is merely hinted at by the reference to their vehicle. The temporal relationship between the appearance of the police and the mentioned death implies a causal relationship, and, as no logic could explain why people would drop dead when police vehicles appear, the informed reader can easily decipher the quote's real meaning, namely that police in Soweto kill residents. The text further implies that their choice of target is entirely arbitrary, as the narrator does not mention any provocation of the police before the residents' death. On the contrary, the victim does something that anyone of us does several times a day; he crosses the road. Yet even such an ordinary action in a seemingly normal environment (symbolised by the introduction "One day it's all right") can end in death in Soweto. The sentence "It's like Beirut" further implies that such a violent episode is no exception, but rather that South Africa's townships were in a state of civil war that can lead to violence at any time. Thus, if read properly, the article describes how the omnipresent police violence prevents normal life in the townships.

Armoured Vehicles after 1990

The Casspir as a symbol of violence perpetrated by the security forces was slowly phased out during the 1990s. The focus had shifted away from the security forces to the violence among the black population and government intervention in the townships was no longer

---

[1011] The Argus (20th May 1986: 1)
[1012] Sunday Star, 8th September 1985, quoted in Cock (1990: 51)

newsworthy. The first democratic elections marked the end of armoured vehicles, 'sneeze machines' and police vans. While before 1994 they had been part of life in the townships, after the elections they disappeared in the military's depots. Accordingly, they were no longer seen in the news reporting either.

4.6.2 The Violence of the Liberation Movements and Black Violence – Different Phenomena but Still Synonymous

The newspapers felt a similar ambivalence towards violence perpetrated by blacks as they did towards that committed by the state. On the one hand, the concept of violent and uncivilised blacks was an integral part of the white population's worldview and the press saw it as their duty to reflect this. On the other hand, for a number of reasons they were unable to cover the entire spectrum of violence perpetrated by blacks. One barrier were the readers themselves. Not many whites were interested in what the black population did. Criminal violence in the townships was therefore dismissed as not interesting. In the strictly segregated life under apartheid it had no implications for the life of the white population. [1013]

Another problem was that the government did not want to get the public worried about the ongoing violence. They were supposed to believe that the world was as perfect as their everyday experiences suggested. The NP knew that they were only going to keep the support of the broad mass of whites if they were certain that life in South Africa was perfect and would forever stay that way. Reports of a violent black uprising against the current order did not fit in with the beautiful world of white suburbia. [1014]

Therefore, even in those cases when the newspapers wanted to report black violence, the laws were often in the way. There was another, equally important reason behind this targeted news blackout. The NP was quite aware that a considerable part of the violence in South Africa consisted of political acts and as such carried a message. By reporting them the media also conveyed their message. According to van Heerden "violence is the most effective way of bringing objectives to the notice of the broad public. It is not so much the act in itself that matters, but its publication." [1015] This meant that by paying attention to the liberation movements' violence the media would have given them a public platform for their struggle. And under no circumstances was this supposed to happen. [1016]

On the other hand, the violence perpetrated by opponents of the government provided the officials with an excuse for the repressive laws and the massive curtailment of human rights. Accordingly, the liberation movements had to be portrayed as violent in order to prevent questions about the repressive machinery's right to exist. Furthermore, the government

---

[1013] TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 3)
[1014] TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 4 and 113
[1015] van Heerden (1982: 206)
[1016] Rauch (1993: 3)

profited substantially if white South Africans were of the opinion that without apartheid their country would descend into chaos and anarchy, as so many other African states had done after the end of white colonial rule. [1017] For that reason, the newspapers had to be allowed to report on violence perpetrated by blacks in some way, just to keep the whites worried. Accordingly, if violence was talked about, it was used to further reinforce the philosophy of apartheid by presenting the government's opponents' fight as "senseless violence perpetuated by people who have no commitment to civilized standards" [1018], or, as Jeremy Gordin put it, "the savages are at it again" [1019].

This premise made one thing particularly important for the reporting of black violence in general and the violence of the liberation movements in particular: The individual acts had to be stripped of their political motivation. This achieved two things. For one, the risk of communicating an unwanted political message and thus awakening sympathies for the opponents of apartheid was eliminated. Secondly, the violence became devoid of meaning and as such really seemed like the result of anarchistic acts perpetrated by crazy savages incapable of rational thought and careful planning. [1020]

The SABC and the newspapers close to the government solved this dilemma by rarely reporting the violence directly. Instead, for example, the arrests of ANC members were described as prevention of violence. This way, the violent nature of the arrested activists could be pointed out and the desired images could be created without actually having to portray any violence. The English language press tried to be more balanced in their reports, but their overall attitude towards the violence in the townships was not substantially different to that of the government-supporting media. This meant that, in general, violence perpetrated by blacks was of no interest to them, unless it had any implications for the white population. [1021]

Throughout its reporting of the political trouble in the townships, the liberal press maintained an entirely white point of view and mostly ignored the framework from which the black violence derived its meaning. Rather than a struggle by oppressed people, it was portrayed as the deeds of ruthless black terrorists who were committing acts of violence only for the sake of being violent. [1022] Every once in a while journalists did succeed in publishing truly critical articles about government violence or explain the reasoning behind the armed struggle of the liberation movements. I certainly do not want to detract from their achievements. However, throughout the apartheid years, they remained the exception. [1023]

[1017] Manning (1987: 153) and Posel (1989: 263)
[1018] SAP Yearbook 1991, quoted in Rauch (1993: 3)
[1019] Interview with the author, 31st July 2002
[1020] Merrett (1994: 119) and Frederikse (1987: 212)
[1021] Shaw (2002: 15) and TRC (17th September 1997: Thami Mazwai; Jon Qwelane, 3)
[1022] Business Day (21st January 1997 b: 3), ANC (1997 b: 7) and Independent Newspapers (Unknown: 24)
[1023] Hachten (1984: 18), Electronic Mail & Guardian (6th August 1997: 2-3) and Business Day (21st January 1997 b: 2)

So how did the newspapers succeed in depicting violence in a way that would not frighten away their readers and advertisers, or led people to believe that apartheid had outlived its usefulness? Direct images of violence or graphic descriptions of individual acts were obviously out of the question. Accordingly, just as they had done in the case of government violence, the newspapers solved this problem by constructing an intricate code, a bit like a kind of visual and verbal shorthand, to denote black violence. [1024]

It consisted predominantly of images and concepts that were based on the white population's most common prejudices and ideas of black violence, which had emerged soon after their arrival in Africa. What the newcomers encountered here was entirely different from what they knew from home. The local population appeared frightening to them, and soon a clearly negative image, tied closely to violence, was created. They were seen as wild, primitive, impulsive, uneducated, backwards, barbaric, and uncivilised. Through repeated use, these subjective impressions eventually turned into seemingly objective descriptions of the facts. All European fears and prejudices are summarised in the term 'African Mind', the indigenous psyche, which was defined as being violent and driven by instincts. The African as an irrational barbarian whose violence was a threat to white civilisation soon became an important factor in white South Africans' understanding of the world. [1025]

During the apartheid years, these stereotypes were quickly picked-up by the newspapers. All they had to do was create a modern version of the old images. [1026] Some, like 'black-on-black violence', were easily understandable and quickly accepted. Others were less obvious and their construction took some time. The government used a two-part strategy for meaning building. In the first step, reports about violence were not censored too heavily for a while. During this phase, the English language press was at times allowed to publish fairly explicit articles of certain events provided that they stayed within the common apartheid discourse. Events like the Soweto Uprisings, the shooting in Uitenhage in 1985, the fights between the followers of the UDF and Inkatha during the early 1980s, and particularly the spread of necklace murders were described in surprising detail. [1027]

This time of relative openness was used to construct the codes needed for manipulating the audience. Certain images were embedded in the reporting of violence and used over and over again, which implied that they captured the essence of black violence. This produced a strong 'second order message' [1028] which, hidden in the narrative about individual acts of violence, communicated a message that went far beyond the primary subject of the report. It was a

[1024] Posel (1989: 272) and Pahad (1993: 123)
[1025] Butchart et al. (1998: 2-3), Posel (1989: 272) and Pahad (1993: 123)
[1026] Rauch (1993: 4)
[1027] Posel (1990: 155-156)
[1028] The term was first used by Roland Barthes in the 1972 book *Mythologies* and later picked-up again by Stuart Hall (1973: 185) in his work on news photography.

statement about the character of black violence in general, namely that it is wild, primitive, and uncontrollable except by superior force. By repeatedly mentioning these key elements, they were turned into symbols of the parallel content. After a while, readers associated these elements with certain kinds of violence, accepting them as depictions and explanations of the events. At this point, they were moved to the foreground of the reports. [1029]

Soon these signifiers were established so well that merely mentioning them created images of the acts of violence they had been tied to in the audience's heads. [1030] This is when the government strategy entered its second stage and the explicit pictures and descriptions of violence disappeared. What remained were merely the superficially non-violent symbols. The violence did not have to be mentioned directly anymore, everyone knew exactly what was being said. A new kind of non-violent depiction of violence was born. [1031]

The images were then further legitimised and reduced to ever-smaller units of meaning through a process of repetition and condensation. By the mid-1980s a mere three elements, used alone or in combination with each other, were all that was needed to describe any form of black violence: crowds, stones, and fire. These images and concepts appeared over and over independent of the content of a particular report. Removed from any context they became symbols for violence perpetrated by blacks. [1032]

a)   Crowd / Horde

The use of crowds to denote negativity is not unique to South Africa. Several British and American studies [1033] have shown that the portrayal of crowds in news reporting serves a distinct ideological function. Wilder for example documented in great detail that people will tend to feel more negatively towards others if they are perceived as members of a group rather than individuals, and that such feelings can be and have been exploited by the media to manipulate audience members' sympathies when portraying conflict between groups. "Deindividuation" [1034], as Wilder calls it, is an easy and effective way to create feelings of hostility towards out-group members while at the same time increasing feelings of sympathy towards members of the in-group. [1035]

[1029] Posel (1990: 155)

[1030] Posel rightly points out that the effect of the reporting was naturally not the same with all media consumers. They could have raised conservative South Africans' fears of the uncontrolled fury of the black population and opponents of apartheid took them to confirm their accusations against the state. However, the mainstream media did not try to reach either of these groups with their message. Their target audience was the middle of the political spectrum among whites and these people took the reports exactly as intended. ((1990: 155))

[1031] Sayer (1984: 52-53) and Posel (1990: 155 and 166)

[1032] Malan (1990: 110)

[1033] For example Glasgow Media Group (1976), Halloran et al. (1970), Fowler (1991: 134-145), Wilder (1981) and Hansen & Murdock (1985)

[1034] Wilder (1981: 234)

[1035] Wilder (1981: 234)

It is therefore not surprising that, during the apartheid years, the newspapers hardly ever described blacks as individuals. It is hard to say which was cause and which was effect, whether such reporting was the result of the white journalists' own prejudices or whether they merely reflected the authorities' prescribed point of view which in turn influenced public opinion (and in the end possibly their own), one thing is certain: no black person, not even outstanding personalities or blacks who were courted by the apartheid government, were granted the right to be seen as an individual. Articles about Mangosuthu Buthelezi for example generally talked about him as a homeland leader, a black leader or a Zulu chief, but never simply as a man, and were often illustrated with pictures that showed him among a group of Zulus in traditional dress. [1036]

Whether it was done consciously or not, this served a clear ideological function, namely, to paint a negative image of the people described and to set them apart from the implied reader of the English language press. In their study of populist media discourse and the crowd in Britain Mosco & Wasko found that

> "conservative attitudes to working class political participation have long revolved around the opposition between the public and the crowd. The public is seen as composed of individual citizens, each making rational political choices (…). In contrast, the crowd is defined as a degenerate and illegitimate form of expression based on collectivity (…), and characterized by irrationality, violence and extremism rather than rationality, orderliness and moderation." [1037]

The same could be said of South Africa, especially if the word 'conservative' is replaced with 'white' and 'working class' with 'black'.

The crowd was a seemingly natural choice of symbol for black violence, for it has been an important element in white South African perceptions of blacks for decades. It has its origins in an idea propagated by Volkekunde that, as members of primitive cultures, black Africans need a tight social unit in order to survive. To many whites, individuality seemed to be incompatible with the blacks' character. And ideologically linking crowds with violence was not a difficult feat, for it is a common assumption that people in a crowd, along with losing their individuality, are somehow removed from their civilised state and are therefore prone to unleash an un- or rather pre-civilised kind of violence. This attitude is made painfully clear by a statement made before a commission of inquiry by Lieutenant-Colonel Pienaar who, as the senior officer at the police station in Sharpeville on 21st March 1960, was responsible for the police action during the Sharpeville Massacre: "The native mentality does not allow them to

---

[1036] Teer Tomaselli (1992: 225)
[1037] Hansen & Murdock (1985: 231)

gather for a peaceful demonstration. For them to gather means violence." [1038] Thus, all the state ideologues had to do to create a salient image of violence was to sufficiently play on the deeply entrenched white fear of the black mob. [1039]

This was achieved in several ways, all of which I will sketch in the following sub-chapters.

Crowds are not Multi-Coloured

For one, crowds were generally shown to belong to one race group only. White protesters who joined their black compatriots were generally cropped out of pictures and ignored in texts. One exception I found was the *Sunday Times* of 21st July 1985, which displayed a large picture of a white man among the mourners at the funeral of the 'Cradock Four', Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sicelo Mhlawuli (see fig. 34).

However, this should not be taken as a sign of greater openness. On the contrary, when looked at in context, the photograph created exactly the opposite impression, because the meaning does not lay in the picture alone. Several other factors, from the layout of the page to the content of the caption, are also involved in constructing its meaning. Let me explain starting with the big picture and working my way down to the photograph itself.

First of all, the image is located in the centre of the page, next to the lead article and directly under the main headline that stretches across the entire top of the page and reads "EMERGENCY!" [1040]. This makes it seem as if the depicted event is somehow directly related to the declaration of the state of emergency, something that certainly does not work in its favour. That impression is further strengthened by the black box/arrow to the left of the picture, which is inserted into the lead article. Again this serves to underline the link between the funeral and the emergency.

Now to the text inside the arrow: "Priests March Under Soviet Flag". Why is it there? Anyone with eyes can see that for themselves in the picture! Yes, but some people might not actually take this to be the essential message of the photograph – although in the politically charged situation of South Africa during the 1980s this is not very likely. Thus, the function of the arrow was not to inform, but to guide the reader towards the preferred reading of the photograph. The caption serves a similar purpose when it states "BLACK AND RED POWER … churchmen walk under the Soviet flag at yesterday's funeral". I say 'a similar', not 'the same' purpose for a reason. In the arrow, two groups are mentioned – Soviets and priests. In the caption, too, we initially hear about two groups – blacks and reds. But if we read on and when we look at the picture, we find three groups – Soviets in the shape of a flag,

---

[1038] Reeves (1996: 95)
[1039] van der Spuy (1990: 94), Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1), Hansen & Murdock (1985: 231-232) and Sharp (1980: 25)
[1040] Sunday Times (21st July 1985: 1)

blacks, and a white churchman. But the caption informs us of only two, so what happened? It is obvious that the priest cannot be part of the group of blacks, he therefore must be one of the reds. And this, in my opinion, is exactly what the arrow and the picture insinuate and the caption says in a very roundabout way: Those churchmen who are involved in the township struggle are in fact not men of god, but puppets of Moscow.

Figure 34: Red, white and black (Source: *Sunday Times* **(21ˢᵗ July 1985: 1))**

This message is reinforced by the choice of angle and the way the image is cropped. The dominant feature is certainly the Soviet flag which takes up nearly half the picture. The focal point, though, is the white priest's face. It stands out markedly against the surrounding black

mourners and the angle and the way the image has been cut help to put him at the centre. This certainly did not correspond to reality, as is clear if we look at the section of the flag that is visible. This would probably be missed by the reader who only gives the image a passing glance. He/she would most likely get the impression that the priest was among the leaders of the procession. So, to sum up, far from uniting the in- and out-groups, the picture serves to define the out-group as all reds and blacks who are opposed to the current order.

The state ideologues encouraged the use of such stereotypes, for it reaffirmed the division between the black demonstrators and the white newspaper readership and served to de-politicise the reporting about township violence. Much like the concept of 'black-on-black violence' it painted a picture of blacks as an intrinsically violent amorphous mass without any sense or direction, thus negating individuality, political purpose, and ideological differences among the black population. Whether the armed struggle against apartheid or Inkatha's state-sponsored terror, the government redefined all ongoing conflicts as one and made it appear rooted in African culture rather than the oppressive system of apartheid. [1041]

This, however, does not explain why the newspapers that claimed to oppose apartheid took on this symbolism quite so readily. Several explanations would be plausible, and the truth is probably a mixture of them all. One factor is the newsworthiness of the event in terms of Galtung & Ruge's twelve factors. Crowd violence fulfilled at least six of them: It perfectly fitted the frequency of newspaper publication; it generally passed the threshold of what was deemed worthy to be reported; it was easily interpreted by the news codes as a political story and could be presented to the readers in a simple manner of 'us' against 'them'; it was easily understandable to the readers and thus meaningful to them; it certainly was a negative event; and, most importantly, it was expected to happen. White readers had been conditioned to expect large groups of blacks to behave violently.

But newsworthiness alone does not explain the approach. I believe that the real motivator can be found on a more unconscious level – that of ideology. As much as they claimed to want to change the status quo, English speaking journalists were still average members of white society – they belonged to the urban middle class, were generally well off, and mostly male – and as such expressed their opinions exclusively within the officially sanctioned discourse. They were trapped in the dominant ideology without even noticing it. Most white South Africans felt that political participation (which, in their eyes, was sufficiently possible for blacks in the homelands and in the shape of community councils in the townships), not mass demonstrations, were an adequate channel for expressing political sentiment. [1042] They saw no reason for anyone taking to the streets, and took demonstrations, especially violent ones, to be

---

[1041] Foster (1990: 166), Sanders (2000: 178), Franks (1987: 174-175) and Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1)
[1042] Pattern (1997: 18-19)

an unprovoked attack on public order. Protesters were assigned the role of enemies, to be defined solely by their criminal acts of stone throwing, arson, and destruction, and containable only by a strong, orderly police force. Such a view obviously left no room for explanations or analyses of the context of a demonstration and meant that non-violent black crowds, such as the group of 300 school children who marched peacefully through central Cape Town on 1st September 1976 accompanied by one lone policeman, were often ignored. [1043]

And this leads us straight to the next characteristic of the crowd: Crowds were not just mono-racial; crowds were always black. This is not to mean that whites were never shown in groups. They were, but these groups were portrayed entirely differently than blacks in that they were orderly or following a leader. Rampaging white crowds were just as absent from the reports as peaceful black ones. [1044]

Crowds are African

The easiest way to express the difference between the two kinds of group was by emphasising the crowd members' African-ness. For example, when protests began at the University of Zululand on 18th June, *The Star* ran a front-page story titled "Zulus on rampage" [1045]. Unlike an article about a demonstration at the University of the Witwatersrand the day before ("Wits march into city 'out of control'" [1046]), in which students were described unfavourably, but were still portrayed as ordinary people, the newspaper paints an image of the black protesters as tribal savages ("Zulus" rather than 'students') whose actions constituted vandalism and blind rage, devoid of any political message. "Buildings were gutted, cars were burnt and Whites fled for their lives today when rioting broke out at the University of Zululand at Ngoye near Empangeni," [1047] the report begins. This sets the tone for the entire account, which goes on to paint the image announced in the headline: Zulus on rampage.

A similar effect was attained by showing crowd members in African (mostly Zulu) tribal dress like animal hides or even mentioning (however, due to religious censorship never showing) that they were not wearing any clothing at all. For example in an article about the shooting in Uitenhage *The Argus* quoted a policeman as saying: "A coloured woman with bare breasts threw a stone at the Casspir. Simultaneously the crowd threw stones, I realised 'here is trouble', and immediately shouted 'fire'." [1048]

Especially during the 1980s, but as early as 1976, weapons that were believed to be traditionally African, such as spears, clubs and axes, also served as symbols of black

---

[1043] Shaw (1999: 275)
[1044] Posel (1989: 271) and Teer Tomaselli (1992: 257-258)
[1045] The Star (18th June 1976 b: 1)
[1046] The Star (17th June 1976 d: 1)
[1047] The Star (18th June 1976 b: 1)
[1048] The Argus, 30th March 1985, *Why I Gave Order to Open Fire – Officer*, quoted in Thornton (1990: 136)

savageness when carried by people in a crowd. [1049] For example on 26th March 1985, the *Cape Times*, under the headline "Panga attack brings unrest death toll to 31" [1050], reported that: "The deaths of two Uitenhage residents who were attacked by a mob wielding pangas have pushed the unrest death toll since Thursday to 31 in the Eastern Cape where several incidents of arson were reported yesterday." [1051] And in an article in *The Argus* about the attack on Crossroads in 1986, a journalist recounts his trip into the battle-torn settlement as follows: "Entering from one of the entrances off Lansdowne Road, we were beckoned by about 70 men wielding long sticks and kerries." [1052]

One of the most striking examples of the use of weapons to denote wildness and wanton violence that I found was published in *The Star* on 26th December 1985. The newspaper's main headline that day read, "53 die in faction fight" with a kicker that read "Thousands of Zulus and Pondos clash in Christmas of blood". The article was fairly long, so I will limit myself to quoting one short section that struck me as an interesting juxtaposition of white strength and black savageness:

> "A strong force of policemen from the Riot Unit have been in the area since the start of the fighting.
>
> Unconfirmed reports said that several homes of Pondos and Zulus have been burnt.
>
> Witnesses said that both groups clashed with shotguns, knobkeries, assegais, sticks, knives and pangas." [1053]

This section has no apparent information value to the reader. The policemen are not stopping the violence, so mentioning their presence is rather useless. Unconfirmed reports that property has been damaged are also rather boring to someone who is not involved in the fight, and the weaponry used is of secondary importance compared to the losses inflicted. So why were these two paragraphs published? In my opinion it is purely to communicate images of black savageness in order to remind the white population that the "strong force" should remain in power lest the savages escape from their townships and go roaming white neighbourhoods.

Other articles create the same impression by simply talking of violence between different "factions" [1054] or "bands" [1055], "tribal" [1056] hostilities and the like, which implied that the use of violence was a tradition among blacks. [1057]

[1049] Manning (1987: 153), Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161) and Posel (1990: 160)
[1050] Cape Times (26th March 1985: 2)
[1051] Cape Times (26th March 1985: 2)
[1052] The Argus (20th May 1986: 1)
[1053] The Star (26th December 1985: 1)
[1054] Sunday Times (29th March 1987: 2) and Cape Times (13th June 1986 b: 2)
[1055] The Star (24th December 1985: 3)
[1056] The Star (26th January 1986 b: 1)
[1057] Tomaselli (1991 a: 22), Segal (1991: 20), *Talking about "Tribe". Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis* (Unknown: 1-2), Posel (1989: 268) and Posel (1990: 160)

Crowds are Opinion-less

Similarly, many white racists believed that blacks were incapable of purposeful thought, let alone political opinions, a view that was consistently supported by the government and, to a lesser extent by the press. During the Soweto Uprisings the newspapers, particularly the *Rand Daily Mail*, still explained the students' motives and reasons for protesting (if not so much for protesting violently) and showed their placards in the accompanying images (see fig. 35).

Figure 35: The people shall speak! (Source: *The Argus* **(17th June 1976: 23))**

With time, however, all explanations for the protesters' gathering or declarations of intent disappeared from the reports. Views of posters and slogans were generally either removed from photographs or obscured in such a way that their message became illegible (see fig. 36). Texts made no mention of them. [1058]

Figure 36: Ten years on, the message is lost (Source: *The Argus* **(20th July 1985: 1))**

[1058] Merrett (1994: 119), Posel (1990: 159) and Posel (1989: 267)

The emergency regulations may explain some of the omissions, but I believe that this is not the whole picture. For one, when it suited their views the newspapers did show political statements and symbols in their photographs. The entire message of the *Sunday Times* article described above would have been lost had it not displayed the Soviet flag on the front page. Secondly, the alternative newspapers managed to publish political statements without being closed down (see fig. 37).

Figure 37: Our strength is in our message (Source: *Grassroots* (August 1985: 2))

In my opinion, the reason fur such selective reporting lay once again in the ideological background of the English press. Most editors were quite content not to dispute the government's views about the legitimacy of black politics because, by and large, they too saw the liberation movements as dangerous terrorists whose aims should not be furthered.

Crowds are Huge

Instead, elements of chaos and anarchy were stressed. Such feelings were communicated in a number of different ways: For one, the crowds were generally made to appear humungous. The *Star* for example reported on its front page on 16th June 1976, that the there were "10 000 in Soweto on the rampage" [1059]. And the *Daily Dispatch*, in a story about the murder of community councillor Benjamin Kinikini and his sons, explains: "The incident reportedly occurred when more than 30 000 chanting people who attended yesterday's funerals were returning from the cemetery." [1060] Such stories were frequently accompanied by photographs of huge crowds (see fig. 38).

Figure 38: The danger is approaching (Source: *The Argus* (16th June 1976 (City Late Edition): 1))

During the Soweto Uprisings, the size of the crowds must have come as a particular surprise to journalists and editors. Most newspapers dedicated several pages entirely to photographs of the events in the townships and crowds of protesting students always featured prominently among them (see fig. 39).

[1059] The Star (16th June 1976 d: 1)
[1060] Daily Dispatch (25th March 1985: 1)

Figure 39: The symbols of bloodshed (Source: *The Star* **(16th June 1976 (Late Final Edition): 7))**

The size of the crowds was often further emphasised by showing them at very close range. The whole image was filled with moving blacks, dancing and singing or with raised fists. This way the people were robbed of any individuality and disappeared in a sea of black bodies and body parts, a mass without any kind of structure (see fig. 53 in chapter 4.6.2 c). [1061]

Crowds are Wild

The lack of individuals also made the group appear chaotic, uncontrollable and wild. The sense of danger emanating from it was greatly increased by depictions of the people moving towards the camera, rather than passing by the side of the photographer or even away from him. The viewer instantly felt that this impenetrable wall of blacks was coming for him, that they were running towards him, attacking him, ready to invade his/her world.

Also, a group of blacks was seldom called that. Instead it was described using terms such as 'crowd', 'horde' or 'mob'. This verbal imagery was extensively used in the reports about the events in Soweto on 16th June 1976. In its City Late Edition on 17th June, *The Star*'s main headline warns readers "Mobs take over" [1062]. The *Rand Daily Mail* wrote of "Women dragged off by student mob" [1063], and *The Natal Mercury* explained: "Soweto was in chaos last night as vandal bands gutted Government buildings, looted bottle stores and laid siege to

---

[1061] Sanders (2000: 171) and Posel (1990: 157)
[1062] The Star (17th June 1976 c: 1)
[1063] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 e: 3)

some police stations." [1064] Similarly, during the 1980s the state of emergency was frequently portrayed as a necessary measure to contain the mobs. On 21st July 1985, the *Sunday Times* wrote: "In a bold – and controversial – move, the State has adopted almost totally unfettered power to crush defiant mobs that have brought mayhem and murder to black townships." [1065] Note the contrasting of the mobs and the State, which is – unusually – capitalised.

Whether people were described as a tribal army, a force of nature, or simply as a mass of bodies, the primary message of the reports was always the same: A group of blacks by its very nature is disorderly and violent. And even if the old terms were no longer used in the 1980s, the picture drawn of blacks remained the same: that of 'violent black hordes'. [1066]

The Crowd during the Period of Transition

This imagery did not change with the unbanning of the liberation movements in 1990. On the contrary, images of barbaric crowds laying the country to waste and going on murderous rampages were fast becoming a normal feature of the reporting during the transition. [1067] On 30th June 1992 for example, under the headline "Newsmen witness brutal death" *The Star* carried the following story on the front page:

> "Two horrified news photographers saw a man being dragged out of a Boipatong house and beaten unconscious before being shot and necklaced during yesterday's mass funeral for the June 17 massacre.
>
> Star photographer Joao Silva and Weekly Mail counterpart Guy Adams were chased from the scene at gunpoint after witnessing the murder.
>
> They described how a crowd pulled a man said to be an Inkatha Freedom Party member from a house.
>
> "They started to beat him senseless with sticks and then threw rocks at his head.
>
> "As the crowd got the man into the street, a minibus carrying a lot more people, some armed with AK-47s, drove up," Silva said. "They shot him dead and put a tyre around his body."
>
> Silva and Adams said that as the group was about to burn the body, they were chased away at gunpoint." [1068]

The article is illustrated with an image of a black man swinging a homemade axe above his shoulders about to bring it down on another man lying on the ground. In the background we see the outline of a crowd, which covers the whole width of the picture (see fig. 40).

[1064] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[1065] Sunday Times (21st July 1985: 1)
[1066] Rauch (1993: 2) and Sanders (2000: 171)
[1067] Merrett (1994: 168)
[1068] The Star (30th June 1992: 1)

Figure 40: The brutal death of a young man seen through the eyes of a frightened photographer (Source: *The Star* (30th June 1992: 1))

The caption reads: "Unknown attacker … hacks the body of a man who had been beaten and shot in Boipatong yesterday. The victim was then necklaced." [1069]

Both the article and the picture illustrate perfectly how the image of crowd violence was constructed. In both cases the assailants are nameless and faceless, a feature that stands in stark contrast to the naming of the two photographers. The victim, although given the privilege of being a single person, is still not identified as an individual, but rather as a member of a political party. The threat emanating from the crowd is further underlined by the minibus "carrying a lot more people". This gives the impression of there being a seemingly endless supply of potential attackers. The crowd's tools, sticks, axes and rocks, typical 'primitive' weapons, along with the Soviet made AK-47s re-invoke images of the black peril and the red peril, now rolled into one: wild Africans armed with modern weapons.

As the news value of the story is very low given the context of the ongoing violence at the time and the mass funeral which happened the same day, the article seems to do little else besides illustrating the black population's primitiveness. Still it is something special. Unlike most news items, this article makes explicit mention of the readers' in-group, namely the two photographers, contrasting their feelings and their behaviour with that of the crowd: While they are "horrified" at such displays of violence, the crowd seems to show no such feelings. In fact, they seem to show no feelings at all while beating a man "senseless". Although this latter term is not used to describe the crowd its use still leaves an impression of the violence being senseless and the crowd being beyond sensible thought. The two white photographers therefore react to the spectacle in a way the reader can identify with while the actions of the crowd remain entirely unexplained and therefore beyond understanding. And then there is the

---

[1069] The Star (30th June 1992: 1)

direct relationship between the two groups. The photographers are in the minority, threatened and finally chased away at gunpoint, while the crowd is in the overwhelming majority, threatening and chasing the two members of the readers' in-group. Taken metaphorically, again, we have a strong reference to the black peril, which serves to underline white fears of what might happen if these people are allowed to do as they please in South Africa.

Even during the transition, the newspapers sometimes still presented violence as typically 'African'. The Boipatong massacre for example was frequently described as an ethnic conflict between violent primitives. *The Argus* of 18th June 1992 for example told readers:

> "The mob attacked houses at random, hacking and stabbing people in their path. Eight people are reported to have been injured.
>
> Vaal Triangle police liaison officer Captain Piet van Deventer said township residents claimed Inkatha residents from a nearby hostel were responsible for the attacks.
>
> He said men armed with knives, pangas and guns entered the township at 11.30pm and attacked occupants of houses. Most victims were women and children." [1070]

The *Pretoria News* was even clearer about its interpretation of the events. Instead of relying on the symbolic power of the weapons and people's knowledge of whom and what Inkatha represented, they said it right in the headline: "34 die in 'impi' raid". And the article explains:

> "At least 34 people, many of them women and children, were killed in a mass slaughter when Zulu impis allegedly went on the rampage in the Boipatong squatter camp in the Vaal Triangle late last night.
>
> (…)
>
> A group of about 200 men armed with knives, pangas and guns had slipped into the township on foot and started attacking houses in Slovo Park and killing occupants at random.
>
> Most of the victims were stabbed and hacked to death." [1071]

Neither article needs to be dissected very much to find the intended meaning. It is all right there – mobs of Zulus randomly hacking people to death. None of the mainstream papers seriously investigated residents' claims that policemen, soldiers, or white people had been among the attackers. The *Argus* article did mention the allegation in passing:

> "An elderly Boipatong resident, who witnessed the massacre, told the Star, sister newspaper of the Argus, that Inkatha hostel dwellers at the nearby Kwamadala hostel were responsible for the attack. He also alleged that "white" uniformed men in armoured vehicles assisted Inkatha in the massacre." [1072]

[1070] The Argus (18th June 1992: 1)
[1071] Pretoria News (18th June 1992 b: 1)
[1072] The Argus (18th June 1992: 1)

But it took the press quite some time to find the deeper connections between the NP government and the Boipatong attackers. As Jeremy Gordin, Eugene de Kock's biographer, told me: "I mean that was de Kock and his buddies stoking up fires and giving weapons to the IFP. But again the press played it … sort of as IFP savagery." [1073]

The Crowd after 1994

The black crowd has remained a potent symbol for violent unrest even after the 1994 elections, however the terms used to build and maintain the image have changed. Expressions such as 'black-on-black violence' and 'faction fights' are rarely found in the press these days. They no longer fit in with the official discourse of tolerance and equality. This, however, does not mean that the attitude that gave rise to these terms in the first place has changed completely. Violence among blacks is still frequently described in more detail than acts of violence committed by whites, and the association of crowd action with a black skin is still strong. This perpetuates the cliché of the uncivilised hordes of black murderers. The only difference is that, today, such violence is more often ascribed to the political intolerance of the black population rather than their nature. [1074]

For example in a report on the inquest into Rashaad Staggie's murder, the *Electronic Mail & Guardian* described the scene in front of the victim's home as involving "5 000 Pagad supporters chanting "kill the merchants, kill", minutes before Staggie was dragged from his bakkie, shot in the head and set alight" [1075]. The actors, particularly the victim, may have changed, but the imagery is clear: a mob of chanting black people waiting for their prey. Furthermore, the story is told from the viewpoint of a police intelligence operative who had been present at the scene, thus reflecting the official point of view and positioning the reader among the officers who face what is later called "the crowd" [1076]. The officers are mostly individually named adding to their positive evaluation and contrasting with the faceless mob. They are described as acting calmly and purposefully, for example when one of them "addressed the crowd" [1077]. After this talk, "a gunfight broke out in which several people, including Parker [one of the policemen] were wounded" [1078]. No cause is given for this sudden violence, neither are the perpetrators named, but the context implies that the shooters had been among the crowd and had attacked the policemen. This again reinforces the view of crowd-action as irrational and violent.

[1073] Interview with the author, 31st July 2002
[1074] ANC (1996 b: 25) and Segal (1991: 20)
[1075] Electronic Mail & Guardian (20th August 1998: 1)
[1076] Electronic Mail & Guardian (20th August 1998: 1)
[1077] Electronic Mail & Guardian (20th August 1998: 1)
[1078] Electronic Mail & Guardian (20th August 1998: 1)

This imagery has survived all changes in reporting and is still used by the mainstream press today. Consider for example the following article that appeared on the front page (it was not the main story, but the headline was above the fold) of *The Star* of 18th July 2002:

"**Rioters petrol bomb school**

Schoolchildren ran for their lives today as an angry mob went out of control, throwing petrol bombs and destroying property in Lenasia.

The school was attacked by a mob of residents – protesting their removal from the Thembelihle informal settlement – after they had damaged three shops and ransacked a butchery.

The school's deputy principal, Gerald Pillay, said the mob gathered at the school at about 7.45am, broke down the fence and started throwing petrol bombs into some of the classrooms. Students trying to flee were sjambokked by the mob.

Pillay told how he and other staff desperately tried to put out the flames but were accosted by the mob.

"They took our cellphones, beat us up and held us to the ground. One of them pointed a firearm at our chief administrative clerk. They searched him and robbed him of cash," Pillay said. They then smashed windows and classrooms.

Pillay said the principal had been approached by residents yesterday, telling him that the students living in Thembelihle would not attend school today.

Pillay said they had wanted to use the pupils as shields if police fired on them during the march.

"I think the thugs that came to the school are undermining the genuine demands of the squatters."

The mob also broke into a butchery owned by Settar Karim.

"These people just came at about 7.30am, broke my till and removed the money inside it," Karim said.

They also smashed the windows of his car.

The till of another shop owner, Shiraz Khan, was carried off by squatters this morning who had also smashed his car.

Police reinforcements were on the scene trying to negotiate with the mob, members of which were trying to regain entry to the school.

At the time of going to press, police and the mob of residents were in a stand-off." [1079]

This article is a prime example of the crowd symbolism in use today. Not unlike its counterparts during apartheid, it gives hardly any information about why the residents of

---

[1079] The Star (18th July 2002 a: 1)

Thembelihle were protesting, except that they were "protesting their removal". Neither does it explain why the protest had turned violent. It is as if the newspaper expects its readers to presuppose that a protesting crowd of black people is by its very nature violent and therefore not to ask such a question.

The protesters are not allowed to explain their reasons for resisting relocation or for violently attacking school children. Instead, they are constructed as the evil out-group ("they", "these people"), a "mob" of "squatters" and "thugs" (never 'people' or 'residents') with all attributes the good in-group is expected to hate and fear: They are "angry", "out of control", "destroying property", "attacked" a school, "damaged three shops", "ransacked a butchery" "sjambokked" children, "beat" people and took their cellphones, "robbed them" and "smashed" car windows. Their negative actions are mainly described in active clauses and using terminology that describe the demonstrators either in the old apartheid way as a degenerate mob of primitives or as common criminals.

On the other side stand the residents of Lenasia, they are constructed as the good in-group ("our", "us") with attributes that the readership is expected to recognise as normal and identify with: They are mostly named and other information, such as job descriptions ("principal", "clerk", "butcher", "shop owner"), is given, which makes it easier for the reader to identify with them. Also, the fact that they have jobs, money and status symbols (cellphones, a firearm) indicates that they occupy a rank on the social ladder which is much closer to that of the white newspaper readership than that of the black out-group. They are attacked by the evil out-group (the close proximity of the robbing and the demonstrating almost insinuates that the attacks were motivated by the chance of making a profit) and, like most whites who were attacked in their homes, "desperately tried to put out the flames". The people of Thembelihle on the other hand remain an anonymous "mob" without names, faces, sense or reason.

Let us briefly compare this article with one about the same conflict that appeared on the same day in the *Daily Sun*, a tabloid newspaper aimed at a working-class black readership [1080]. The Thembelihle issue was front-page news, illustrated with a huge picture of two people barricading a road with rocks. The title makes it clear from the beginning whose side the paper stands on: "We won't go!" [1081] it declares making the protesters' cause their own without even adding quotation marks as a distance marker (see fig. 41).

[1080] The cover price in 2002 was only 1 Rand compared with 2.40 for the Sowetan and 2.80 for The Star.
[1081] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 1)

Figure 41: A whole different in-group (Source: Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 1))

The article on page two titled "'We refuse to move'" [1082], this time including the speech marks, begins by explaining the situation in Thembelihle as follows:

> "Angry members of Thembelihle have vowed not to move, in spite of eviction orders.
>
> Trouble has been brewing in Thembelihle, an informal settlement in Lenasia, south of Johannesburg, for weeks.
>
> At the heart of the trouble, which has seen clashes between residents, motorists and the police are plans to move about 500 families from the area." [1083]

After this brief introduction the newspaper goes on to explain that the protesters are waiting for a meeting with Johannesburg executive mayor Amos Masondo, which they "have been

---

[1082] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)
[1083] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)

told was coming" [1084]. "But the office of the mayor said Masondo had never arranged any meeting," [1085] the paper continues a little further down and no talks took place.

> "Squatters who spoke to *Daily Sun*," the article continues, "said the decision to move them to Vlakfontein was a ploy to make the land available for businesses.
>
> "The council is trying to make money at our expense. We are not occupying this land for free, we are also paying service charges," said the residents.
>
> Thembelihle crisis committee spokesperson, Mzwandile Mdingi, said the community was being moved to Vlakfontein, an area which they claim has no infrastructure.
>
> "There is no running water, electricity, schools or clinics and the land is far from the industrial area where most of our people work," said Mdingi." [1086] (Italics in original.)

The newspaper then goes on to explain how even the "nearby rate-payers of upmarket houses" had called the decision to evict squatters as a ""crime against humanity"" [1087] (quotation marks in original), especially as the people are being moved in winter. The article finishes off by quoting Soweto police spokesperson Captain John Shiburi that the police would be deployed in the area "on a 24-hour basis to monitor the situation" [1088].

From this article a whole new image of the crowd emerges. No longer are they depicted as dangerous and evil ("members" or "residents" instead of 'mob'), although some of the negative descriptions remained, such as squatter, a term that indicates illegal behaviour and carries heavy historical connotations as it was used by the apartheid regime to indicate that the black population had no right to live in urban areas. Neither do they act impulsively, irrationally or without reason. They feel they are being cheated for a number of possible reasons that they are allowed to express themselves in direct quotes. Moreover, they are shown to be open for dialogue. And finally, they are not described as violent, let alone as the out-group. It is quite clear from this comparison that *The Star* had the option to report differently that day [1089] but editors made the more or less conscious choice to stick with the old imagery of good individuals being faced by a bad crowd.

Not only the articles often maintained the old modes of reporting when describing groups of black people. Pictures, too, tended to make use of the old symbols when portraying crowd action. *The Star* for example published a large picture of a crowd reminiscent of the apartheid days on the front page on 4th July 2002 to accompany an article about a strike among municipal workers that had turned violent (see fig. 42).

[1084] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)
[1085] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)
[1086] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)
[1087] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)
[1088] Daily Sun (18th July 2002: 2)
[1089] For yet another view on the issue see Mail & Guardian (28th June 2002: 5), which provides an intrinsically mainstream position, but balances this with background information and quotes from residents.

Figure 42: Welcome to the new millennium (Source: *The Star* (4ᵗʰ July 2002: 1))

The writing on the placards may have changed, but the image remained the same – a massive crowd of angry-looking blacks walking towards the reader seemingly trashing everything in their way. The headline, "'Only talks will end chaos'" [1090], also brings back memories of apartheid where crowds of blacks automatically meant unrest (or, in some headlines even "chaos" [1091]). However, in this case the article does not deliver what it promised. Rather than a condemnation of the protesters the paper actually gives readers an account of their grievances, complete with a quote from one of the demonstrators, talks about their

---

[1090] The Star (4ᵗʰ July 2002: 1)
[1091] The Natal Mercury (19ᵗʰ June 1976: 1), The Star (21ˢᵗ July 1985: 2) and The Argus (1ˢᵗ February 1990 b: 5)

"leadership, determined to prevent the nationwide strike from degenerating into further mayhem" [1092] negotiating with the government. They also give a description of the violence, which is clearly blamed on renegade workers who "broke ranks and, despite pleas from union leaders to "clean up their city", continued where strikers had left off the night before, and again trashed the streets" [1093] and an overzealous policeman who had "fired a rubber bullet into the crowd" [1094] in Johannesburg and two who had injured workers with birdshot in Paarl. Still, the violence is more closely associated with the marchers. The police appear in connection with violence in the following sentences:

- "In Johannesburg, what started out as a peaceful march ended with one man wounded from rubber bullets allegedly fired by police as mayhem broke out for a second day in a row"

- "In one incident, a policeman allegedly fired a rubber bullet into the crowd and injured a worker in a leg."

- In Paarl, two marchers were treated for birdshot at a hospital, apparently after police said they needed to defend themselves when attacked with sharp objects. [1095]

And this is how the workers are described when they act violently:

- "Rampaging workers broke ranks and, despite pleas from union leaders to "clean up their city", continued where strikers had left off the night before, and again trashed the streets."

- "The worker, Comfort Shosha, from Durban Deep Pikitup, who was trying to calm a rampaging group who had broken a taxi driver's window, was left lying on a filthy President Street pavement as the police officer allegedly ran from the scene."

- "[Superintendent Chris] Wilken said Monday night's rampage was captured on video by the CCTV cameras linked to the Business against Crime surveillance unit and that workers would face prosecution if the council decides to press criminal charges."

- "Workers emptied dustbins and damaged property."

- "On their way to Cape Town station, rubbish bins were overturned."

- "The protesters forced many informal traders and lunchtime shoppers to seek safety in barricaded shops as they destroyed rubbish bins, strewing garbage in the city's streets." [1096]

I believe that it is obvious even from this short summary that the amount of coverage given to the workers' violence is much greater than that of police violence. Moreover, the newspaper

---

[1092] The Star (4th July 2002: 1)
[1093] The Star (4th July 2002: 1)
[1094] The Star (4th July 2002: 1)
[1095] The Star (4th July 2002: 1)
[1096] The Star (4th July 2002: 1)

describes the violent actions of the three policemen as vaguely as possible and only in one case in an active sentence. In sentence one the police are in the grammatical subject position, which serves to distance them from the action, and sentence three does not explicitly link the policemen to the violence at all. Instead the relationship is implied through the description of a temporal relationship ("after") between the police action and the workers being treated in hospital. The newspaper presupposes that the reader will fill in the blanks and reconstruct the events in his/her head. Once again this technique serves to obscure the policemen's involvement in violence. The impression of vagueness about the police violence is further underlined as all three sentences contain modality markers that signal uncertainty (allegedly, apparently). And finally, both incidents are justified by pointing at the violence of those the police were facing – the crowd.

Now if we compare this description to that of the crowd, we will find a whole different kind of violence. In four out of six sentences their actions are described in active sentences with them in the grammatical agent position. One uses a passive construction and only one makes use of nominalization (rampage), thus making the actor completely irretrievable. There are no modality markers indicating uncertainty or vagueness in any of the sentences; the actions are described as fact. Moreover, unlike the police whose actions are described using relatively sober language ("fired", "defend"), the words used in connection with the workers ("Rampaging", "despite pleas", "trashed", "rampage", "forced", "destroyed") are highly emotive and evoke the old images of chaos and mayhem. And while the police were now a non-racial category, that of the crowd was still closely associated with blacks. As Tony Heard put it: "Blacks usually run amok and go on a rampage. How many whites go on a rampage? Very few. I don't even know what a white on a rampage looks like." [1097]

b)   Fire

During the apartheid years, an equally popular symbol of black violence was fire. It played into two stereotypes that whites had towards their fellow black countrymen and was therefore used in two ways, literally and metaphorically. Let me explain.

Fire as a Form of Black Violence

Blacks were seen as closer to nature than civilised whites, and what better way to express this than by showing them to make use of nature in its crudest form, namely that of fire? Flames were extensively used in press reports of violence with people being described as setting fires, handling burning objects such as petrol bombs, or dancing around a fire.

The fire symbolism was used frequently during the reporting of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976:

[1097] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002

- "Children set cars ablaze" [1098],
- "Looting, burning as riots continue" [1099],
- "Flaming night" [1100],
- "Death town burns" [1101],
- "Riots, arson spread" [1102], and
- "Children stone buildings, burn vehicles" [1103]

These were just some of the headlines on and after 16th June. The articles, too, were dotted with references to flames and fire. "As we flew over the next time," *The Star* describes a helicopter flight over Soweto, "pupils were jumping back from one of the cars, which began to spew flame and smoke. Seconds later the car was a ball of flame with thick black smoke pouring towards the sky." [1104] "The fires are burning furiously," [1105] a different article in the same edition explains. And *The Argus* told readers: "Thick black smoke was blowing over Orlando from a van which was reportedly overturned and burnt by the angry crowd." [1106] Even the supposedly liberal *Rand Daily Mail* described the situation in Soweto in a decidedly conventional way:

> "The giant Black city – housing more than one million people – was last night in chaos as roving bands of vandals burnt Government buildings, looted bottle stores and threatened to lay siege to police stations." [1107]

In fact, this formulation looks very much like one that was published the same day in the rather conservative *Natal Mercury*: "Soweto was in chaos last night as vandal bands gutted Government buildings, looted bottle stores and laid siege to some police stations." [1108] Such striking similarities are probably the result of both newspapers belonging to the South Africa Morning Newspaper Group, whose members shared stories on a common wire service. [1109] The "Mercury Correspondents" that the *Mercury* article is bylined to are most likely reporters for the *Rand Daily Mail*. This is a significant little detail, because in my opinion, the fact that the *Mail* published a story which was taken over without great changes by the *Mercury*, shows that the idea that black protesters are nothing but "vandals" on a rampage laying everything in their path to waste is widely shared among white South Africans.

[1098] The Star (16th June 1976 f: 1)
[1099] Cape Times (17th June 1976: 1)
[1100] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[1101] The Natal Mercury (18th June 1976: 1)
[1102] Daily Dispatch (19th June 1976: 1)
[1103] The Argus (22nd June 1976: 1)
[1104] The Star (16th June 1976 f: 1)
[1105] The Star (16th June 1976 g: 1)
[1106] The Argus (16th June 1976 b: 1)
[1107] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[1108] The Natal Mercury (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[1109] Raymond Louw in an interview with the author, 19th July 2002

Similarly, every newspaper I surveyed illustrated its reports about the events with images of burning vehicles and buildings or billowing smoke rising at the horizon (see figs. 43 and 44).

Figure 43: Soweto through the eyes of *The Star* (17th June 1976: 1) (The same picture appeared on the front page of *The Argus* that day)

Figure 44: Soweto as seen by the *Rand Daily Mail* (18th June 1976: 1) (The same picture appeared on the front page of the *Cape Times* that day)

I agree that the burning of buildings is a newsworthy event, but to give a burning car preference over, for example, images of injured victims must be the result of a conscious decision, especially if it is done with such great consistency across the entire spectrum. It

certainly was not done for lack of photographs of victims. *Rand Daily Mail* staff photographer Peter Magubane, among others, did a tremendous job at capturing the human face of suffering, but only one of his pictures of victims made the paper (see fig. 45). And, despite its immense visual power, it was only published fairly small on page three.

Figure 45: The pain and suffering caused by the guardians of law and order is pushed aside by an advertisement for cigarettes (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (19th June 1976: 3))

The Soweto Uprisings were not the only event in my survey where fire played an important role in the reporting. It was frequently used in the reporting of the witdoeke's attack on Crossroads in 1986. In the lead article in *The Argus* on 20th May 1986 it was even the dominant feature. The headline, the lead, and the main picture all made use of the fire symbolism. "The day they blotted out the sun" [1110] the headline read. The article is illustrated with a big picture at the centre of the page showing a township (Crossroads, we are told) with smoke billowing above the shacks. And the lead states:

[1110] The Argus (20th May 1986: 1)

> "The ominous pall of smoke blotting out the sun stained the sky to the Gordon's Bay coast.
>
> Flames leapt as new fires broke out in huts deep in the camp. Jets landing at nearby D F Malan airport were barely visible through the smoke." [1111]

And although the article never says who actually laid these fires, it is quite clear in the South African context. The headline gives the first indication by referring to 'them', which in apartheid South Africa generally meant black people. This impression is further underlined by the fact that the fires break out "deep in the camp", a place that white people would not generally be associated with. And finally there is the fact that no white people are explicitly mentioned, in which case it is safe to assume that none were present in a black township at the time the fires broke out. Thus, without having to give long explanations, the newspaper expresses that the fires are a purely black phenomenon.

In a completely different context and for more obvious reasons, the fires that broke out after the ANC's attack on the fuel depot in Sasolburg were omnipresent in the newspapers' reporting of the event the following days. "Six tanks still ablaze" [1112], "We fly through pillars of smoke" [1113], "Residents roused by midnight blast" [1114], "Blasts, then residents see 'flaming hell'" [1115] were some of the headlines in *The Argus* on 2nd June 1980 (see fig. 46 for *The Argus*' front page photograph that day). *The Star* painted a similar picture: "Sasol inferno" [1116] and "Pyjama crowd watched the flames" [1117].

However, not only the fire, that is the black violence, is portrayed. The fire fighters, the real-life ones as well as those symbolic ones in government, and the police are shown to be on the ball right away. *The Natal Mercury* ran a kicker above the main headline on 2nd June that read: "Plastic devices defused as Sasol fires brought under control" [1118] and underneath the main headline, almost like a sub-headline, is the headline of an article announcing possible attacks on Mozambique: "Le Grange warns SA's neighbours of reprisals" [1119]. The *Pretoria News* on 3rd June announced a "Huge manhunt for saboteurs" [1120], while *The Star* reported in one of its later editions on 2nd June: "Firemen in battle to hold Sasol flames" [1121]. And the next day it informed readers: "Sasol flames die as police hunt bombers" [1122].

[1111] The Argus (20th May 1986: 1)
[1112] The Argus (2nd June 1980 a: 1)
[1113] The Argus (2nd June 1980 b: 1)
[1114] The Argus (2nd June 1980 c: 2)
[1115] The Argus (2nd June 1980 e: 11)
[1116] The Star (2nd June 1980 a: 1)
[1117] The Star (2nd June 1980 b: 1)
[1118] The Natal Mercury (2nd June 1980 a: 1)
[1119] The Natal Mercury (2nd June 1980 b: 1)
[1120] Pretoria News (3rd June 1980: 1)
[1121] The Star (2nd June 1980 c: 1)
[1122] The Star (3rd June 1980: 1)

Figure 46: The flames of terror at Sasolburg (Source: *The Argus* (2nd June 1980 (Late Final Edition): 1))

Combined with the symbol of the crowd, the flames acquired an almost mystical meaning. By showing people handling fire, or better yet dancing around a fire, the media invoked images of pagan rituals, again tapping into the white population's fear of the primitives. This method obviously worked best on television as moving images combined with sound made the biggest impression on the audience. [1123] However, the English press, too, made use of this imagery. For examples, in a report about the burning to death of Kwanobuhle community councillor Benjamin Kinikini, the *Daily Dispatch* wrote:

> "Mr. Kinikini and his son, Silumko, 18, were burnt to death when his funeral parlour was set alight on Saturday.
>
> The chanting crowd reportedly danced on the charred remains of people they said were those of Mr. Kinikini and his son." [1124]

[1123] Hudson & Stanier (1998: 314), Posel (1989: 269) and Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161)
[1124] Daily Dispatch (25th March 1985: 1)

This shows a completely different context in which fire was used to symbolise black violence. In the shape of necklacings it also came to represent the essence of township murder. Here it was not so much the nature of fire that was drawn on to create the desired images in peoples' heads, but rather the ghastliness of the act of burning a person alive. Accordingly, the newspapers did not try to hide the violence behind a cloud of smoke, but openly described the brutal practice, at times in surprising detail and occasionally illustrating the articles with explicit images of the (dead) body. [1125]

For example on 20th May 1985, *The Star* described the dying moments of Maki Skosana under the headline "Funeral mob batters and burns 'spy' at Reef burial" [1126]:

> "When they caught up with her they tore her clothes off and attacked her.
> Maki fell to the ground and combustibles were piled upon her and set alight. Even when it was apparent that she was dead, youngsters hurled stones at her and some spat on her semi-naked body." [1127]

The article was illustrated with a photograph of a group of black men standing around and kicking at something that is burning on the ground. The body itself is not discernible in the photograph (see fig. 12 in chapter 4.2.3). Not so in the *Sunday Times* of 29th June 1986, which published a story titled "My 'necklace' hell" that was illustrated with a gruesome picture of the victim's scarred back (see fig. 47). [1128]

The text makes use of similar language to that about Maki Skosana, invoking images of a frenzied mob descending on their helpless prey. The victim is portrayed as a tangible human being: he is named (even if his 'name' is the pseudonym "Mr. "X"" to protect his safety) and described as a "father of four" who lives in Crossroads with his wife. We are told his age, his occupation and, most importantly to the white reader, the fact that he is non political (he was "sucked into the violence") and does not partake in strikes. The perpetrators on the other hand are described as a "mob" and a "crowd comprising men and women of all ages". As so often in descriptions of black crowds at the time, they are said to have attacked him with "sticks, an axe and pangas"; they "put a tyre around his neck and splashed petrol over him"; then "they set him alight". The victim is finally saved when "Through a haze of pain he heard shots and the crowd scattered as the police arrive" [1129].

[1125] Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1), O'Dowd (1996: 81) and Posel (1990: 161)
[1126] The Star (20th May 1985: 4)
[1127] The Star (20th May 1985: 4)
[1128] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)
[1129] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)

My 'necklace' hell

By SYBRAND MOSTERT

A "NECKLACE" victim who miraculously survived a brutal attempt on his life a month ago has told of the terror and pain he lived through when a mob placed a tyre round his neck and splashed petrol over him.

Mr "X", a 48-year-old father of four who was sucked into the violence that wiped Crossroads off the map last month, took his shirt off at a Press conference arranged by the police on Friday to show burns on his arm and chest which will leave him scarred for life.

His face and head had panga and knife wounds, and the interview was conducted shortly after his discharge from a Cape Town hospital.

Police requested that he should not be identified for his own safety.

Still feeling discomfort after a month in hospital, the man explained that "when the fighting started in Crossroads I had not wanted to get involved", and he had gone to work on the Monday as usual.

The Crossroads conflict between the more conservative "witdoeke" and the "comrades" broke out on a Sunday in the middle of last month.

He lived in the camp with his wife and four children, and was employed at a building site in Kraaifontein.

When he returned from work on the Wednesday, "some people stopped me and asked me where I stayed and where I worked. I told them that I stayed in Crossroads and had just come from work in Kraaifontein".

He said that the crowd, comprising men and women of all ages, told him that he was lying. He was attacked with sticks, an axe and pangas. The crowd had accused him of being a "witdoek".

"They then put a tyre round my neck and made it hang under this arm", he said, pointing to his hideously scarred right arm.

He had been terrified as they splashed petrol over him and then set him alight.

Through a haze of pain he heard shots and the crowd scattered as the police arrived. He vaguely remembers running — "my kop was dronk" ("I was dizzy"), he said — and then falling on to sand where, with the help of the police, the fire was doused.

He was taken to Tygerberg Hospital, and was discharged from Groote Schuur on Friday after a month in bed.

Mr "X" showed no fear about returning to his home. He said that his shack had not been destroyed in the violence and that he was "now going home to my wife and children".

• The ban on reporting on events in Crossroads and the surrounding townships was temporarily lifted on Friday when police escorted a Press group into Nyanga to observe a security operation.

All access to Cape Town's black townships, and the publishing of any unrest-related information in these areas, had been banned since the imposition of the state of emergency.

Security forces cordoned off a section of Nyanga — bordering on the cleared Crossroads site — and conducted a house-to-house search as hundreds of troops lined the streets.

Captain Jan Calitz, police liaison officer, said that the operation was to search for people wanted for serious crimes, and to search the area for illegal weapons and ammunition.

Four black men were arrested for illegal possession of ammunition, being in possession of banned literature and for unlawful liquor sales.

Mob axed me, set me alight tells dad

Mr "X" shows his scars

Mixed rule in Natal still on cards

By SHAUN HARRIS

THE exclusion of blacks from the appointments to the new Executive Committee for Natal, announced late this week, could fit in with long-term plans for joint executive rule for KwaZulu and Natal, say two senior observers.

The appointments to the new multiracial Executive Committees, which will replace the old, elected Provincial Council systems this week, were met with strong criticism from opposition politicians because no black members were appointed to the new Natal Exco.

Speculation

But both Dr Oscar Dhlomo, KwaZulu Minister of Education and Culture — and the KwaZulu government's representative to the ongoing Indaba — and Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, director of the Centre for Applied So-

Figure 47: Savagery on display (Source: *Sunday Times* (29th June 1986))

Here we have the representatives of the in-group, the saviours, the protectors, and those who hunt (later in the article we read about a house-to-house search) for the perpetrators of violence. All others represent the out-group, the crowd quite clearly so with its primitive weapons and barbaric violence and the victim a lot less so, but still he is not one of 'us'. At one point for example he is quoted as saying, "my kop was donk" [1130], a colloquialism that we would not hear in the papers coming from whites. Moreover the newspaper translated that quote in brackets ("I was dizzy"). This to me clearly means to underline that he is different, for would one of 'us' need translating? But the most important feature of the article is not found among the reference to persons; it is the portrayal of the victim's wounds, scars and suffering. Almost a quarter of the two-column article is devoted to descriptions such as: "His face and head had panga and knife wounds, and the interview was conducted shortly after his discharge from hospital." [1131]

[1130] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)
[1131] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)

Why did the newspapers choose to expose their readers to such a disconcerting subject? It was certainly not meant to emphasise the obvious, namely that burning people alive is incredibly cruel. Strangely, words like 'cruel' were rarely used in articles about necklacings. They did not fit in with what I have called the 'racial differences' frame, and were too neutral to be of use in apartheid discourse, where words such as 'terror' were preferred. As we will see in greater detail in chapter 4.6.4 b the portrayal of such aspects of the victim could serve several functions in a report. In our case it was of interest for the journalists because, besides fulfilling eight criteria of newsworthiness (frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness (these last two might seem like a bit of a contradiction, but it was expected in that whites thought that necklacings happened frequently, but came unexpectedly as no on knew when the next case would become known), reference to persons and reference to something negative), it satisfies the readers' fascination with the forbidden world of devilish violence (necklace "hell") in the townships that they would otherwise not even get a glimpse of. It is the appeal of the forbidden.

And why did the government allow the papers to be so open with these necklacings when it put so much effort into keeping other kinds of black violence hidden from the white public? We must not forget that this last article was written just after the declaration of the second state of emergency and while, as even the article itself tells us, a "ban on reporting on events in Crossroads and the surrounding townships" [1132] was in place. Obviously the information was not obtained secretly. The government wanted this story to get out. So why was the ban "temporarily lifted on Friday when police escorted a Press group into Nyanga to observe a security operation" [1133] and Mr. "X" paraded in front of gazing white journalists at a "Press conference arranged by the police on Friday" [1134]? In my view it served them in two ways. On the one hand it supplied the journalists with some information about the townships, which might have stopped them probing independently and uncovering things that the government wanted to keep under wraps. On the other hand it was an easy way to show to the white population what barbaric deeds the blacks in the townships were capable of.

Through such reporting, necklacings soon developed into a symbol for the political violence among South Africa's blacks, or rather for 'black-on-black-violence' or 'faction fights' as the conflicts were called in the press. [1135] And this is where the real reason for their publication lay. They reinforced the old prejudice that blacks were not just visibly different than whites, but actually stood on a lower step on the evolutionary ladder. Who else but underdeveloped

---

[1132] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)
[1133] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)
[1134] Sunday Times (29th June 1986: page unknown)
[1135] Tomaselli & Louw (1991: 161), Foster (1990: 168), Frederikse (1987: 218-219), Segal (1991: 20), Maré & Ncube (1989: 477) and Rauch (1993: 4)

savages could commit such despicable acts? This in turn implied that the only way to protect whites from falling prey to this kind of violence was to keep them well away from blacks, and served to justify the preservation of apartheid. Besides, the reports had the added advantage of increasing white support for the government intervention in the townships in the name of saving lives. [1136]

Black Violence as a Form of Fire

Fire was not only used in the literal sense described in the last sub-chapters. The newspapers also employed the symbolism in a different, metaphorical way. Fire was perfect for expressing notions of chaos, senseless destruction, and wildness. Raging flames encompassed everything whites took black violence to be about. Like a fire it can erupt at any time and in any place. It happens spontaneously and has no specific cause, which means that it is not the result of a rational, thought process. The spark which enflames them comes from an inner force. Blacks carry violence within them. The fire symbolism was also meant to show that black violence has no clear direction and does not attack any clear targets. It is like a wildfire. Once started, it develops its own momentum and can develop in any way imaginable. [1137]

Playing on the white population's fear of the supposed irrationality of blacks and their wild passions, the newspapers thus described crowd violence using metaphors that drew on analogies with wildfires or volcanoes, which insinuated that the violence perpetrated by the crowd was forceful and uncontrollable. It was said to 'break out' or 'erupt', 'flare-up', 'rage' and 'spread'.

Again, the Soweto Uprisings were a prime example. On 17th June *The Argus*' main headline was "Violence flares again in Soweto" [1138] and the *Rand Daily Mail* used metaphors of fire and flames throughout its reporting of the uprising. The sub-headline of its main story ("Flaming night" [1139]) on 17th June 1976 read "Riots rage – Army on standby" [1140]. And a few pages on we find an article saying:

> "Only a day or two before yesterday's violence broke out in Soweto Mr Leonard Mosala, of the Soweto Urban Bantu Council, warned that unless the matter was dealt with immediately it would precipitate another Sharpeville shooting incident."

And a little ways further down the article continues: "Mr Alpheus Kumalo, of the Zulu School Board in Dube, warned that the strike could spread like wildfire" [1141].

[1136] Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1), Posel (1990: 161) and Frederikse (1987: 220)
[1137] Retief (2002: 198), Posel (1989: 268) and Posel (1990: 161)
[1138] The Argus (17th June 1976: 1)
[1139] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[1140] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 a: 1)
[1141] Rand Daily Mail (17th June 1976 h: 15)

This theme was maintained by all papers in their reports of violence during the following days. On 18th June the *Cape Times* told readers "54 dead as riots spread" [1142], on 21st June *The Star* reported "Fresh riots erupt" [1143], and on 19th June the *Cape Times* talked of "20 dead in Alexandra flare-up" [1144], a headline placed above a picture of a smoking building (see fig. 48).

Figure 48: Flaming riot (Source: *Cape Times* (19th June 1976: 1))

The 1980s also supplied the press with enough chances to use the fire symbolism. On 8th September 1985 the *Sunday Tribune* reported rioting in the Cape Town area as follows: "This week the surges of violence in the Cape peninsula spread out of the Coloured and Black areas and into the suburb of Windsor Park." [1145] The *Cape Times* of 6th September 1985 chose a

---

[1142] Cape Times (18th June 1976: 1)
[1143] The Star (21st June 1976: 1)
[1144] Cape Times (19th June 1976: 1)
[1145] Sunday Tribune (8th September 1985 c: 19)

similar metaphor to describe the same situation: "Violence flared in Athlone again yesterday (…)." [1146]. In December 1985, *The Star* told readers about violence at a funeral in Moroka:

> "Chaos erupted when mourners fleeing the police near Moroka Police Station, on their way to the Avalon Cemetery, were attacked by enraged taxi-drivers, causing fears of a clash between youths and the motorists." [1147]

And on 12th June 1986 the *Pretoria News* pointed out that

> "The spreading rioting rocking black townships and squatter camps near Cape Town is taking place close to D. F. Malan international airport only a few kilometres from coloured and white suburbs, as our map shows." [1148]

The most important aspect of fires in the context of official apartheid discourse is that there is always the risk that it gets out of control. Let us remember why the newspapers were allowed to report on black violence in the first place. Among other reasons, the government wanted to reassure voters and opponents alike that it was in control, and the fire symbolism came in handy here for it carried a connotation of its own limitation. Experienced fire fighters – in government, the police, and the army – were always able to contain these violent forces in the townships and would even eventually restore order there. Thus, the flames as a symbol for the uncontrollable were also a sign of the government's strength because their destructive force had obviously not advanced into the white areas. [1149]

In this context showing images of fire rather than, say, crowds served another purpose besides emphasising the violence. They helped cover-up those aspects of the protest that the authorities wanted to keep a secret. Leaders, goals, opinions, points of view, everything that could give the violence a face and a reason, or serve as an explanation, disappeared in the flames. A political will was the last thing that could be expressed in this way. [1150]

Fires after 1990

Fire retained its symbolic power throughout the transition period, both in its literal and its metaphorical use. For example on 13th September 1990, the *Pretoria News* covered the violence in the Reef under the headline "Killing spree mayhem spreads": "Townships on the Reef erupted into renewed violence last night with mobs shooting and hacking people to death, burning houses and looting." [1151] Around the same time, the *Cape Times* also published a number of articles that lexicalised township violence in terms of fires: "Horrific attacks

---

[1146] Cape Times (6th September 1985: 1)
[1147] The Star (24th December 1985: 3)
[1148] Pretoria News (12th June 1986: 3)
[1149] Posel (1990: 160)
[1150] Posel (1990: 161)
[1151] Pretoria News (13th September 1990: 1)

erupt on Reef" [1152] we are told on 13th September. "Taxi violence erupts" [1153] a headline reads the next day. The word 'erupt' pops-up twice more in this latter article, where both "drama" and "gun battles" are said to erupt.

However, more than any other kind of fire, it was necklacings that now inspired the newspapers' imagination. The best-known incident is probably the necklacing of Lindsaye Tshabalala on 15th September 1990 by five ANC members, who accused him of being an IFP supporter. They attacked him at Inhlanzane station in Soweto, stoned, beat and stabbed him, and then doused him with petrol and set him alight.[1154] While a number of newspapers, including the *Sunday Times* and the *Cape Times*, did not use the pictures, several others, such as the *Weekend Argus* and the *Sunday Star*, published a whole sequence (see fig. 49).

Figure 49: The last dying moments of Lindsaye Tshabalala (Source: *The Argus* (15th September 1990: 6))

When questioned about the story by O'Dowd, several editors admitted that the gruesomeness of the images would normally be a strong reason for not publishing them, but that in this case

---

[1152] Cape Times (13th September 1990 b: 1)
[1153] Cape Times (14th September 1990 a: 2)
[1154] Marinovich & Silva (2000: 30-39 and 44) and O'Brien (1993: 69)

they felt that they had to use them because they constituted something new. Robert Mgwasa, the *Sowetan*'s chief photographer, explained:

> "When I first saw these pictures I became very excited. Because we have never captured necklace like here. Mostly we find the body lying there, the flames already out. (…) Because of the way the scene was captured, we had to publish." [1155]

However, several white journalists admitted that there was another, more profound reason. Chris Karstens, assistant editor at *Rapport*, said:

> "You can write the story of violence without using any of those pictures, and no one is going to read that story half way through. But when they see the pictures, they say: "Oh my God, is this what they are talking about when they are talking about violence?"" [1156]

Therefore, he wanted to write a story which would show his readers that "there is another sort of South Africa, and this is what is happening a couple of kilometres from you." [1157] And the deputy editor of *The Star*, David Hazelhurst, described the picture of Tshabalala's burning body as one of "three or four pictures that I remember that really highlighted the real horror of township warfare". [1158] And apparently most editors felt that the images spoke for themselves, for they were generally not accompanied by an article.

Since the 1994 elections the necklace seems to have largely disappeared from public view. This is not so much because people no longer get necklaced. Rather, I believe that the newspapers' change in editorial policy – less violence and more hope-inspiring news – as well as the readers' lack of interest are responsible. The only necklacing that I came across in my sample, apart from the murder of Rashaad Staggie, was a case of three suspected murderers who had been killed by a group of angry residents in Khayelitsha. The article – "'Innocent men' were necklaced" [1159] – appeared on the front page of the *Cape Argus* on 16th January 2002. It was not the main story and only had a small headline, but it was placed above the fold. There was no picture with it and nothing else to draw readers' attention to it.

I believe that this story was not published because of the necklacing, but because it was a case of mistaken identity. The wrong people had been burned while the 'real' murder suspects were hiding from the community inside the local police station. Moreover, the Minister of Safety and Security had reacted to the incident by visiting the Cape Peninsula and talking to residents and policemen in an effort to improve policing in the area. If nothing else, those two factors surely helped to get the story published.

[1155] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 59)
[1156] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 60)
[1157] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 65)
[1158] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 60-61)
[1159] Cape Argus (16th January 2002 a: 1)

Despite this shift in media attention, fire is still a powerful symbol for black violence today. It is visually dramatic in colour photographs and is therefore of great appeal to editors. Dennis Pather, the editor of the *Natal Mercury*, explained to me:

> "It happens quite often that if you are looking for a dramatic effect in a picture, if there is even the slightest flicker of yellow – meaning fire – in the picture, it will in my mind be decisive, you know, that is the picture that I want because it is, it is made to evoke something in the reader that is going to draw their attention." [1160]

When I questioned him further, he said that he was not aware that there was a "black-white connotation" [1161], but admitted that he could not remember a time when whites were reported as setting fire to things.

Figure 50: Black savages out on the rampage – again (Source: *The Citizen* (11th April 2002: 1))

[1160] Interview with the author, 11th April 2002
[1161] Interview with the author, 11th April 2002

Tony Heard on the other hand confirmed my findings right away. When I showed him a copy of *The Citizen* of 11th April 2002 (see fig. 50) and told him that I believed that in the South African context this had to mean that the persons referred to are black, he fully agreed. "Yes, that's right," he said. "Also, blacks always used to riot. There was never a rebellion or an uprising, but a riot." [1162]

The texts, too, kept the fire symbolism alive. For example, on 30th April 2002 the *Cape Argus* published an article entitled "Delft residents burn tyres to protest cuts, evictions" [1163], which closely resembles the reporting during the apartheid years. "Hundreds of Delft residents burnt tyres on the N2 and R300 freeways in protest against water cuts and evictions from their Reconstruction and Development Programme houses," [1164] the lead tells us. The remainder of the article is then built upon the old bipolar symbolism of a crowd of black protesters threatening order while a contingent of policemen keep them in check. The article continues:

> "Yesterday police, traffic and emergency personnel were called to defuse the volatile situation when angry residents used burning tyres to block traffic on the R300 off-ramp from the N2.
>
> Ian Pretorius, of the Kuils River public order police unit, said they were forced to disperse the crowd after attempts to talk to the organisers of the illegal gathering failed.
>
> "The burning of tyres caused major traffic congestion and motorists hat to be diverted," said Pretorius.
>
> About an hour later residents re-grouped and marched up and down Delft Main Road singing freedom songs." [1165]

The article is clearly written from a position favourable to the police and opposed to the actions of residents. The police are only ever mentioned as agents in passive sentences, the "were called" and "were forced", which, unlike for example 'the police moved in' or simply the active 'the police dispersed a crowd', implies that what happened was really beyond their immediate control and that all they could do is react and contain the situation. They are shown as restrained and helpful to the general public, they attempted to talk (during the apartheid years this was a euphemism for issuing orders that were disobeyed) and their concern is to "diffuse a volatile situation" and to end traffic congestion to ease life for motorists, a move that most *Argus* readers would surely evaluate favourably as they are more likely to be a driver than a protester. Furthermore, the police are given a face, in the shape of Ian Pretorius, while the residents (until later in the article) remain an amorphous crowd.

[1162] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002
[1163] Cape Argus (30th April 2002: 3)
[1164] Cape Argus (30th April 2002: 3)
[1165] Cape Argus (30th April 2002: 3)

This confrontation is also represented in the photographs that accompany the article. In a bigger one at the top the only thing that is clearly discernible are policemen and police vehicles, all of which appear calm and non-aggressive, guarding the passing cars. In the smaller image below two policemen are actually confronted by a crowd of people. The picture is taken from behind their backs and from below which makes the protesters appear quite menacing. We see a lot of legs, a huge crowd about to swallow the two policemen who, once again, are standing there all calm, talking to an agitated man who is gesticulating at them.

And this is how the residents are portrayed throughout this section. They are "angry" and they live their anger out actively as agents in active sentences: The "protest", they "block traffic" and they are "marching". All three actions were involved in the popular uprising which resulted in the fall of apartheid (a connection that is made more explicit by the later mentioning of "freedom songs") and the terms would therefore activate in readers' heads the old apartheid schemata of 'protests' or 'demonstrations' as being dangerous, reckless, opposed to order, and, more importantly, probably against everything they know, value, and care about. The actions would therefore probably not be valued favourably by white readers – unlike, for example, if they were called 'a desperate bid by Cape Town's poor to hold on to the basic services that have become a matter of course for us'.

There is one important break with the past that I should not ignore. In the section following the one cited above *The Argus* actually quotes residents' spokesman Jacob Gcobo who explains people's reasons for protesting. This quote, however, would most likely not help to gain sympathy for his cause among *Argus* readers, most of whom are from the wealthier parts of Cape Town where not paying bills is just not an option. I personally found that most whites were opposed to the government policy of giving free water to the poor and had no understanding for the reasons that drove township residents to not pay for their services. And as the author falls short of asking in which way the residents' behaviour is a result of apartheid or of widespread poverty and inadequate relations between the people in power and the voters on the ground, the quote will not enhance readers' understanding of the broader socio-economic context of the report.

c)   Sticks and Stones

While the crowd and fire denoted black violence in general, sticks and stones were reserved as symbols of the 'black onslaught' [1166] against the white population and were mostly used in reports about clashes between blacks and the security forces. The imagery draws on memories

---

[1166] This should only be taken as the position of the white newspapers that I am analysing. In the eyes of most blacks and of the opponents of apartheid in general, this fight was an uprising, a war of liberation or a resistance. I personally share this view, but have decided to use the terminology of the people I am researching, in order to render their world more understandable.

of a time when Africans armed with traditional weapons were a serious threat to the newly arrived colonialists. As Posel points out: "As an action of the crowd, stone-throwing was conveyed as similarly threatening, wanton and wild, evoking a sense of brute force." [1167] The fear of 'the African' is as deep-seated as it is old. It is therefore not surprising that sticks and stones are among the oldest symbols of black violence. They were already well established by the time of the Soweto Uprisings, even though the newspapers were still allowed to report violence quite openly. Later, as press restrictions were tightened, sticks and stones grew ever more important as carriers of meaning. [1168]

Sticks and stones continued to be used as symbols of black violence during the transition period in exactly the same way as before 1990. After the 1994 elections, both items largely lost their symbolic power, though, mainly because the stone-throwing youths who had previously fought the security forces in the townships had laid down their weapons. However, every once in a while, newspaper articles still make reference to stone-throwing, generally in relation with violent black crowds.

Stones

Stones in particular came to symbolise random acts of violence against anything or anyone a black person might disapprove of. They were used extensively in press reports about the demonstrations of the 1950s and 60s and would grow into a key theme in the reporting of the most striking black uprising against white domination – the Soweto Uprisings. Flames and crowds played an important role during this era in explaining the nature of the ongoing violence, but children holding or throwing stones were used specifically to show that the black population was bent on overthrowing the current order and would do so violently if they were given a chance.

The *Daily Dispatch* for example published an eyewitness account saying, among other things: "I saw four white women in a small car escape a barrage of bricks and big stones" [1169]. "People stoned, offices attacked … and vehicles burnt," [1170] the caption under an aerial photograph in the *Cape Times* read. And *The Star* simply summed the events on 16th June 1976 up as follows: "Police opened fire as the rampaging students, who had taken up stones, advanced on them" [1171].

A similar line of thinking is also discernible in a set of photographs published in the *Rand Daily Mail* on 19th June 1976 (see fig. 51).

[1167] Posel (1989: 268)
[1168] Posel (1990: 157)
[1169] Daily Dispatch (17th June 1976 b: 1)
[1170] Cape Times (17th June 1976: 1)
[1171] The Star (16th June 1976 d: 1)
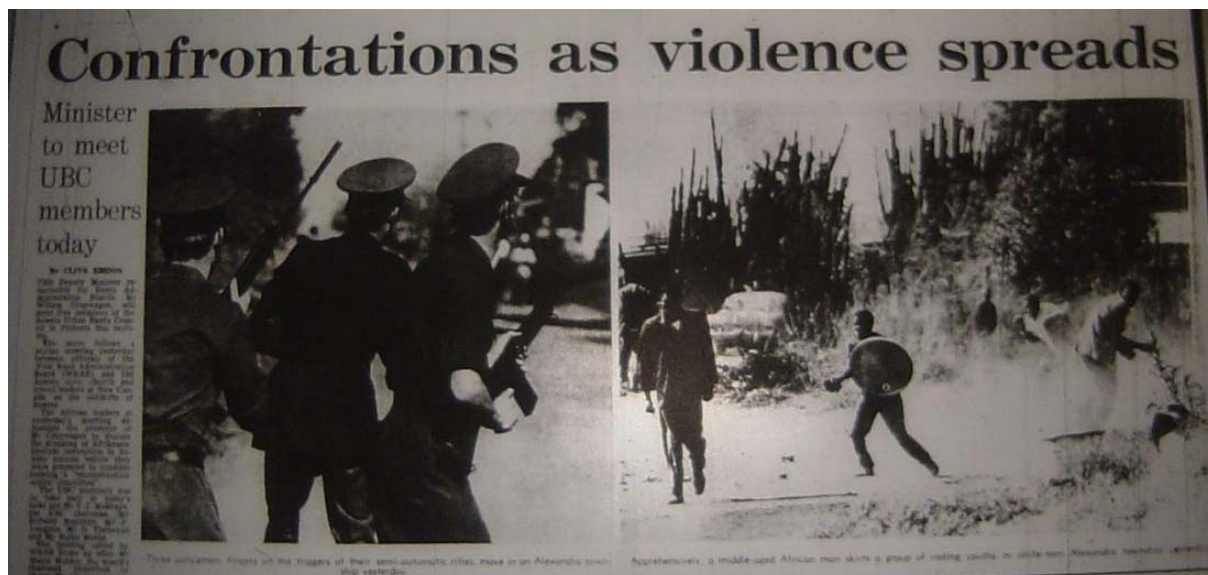
Figure 51: The who is who of violence (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (19th June 1976: 4))

The combination of a picture of policemen facing away from the camera with one of youths holding stones facing towards the camera has clear implications for the reader. The feeling is that the students are attempting to attack the policemen (or even the reader himself) who therefore have to keep their guns ready to defend themselves (and the reader).

With a critical newspaper like the *Rand Daily Mail* it would be quite possible, though, that the intended meaning is in fact one of accusing the policemen of going over the top with using firearms against children armed with stones. However, due to the perspective, I do not believe this to be the case. If the paper had wanted to communicate that message, it would have been a lot more convincing to show the kids from behind and the policemen advancing on them. And in case anyone doubts that a mainstream paper would have been able to get a hold of pictures from among the youngsters, I should point out that, at the time of the Soweto Uprisings, the *Mail* had several black photographers who took plenty of photos from the struggle side. [1172] It simply chose not to use them.

In any case, there is one thing we should not forget. For all we know the policemen could be chasing a cattle thief in the Northern Cape and the children could be playing with their mates in KwaZulu. There is no proof that they are together or that they are in Alexandra as the caption claims. But most readers will believe that they saw what they in fact had merely read.

During the 1980s, stones became an important symbol for black violence and the newspapers frequently made reference to stone-throwing in their reports. At times they even dedicated entire articles to such incidents without really explaining the relevance of such accounts. For example on 3rd June 1980 *The Natal Mercury* published an article titled "50 Cape buses stoned" [1173], where over 28 lines in two columns the journalist talked a lot about broken glass,

---

[1172] Peter Magubane, a Mail staff photographer, later published his photos in a book (see Magubane & Lee (1979)).
[1173] The Natal Mercury (3rd June 1980: 3)

but gives no explanation as to why the destruction of property in Cape Town would be of any interest to the readers in Durban.

Stones also made the headlines in March 1985 after the shooting in Uitenhage. For example, on 23rd March 1985 the *Cape Times* ran an article on page four in which the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, gives his interpretation of the shooting in Uitenhage. The story is titled "'Not a peaceful crowd of mourners'" [1174] and quotes the minister as saying: "The fact that many people were armed with stones, sticks, bricks and even petrol bombs makes it clear that they were not a peaceful crowd of mourners on their way to a funeral." [1175] The reasoning here is clear: The sticks and stones symbolise violent behaviour on the part of the crowd, which instantly explains and excuses the violence used by the security forces against the crowd. In fact their 'violence', without ever being mentioned, is turned into 'defence'. The *Daily Dispatch* used a similar reasoning in its lead article about the events. Again le Grange is quoted, which serves to both, legitimate the statement as it comes from an authoritative source and leave the newspaper room to distance itself from it should it be criticised.

> "Police had been "forced to open fire" on a crowd armed with stones, sticks, petrol bombs and bricks," the paper explains. "The crowd was marching towards Uitenhage on the highway from Langa black township." [1176]

Again we have a reference to stones and sticks, which this time is more openly used as a reason for the police opening fire on the marchers. And, just in case critical readers might disapprove of the use of live ammunition against stick-wielding marchers, the newspaper adds a sentence that would have convinced most whites of the necessity to shoot: "The crowd was marching towards Uitenhage" [1177]. Once again, the police turned to violence in order to defend themselves and protect the white population of Uitenhage. This view was later confirmed by the *Cape Times* in an article about the inquest into the shooting. On 17th June 1986, the newspaper reported that "Mr. Knoesen found that Lt Fouche had done his duty in dispersing the crowd. He said that they were on the way to kill the white residents of the town." [1178]

By the way, the Kannemeyer Commission later uncovered that this explanation was created only for the public. Lt. Fouche, one of the policemen involved, admitted in front of the judges that they had never been stoned. They had apparently invented the story shortly after the event in order to have a convincing explanation for their actions that would seem to make sense within the public discourse. [1179]

[1174] Cape Times (23rd March 1985 b: 4)
[1175] Cape Times (23rd March 1985 b: 4)
[1176] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[1177] Daily Dispatch (22nd March 1985 a: 1)
[1178] Cape Times (17th June 1986: 2)
[1179] Thornton (1990: 137)

A little later this sentiment was reflected powerfully in a picture that would make newspaper history. On 6th September 1985 the *Cape Times* illustrated its front page article on the street battles in Athlone with an image of a young man hurling a rock at a Casspir (fig. 52). As far as I know this was the only time a photographer managed to capture stone throwing in action, providing white readers with visual proof of the ongoing black onslaught.

Figure 52: An impressive display of strength (Source: *Cape Times* (6th September 1985: 1))

This line of thinking involves a strangely twisted rationale which clearly exposes European bias against anyone considered to be less developed, for how can anyone rationally explain

the fact that the throwing of a stone at an armoured vehicle is more threatening than shooting live ammunition from the safety of said vehicle into a crowd of largely unarmed youths? Surely, by any measure, it is the latter which constitutes an act of brute force! This reasoning, however does not take into account the emotionally charged situation in apartheid South Africa where, basically, any violent action taken by blacks was understood as an immense threat to law and order. This link between stones and threats is clearly exemplified in a suggestion that Major Dolf Odendaal, second-in-command of the Peninsula Riot Squad, made at a trial in the Cape Supreme Court in 1988. "If black people decide to fight," he said, "there is nothing I can do." [1180] The best solution in such a case, he felt, was to allow police to shoot anyone holding a stone. [1181]

On 20th July 1985 the *Pretoria News* even used the theme of stone-throwing in an article that was clearly meant to prepare the way for the declaration of a state of emergency the next day. "Pressure builds to put stop to violence" [1182] the headline read. The lead introduces the reader to the idea that violence was rife across the country and that something had to be done about it: "Near-anarchy flared in streets around South Africa again yesterday as pressure mounted on the government to put a stop to the violence." Then the newspaper set out to describe all these dangerous acts that called for the imposition of martial law. Two sections are particularly striking: "In Guguletu, near Cape Town, 600 people attended an illegal gathering. Police intervened and were stoned. They retaliated with sjamboks and teargas." [1183] And: "In Soweto, 10 private and five police vehicles were damaged by stones. In some instances the police used teargas and rubber bullets." [1184] Surprisingly, not many readers seem to have questioned the judgement that a few kids throwing stones in two cities as far apart as Cape Town and Johannesburg were a danger to the security of an entire nation. Or if they did, they were not allowed to express their doubts in letters to the editor.

Nowadays references to stones are rarely found in the press, but the imagery itself has not lost its symbolic power. Every once in a while, it is dug-up again and used in reports about violent black crowds. For example, when on 10th April 2002 train commuters became violent after rail services from Pretoria had to be halted due to a methane leak, most newspapers focussed exclusively on their burning carriages and stoning emergency service vehicles rather than their concerns. *The Citizen* published a big front-page story under the title "Trains gutted as commuters riot" [1185], which explained the situation as follows:

[1180] Quoted in Pauw (1993: 4)
[1181] Sanders (2000: 181) and Pauw (1993: 4)
[1182] Pretoria News (20th July 1985: 1)
[1183] Pretoria News (20th July 1985: 1)
[1184] Pretoria News (20th July 1985: 1)
[1185] The Citizen (11th April 2002 a: 1)

"Rioting train commuters stormed Pretoria Station yesterday afternoon, setting alight three carriages one a locomotive, and then stoning firemen and attacking fire engines arriving to extinguish the blaze, after main-line traffic was halted because of a methane leak." [1186] (Mistake in original.)

The *Cape Argus* and the *Pretoria News*, also made ample reference to the stone-throwing while not letting a single commuter explain their actions. And on 12th April 2002 *The Natal Witness* gave the following account:

"Disgruntled commuters vented their anger by embarking on acts of vandalism.

A man died in hospital after being shot at Saulsville in a stone-throwing incident and seven security guards were injured." [1187]

Without any knowledge of South African history, politics and newspaper reporting this section would really not make much sense. How can a person be shot by a stone? However, if we know of the historical relevance of stone-throwing and shooting and the persons associated with these actions, we can easily reconstruct that the police were called out at Saulsville after a crowd of black commuters had become rowdy. The people (or at least some of them) had begun throwing stones at the police who had retaliated (or at least some of them) by shooting into the crowd.

Sticks

Stones did not lend themselves to being photographed. Occasionally, people holding stones were used to illustrate articles, as in the *Rand Daily Mail* article of 19th June 1976 described above (see fig. 51). Stone-throwing, however, happened quickly and capturing a stone in the air was a task that only *Cape Times* photographer Ivor Markman managed (see fig. 52 in the last sub-chapter). And stones that were lying about were not exactly visually stimulating, so for the commercial press, where interesting photographs often meant higher sales, publishing pictures of stones was not an option – unlike the SABC, which according to Posel repeatedly showed film footage of stones on the ground. [1188]

So while stones featured prominently in the textual elements of the articles, the newspapers' preferred weapons for photographs were sticks. They were readily discernible and instantly gave the crowd an air of aggression (see fig. 53).

[1186] The Citizen (11th April 2002 a: 1)
[1187] The Natal Witness (12th April 2002: 3)
[1188] Posel (1990: 158)

Figure 53: Sticks and stones may break my bones… (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* **(17th June 1976: 6))**

On the other hand, if portrayed the right way, they could also underline just how inferior the black protesters' weapons were against those of the policemen they were facing. A reader who looks at figure 54 below, which was published in the *Rand Daily Mail* on 18th June 1976 as part of a whole page of images about Soweto would most likely not feel intimidated by the crowd that was facing him/her.

Figure 54: …but it's not very likely! (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (18th June 1976: 6))

In fact, the critical reader might even take the children's side in the conflict. If we look at the entire page (see fig. 55), we will find students standing around the dead body of one of their peers next to a picture from a demonstration in London that shows a clearly legible sign "End Police Killings". And at the very bottom of the page is an image of heavily armed policemen in camouflage patrolling the townships. It is therefore not difficult to make the connection between the body, the armed cops and the message of the sign and understand the page to mean: 'You are faced with a few angry kids, find a better way of dealing with them!' This, however, was not the usual message of the mainstream press.

Figure 55: The big picture (Source: *Rand Daily Mail* (18th June 1976: 6))

When sticks were referred to in the textual elements of an article, they were generally dealt with in the same way as the stones described above or even mentioned alongside them. I will therefore skip a textual analysis, lest I repeat myself, and will instead move on to the new elements that emerged in the reporting about violence after the end of apartheid.

4.6.3 Nothing New: Violence during the Transition

No new symbols for white violence emerged during the time of transition even as the apartheid government's violent aberrations came to light and the white right wing stepped-up its violent struggle. In fact, despite profound political changes, the South African newspapers did not much change the principles that guided their reporting until the very end of the period

under investigation here. Most English language newspapers, even those that are now owned and/or edited by blacks and have a majority of black readers, long maintained a predominantly white perspective in their choice of topics as well as in the way in which they approach them. Alternative discourses emerged only tentatively and a new way of thinking about the world was therefore slow to take hold. [1189]

The AWB's invasion of Bophuthatswana in 1994 is a good case in point. It was widely covered in the press, but the focus was not on the murders that they had committed, but on the killing of three of their own members. The story's news value lay not in their horrific attacks on black civilians, but in the fact that, for once, whites had been killed by blacks. [1190] *Star* picture editor Robin Comley explained:

> "I know at the time there seemed to be an inordinate amount of shock attached to the death of three white people. Which I found bizarre considering what had gone on before that, innumerable black people had been killed and there hadn't been that shock. I think it comes down to the old mind-set that we tend to find ourselves in. There seems to be a slight division between blacks and whites, on this newspaper in terms of reportage and how horrific this deed was." [1191]

The Citizen called the events "The horror slaying of 3 AWB men" [1192] and began its front-page article with a touching plea from one of the men who were about to be executed:

> ""Please God help get us some medical help", pleaded the bearded member of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB).
>
> They were his last words before a Bophuthatswana soldier calmly stepped up and pumped six bullets into the bearded, khaki-clad man and two colleagues in Mmabatho yesterday, reports an eyewitness, Reuters photographer Kevin Carter." [1193]

"Shot like dogs", [1194] the *Natal on Saturday* told its readers on the front page of the Final Edition on 12th March 1994. The story was drawn out over several pages with the cover page illustrated by a small photograph of the wounded men and a huge image of them after the execution (see fig. 56) as well as a small text box detailing their plight.

The *Sunday Times* had a similar approach. "Sheer bloody murder" [1195], the paper exclaimed on the front page above a picture of a uniformed black man pointing his gun at a white man lying on the ground, hands in the air. Page three showed a picture of the men lying on the ground with a caption that reads: "LAST INTERVIEW … minutes after answering questions

---

[1189] Fisher (Unknown: 1) and Dooms (2002: 7)
[1190] O'Dowd (1996: 126-132)
[1191] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 128)
[1192] The Citizen (12th March 1994: 1)
[1193] The Citizen (12th March 1994: 1)
[1194] Natal on Saturday (12th March 1994: 1)
[1195] Sunday Times (13th March 1994 a: 1)

from this group of SA and international journalists, the three men lying on the dusty road were executed by members of the Bop security forces". [1196]

Figure 56: Three AWB men were brutally slain – Oh, and by the way 57 blacks also died (Source: *Natal on Saturday* (12th March 1994: 1))

And underneath we are shown a close-up of a man exiting his car, hands in the air, with the other two dead on the ground.

The text equally positions the journalist and thus the reader on the side of the three dead men, expressing horror and compassion. In "The bullets that no one expected" [1197] we read:

> "The execution of the right wingers in Mafikeng was as unexpected as it was brutal.
>
> (…)
>
> A minute before I had interviewed both the victims. They were subdued and frightened but spoke readily. They were under arrest and the police, although agitated, were not mistreating them.

[1196] Sunday Times (13th March 1994 b: 3)
[1197] Sunday Times (13th March 1994 b: 3)

262

Every journalist at the scene treated the three men with compassion. But for the execution, it was like any other hour in the middle of the week's turmoil that produced hundreds of casualties.

A short while before, colleague Ray Bradley who saw the right-wingers surrender asked Colonel Marx of the Bophuthatswana Defence Force to call for medics. He was told an ambulance was on the way.

Then suddenly they were all shot dead.

It was horrific and it was shocking, a sight I never want to see again. It was murder. Neither cold blooded nor premeditated, but a crime of passion." [1198]

Besides unwittingly being made to feel compassion for the three men, the readers are once again presented with the old image of black murderers out of control. The black victims of the white murderers out of control are quietly ignored.

The *Weekend Argus* of 12th/13th March 1994 even ran a four-picture series of the whole execution on page three under the title "Death in the dust" [1199] (see fig. 57). The captions under the four pictures read (from top left to bottom right): "Fighting", "Pleading", "Killing" and "Aftermath" [1200].

Figure 57: No help and no mercy (Source: *Weekend Argus* (12th March 1994: 3))

The *Eastern Province Herald* was even more striking in its identification with the three AWB men. In its edition of 12th March 1994 it showed a colour picture of them pleading for their

---

[1198] Sunday Times (13th March 1994 b: 3)
[1199] Weekend Argus (12th March 1994: 3)
[1200] Weekend Argus (12th March 1994: 3)

lives on page one, taking up nearly half the page. Below was a black-and-white picture of the three after they had been executed. Their main headline read: "God help us" [1201]. While it could be argued that those were the three victims' words, there is a strong possibility that readers would identify with the 'us'-group. In this case, the old fears of the black peril would once again be revived invoking images of black killers out of control threatening the god-fearing members of the (good) in-group.

I believe that these examples show quite clearly that even after the end of apartheid, violence was still judged in group terms. The opposition between 'us' and 'them' had not gone away, and both were still perceived largely along racial lines. The only change was that most English speaking South Africans had now either understood that apartheid was a system of evil oppression or no longer wanted to voice their support for racial segregation for fear of being branded a saboteur of the new order. In any case, the representatives of the old system may have moved to the side of the violent 'other', but the in-group of white English speakers were still white English speakers, not all non-violent supporters of democracy or even all South Africans. [1202]

4.6.4 The new Individualism: Violence in the New South Africa

The newspapers' approach to violence only began to change after the gloomy predictions of a race war did not come true after the 1994 elections. Now, true to the old humanistic ideal of sympathy for the underdog, the in-group began to open itself to all those blacks who had experienced what whites had feared all along – violent attacks by other blacks. Thus, one important symbol of violence came to the fore: the victim. Still, this does not mean that the English language press has suddenly become colour blind after 1994. The racial lines may have been blurred and the in- and out-group modified, but a difference in the reporting about people of different skin colours remains. For example, a white mob is still unheard of, as is an orderly group of black protesters. The term riot is also mainly used in connection with blacks; whites don't seem to take part in such violent demonstrations. Calm and agitation are still bound to the appearance of the people described.

Moreover the most important element in reports about violence is still the binary opposition between good and evil. [1203] And while the groups representing these two poles have changed, the general definition of the terms has not. A good person is still one who shares the worldview of the dominant group – the difference is that this group has changed as the former opponents of apartheid are now the ones who have the say in the country. [1204] Good South

---

[1201] Eastern Province Herald (12th March 1994: 1)
[1202] Danso & McDonald (2000: 7), Steinberg (2001: 4) and Schlesinger (1991: 4)
[1203] Rauch (1993: 2) and Schlesinger (1991: 4)
[1204] Schlesinger (1991: 15)

Africans are therefore seen as all those who support black empowerment and racial integration, and the new other, the new enemy, are racists and sceptics who show no trust in the new order, criminals who jeopardise the stability of the new state as well as 'illegal' immigrants from other African countries, a hatred of whom is for various reasons (among them because it is felt by South Africans of all skin colours) not seen as racism. [1205]

In connection with violence this means that a good person is one who keeps away from it. While during apartheid some ANC members still accepted violence as a legitimate means to reach their goal, today they consider any violence committed outside the state's monopoly on power to be illegitimate. Right-wing perpetrators of violence for example are not seen as fighters for a good cause. And while the new rulers have a certain degree of understanding for the underprivileged blacks in the former townships who commit violence in order to bridge the material gap between themselves and the rest of the population, not many white media workers share this feeling. Violent criminals are therefore presented as the other that needs to be fought. As a result, their victims are among the group of good people, of the self, that needs to be protected. [1206]

This opposing pair stands at the centre of the new reporting about violence. The symbols used to describe them are mainly ones that had been completely ignored during apartheid: the individuals involved in the violence (however, groups, for example in the shape of gangs and vigilantes, are still important in the reporting today) and the victims. These are the two aspects that I want to look at more closely in the following sub-chapters.

a)   Individuals

With the change in political attitude towards the liberation movements and South Africa's shift away from a political structure based on collectives, the newspapers, too, began to focus more on individuals. This is in line with international trends. The reference to individuals in news stories has been widely used in the Western media for decades. Galtung & Ruge listed reference to persons as one of their factors of newsworthiness arguing that "personification is the outcome of *cultural idealism* according to which man is the master of his own destiny and events can be seen as the outcome of an act of free will." [1207] (Italics in original.) News that can be presented by referring to a single person or a small group rather than having to talk about abstract social forces or structures is more likely to be printed. But, as Galtung & Ruge have pointed out, these individuals are not merely newsworthy for who they are, but rather for whom or what they come to represent. [1208]

[1205] Harris (2002: 6-7), Gelber (2000: 2-3) and Danso & McDonald (2000: 7 and 16-19)
[1206] Steinberg (2001: 4)
[1207] Galtung & Ruge (1965: 68)
[1208] Galtung & Ruge (1965: 69)

Let us consider, for example, an article on child-rape and incest that was published in the *Cape Argus* on 24th June 2002: After a fairly emotional headline – "Please daddy, don't rape me" – the article describes, in a surprisingly sober tone what is, in their words "a shocking trend of incest in the Cape". First there is a "38-year old Parow man [who] has been arrested after fathering his own grandchildren", then a "Mitchell's Plain man [who] has been jailed after having a child with his 13-year-old daughter and then indecently assaulting the grandchild when she turned seven" and then a "Brackenfell man [who] is awaiting trial for rape and incest after living with his primary school daughter "like husband and wife", raping her from when she was seven until she turned 13".

These episodic accounts are followed by conversations with Brenda Roodt and Jeannette Kellerman the control prosecutors of the Bellville and Wynberg sex courts respectively, interspersed with statistics from the SAPS Child Protection Unit in the Western Cape, which confirm that there is indeed a problem. All paint a bleak picture. "Kellerman said it was shocking how abused children in areas of low socio-economic standing believed it was "almost normal" and an "accepted fate" to be raped by people they respected and looked up to." The final paragraph is a short remark that social worker Milanda Smith, "who until recently served in the Cape Town sexual offences court" had said that "the profile in Cape Town's magisterial court district reflected the tendency in the rest of the Peninsula and also included a "disturbingly high" occurrence of incest." [1209]

While the article is describing a social problem, it does so using the examples of specific individuals each with their own biography. However, this personalisation of the problem of child-rape in South Africa is not meant to point out the uniqueness of the situation or the people involved. On the contrary, the individual is related to a category of persons, in this case we have the victims and the perpetrators of violence, which is endowed with a mythic meaning at the cultural level. As Hall pointed out: "A newspaper can account for an event, or deepen its account, by attaching an individual to it, or by bringing personal attributes, isolated from their social context, to beat on their account as an explanation." [1210] Individuals are thus turned into symbols for larger news issues, organisations or population groups. Far from replacing collectivism they therefore come to express it. The names, ages, places of residence or job-descriptions of perpetrators, victims, and observers of violence along with images of individuals have become new symbols for the out- and in-groups respectively.

The article quoted above contains a number of indications exactly who these groups are. For example, of the places named by the writer only one, Wynberg, is in the more upmarket southern suburbs and even Wynberg is by no means the turf of the rich and famous. All other

---

[1209] All quotes from Cape Argus (24th June 2002 b: 5)
[1210] Hall (1973: 183-184)

areas are lower-income neighbourhoods to the north of Cape Town or, in the case of Mitchell's Plain, on the Cape Flats. Cape Town proper is only mentioned in passing in the last paragraph and Ms. Smith's remark rings of the same old stuff – it mirrors the rest of the Peninsula. No information is given about white, middle class suburbs like Fish Hoek and Claremont or about wealthy Constantia. Thus by omission the newspaper implies that child-rape and incest are problems of the poor. And just in case this subtle message is lost on some readers, it is made explicit in the statement that the problem was common in "areas of low socio-economic standing". The validity of the claim is underlined by its being attributed to Kellerman, a perceived expert on the subject. Thus it gains the status of an unquestionable fact. No further inquiry seems necessary.

I admit this theory could be attacked on the point that the truly poor black (in the apartheid sense) townships like Langa and Khayelitsha are not taken into account either. However, in my opinion this is not because the newspaper does not feel that they have the same problems, but because these parts of town are of no interest to the intended *Argus* reader and therefore to the paper. In order to test this theory, I conducted a brief content analysis of a random sample of seven issues of the *Cape Argus* throughout 2002 [1211] and found that only nine articles mentioned the black townships and informal settlements at all and that of those only three were about events in those areas as opposed to events that marginally touched upon them like a police raid across the Western Cape which included Philippi East [1212], an ANC bid to find more people eligible for welfare in, among others, Khayelitsha [1213] or the police receiving a letter from white right-wingers claiming responsibility for a bomb blast in Soweto [1214]. In short, the township population just did not feature in the *Argus*.

But let us return to the rape cases above. Now that we have established who the out-group is, can we find an in-group for the reader to identify with? In my opinion we can, in the shape of the experts quoted. In the second paragraph the author talks of a "shocking trend of incest in the Cape". This establishes the position from which the rest of the article is to be understood and lays down the facts. The shocking trend is made real by this factual statement that leaves no room for questions. Later on, presupposing that the entry statement has been accepted, we are told, "records kept by prosecutors in Cape Town, Wynberg and Bellville sexual offences courts paint a shocking picture of incest and child abuse". And further down, Kellerman again is said to have found the state of affairs "shocking" while Smith finds the occurrence of incest "disturbingly high" [1215]. By the end of the article, so many people in positions of authority

---

[1211] 16th January, 19th February, 14th March, 4th April, 17th May, 24th June and 12th November
[1212] Cape Argus (19th February 2002: 10)
[1213] Cape Argus (14th March 2002: 8)
[1214] Cape Argus (12th November 2002: 6)
[1215] All quotes from Cape Argus (24th June 2002 b: 5)

have been shocked and disturbed that the reader is positioned to agree with them. I am not pointing this out to say that we should not agree with them. In my opinion everyone should in fact be shocked at those stories. No, the reason for my emphasising it is to show that the experts – both named and unnamed ('the courts', the 'SAPS') – that we are led to agree with, and for lack of other positive characters identify with, all represent the establishment.

A similar picture emerges from an article about the rape of a five-month-old baby in Johannesburg that appeared in the *Sunday Times* on 9th December 2001.

> "Early last Friday evening, a 24-year-old mother left her baby alone in her flat for a night out at a nearby disco," the article begins. "When she returned at around 1 am, the little girl was crying uncontrollably." [1216]

Thereafter, the newspaper explains how two of the mother's "drinking mates" had raped the child, and how, rather than caring for her daughter, the mother went out again to get beer and then finally, after having been begged by friends, called the police. ""She does not seem to understand the implications," says Child Protection Unit investigator Captain Peter Linda. "When we interviewed her, she did not show the slightest sign of remorse."" The neighbours, however, did and their condemnations of the mother and the two rapists are given ample space throughout the following paragraphs. "Yet," the paper's authoritative voice cuts in again, "if the child's mother cared only about herself, no one seemed to care about her circumstances, where she lived on the corner of Claim and Twist streets in Johannesburg's inner city." Then, we get a detailed description of the "run-down Action Cinema building" where rooms are rented as "venues for "quickie sex" sessions" for 20 Rand a day and "a stench of urine meets the visitor". Now that the whole context seems to be established, the question of why the rape had to happen is addressed. "It is a case of innocence versus evil – and evil is seen to be winning," we are told and are then presented with a number of speculations as to why there is such a "shocking increase in the number of babies raped in the past few weeks": paedophilia (a minor contributor), the belief that sex with a virgin cures AIDS and a collapse of the society's moral fibre. Then it is back to the experts' opinions who point out:

> "In almost all the incidents of infant rape that have hit the headlines recently, the profile of the mothers is the same: poor, largely uneducated and single. Their ages range from late teens to early 20s. They are usually unemployed.
>
> The perpetrators, too, fit a profile: unemployed, young and known to the mothers." [1217]

Then the government is attacked – again with the help of expert testimony – for mainly reacting to cases after they have already happened, by arresting suspects and denying them bail, rather than acting preventatively by strengthening child welfare organisations and

---

[1216] Sunday Times (9th December 2001 b: 15)
[1217] All quotes from Sunday Times (9th December 2001 b: 15)

support systems for mothers. Finally it is back to the scene of the crime where neighbours have beaten up the mother

> "and threatened to continue with the punishment for as long as she remained outside prison.
>
> Thembinkosi Magubane, a security guard at the building, had no sympathy for her.
>
> "We know that the laws are very strict on woman abuse. But if we had beaten her up the first time we saw she was neglecting her baby, we could have saved the poor baby."
>
> Amid all this, a little girl sleeps quietly in a children's ward in Johannesburg Hospital, oblivious to the ripple effect that her brutal defilement has had on society.
>
> As she sleeps, her future – beyond the recovery of the physical wounds – is uncertain. Her new guardians are the police and welfare organisations. They will decide on what shape her shattered life will take." [1218]

Once again we have two groups pitted against each other. On the one side stand the perpetrators and, this time, also the mothers, both of whom are described as young and poor and the latter deviate from the socially approved norm in that they are single. There are also some indications that lead us to believe that they are black: the location of the cinema and the demographics of Johannesburg where the poorest of the poor are generally not white. On the other side we have well educated, articulate experts and policemen, who are named, which gives them an identity beyond the group and indicates that they belong to both racial groups. In this article the latter group is also joined by the neighbours, some of whom are named. Not surprisingly, all those names are African. The former group is associated with neglect and abuse while the latter stands for defence and protection. As the paper said, it is a case of good versus evil, but the *Times* has hope that the good side might be winning. They are the focus of the final sentences and they have made sure that the baby can finally sleep quietly. Now all they have to do is make the right decision for the rest of her life.

Thus, in my opinion, we have now identified beyond doubt the new in-group as the supporters of the new order and the new out-group as all those who act against the in-groups norms. Such images help to subtly advertise to sceptical (white) readers the 'New South Africa', where all good people regardless of skin colour fight side by side against evil.

The names and pictures of individuals are, however, also used to achieve the exact opposite aim. Rather than reinforcing the concepts of equality among all individual South Africans and the spirit of reconciliation, they frequently emphasise the old differences. They for example enable the newspapers to denounce attacks by black assailants against whites without having

---

[1218] Sunday Times (9th December 2001 b: 15)

to use racial terminology (see for example fig. 58). As Jeremy Gordin put it: "The 'swart gevaar' has become the 'swart criminal gevaar'." [1219]

Figure 58: The new face of violence (Source: *Sunday Times* (9th December 2001 a: 1))

b)   Victims

While not new as such, the symbol of the victim certainly acquired a new importance after the end of apartheid. Violence was now no longer seen as an abstract concept that could be hidden behind impersonal terms like 'unrest' or 'public order policing', but as actions that have perpetrators and therefore also victims. As, during the early and mid-1990s, the newspapers' approach to violence was still very much determined by their old world view, the majority of victims portrayed during that time were still white. [1220]

The above-described AWB shootings in Bophuthatswana exemplify this attitude; and it becomes even more strikingly obvious when we listen to the reason given by *Eastern Province Herald* editor Ric Wilson for having published the death of news photographer Ken Oosterbroek as a front-page story. In his opinion it expressed "the senseless carnage and needless death that was happening in the townships" [1221]. Surely, no one doubts that the death was tragic, but I find it quite shocking that the death of one white man is considered to be the perfect illustration of the violence that blacks are experiencing every day.

As many other aspects of the reporting, the newspapers' attitude towards victims changed slowly over the years. By the end of the time period under investigation here, I could no

---

[1219] Jeremy Gordin in an interview with the author, 31st July 2002
[1220] Scheper-Hughes (Unknown: 2) and Halloran et al. (1970: 90)
[1221] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 161)

longer make out a difference between how the newspapers described black and white victims of violence. Together they had become the new symbol of the good in-group.

A Brief Excursion Back to Apartheid

During the apartheid years the papers faced a similar problem when portraying victims as they did when describing violence in general. On the one hand, the reports served the purpose of denouncing the liberation movements for their ruthlessness; on the other hand, the impression could easily emerge that the state was unable to protect its citizens or was even committing acts of violence itself, something that had to be avoided at all costs. Again the newspapers' strategy, partly forced on them by legislation, was to divide victims of violence into groups and portray only those whose cases confirmed the official worldview, while ignoring all others. This is why we rarely read about the victims of crime – except in spectacular cases such as necklacings or murders within the (white) family – the victims of state violence, such as torture and police brutality, and black victims of white violence. [1222]

What we did see were victims of political violence, which was, as we know, defined as violence against the state. However, in order to be worthy of coverage, the victims not only had to have been attacked by the liberation movements, but also had to be of some interest to the readers. This meant that, with very few exceptions, they were generally white. Thus, victims came to symbolise black violence against whites. Their victimhood was expressed in several ways. Linguistically they were victimised through the use of words that emphasised their helplessness and innocence, such as 'civilian', 'bystander' or 'non-combatant'. For example, after the bombing of two Durban bars by the ANC, *The Natal Mercury* published a highly emotional opinion piece demanding that

> "They must be put down, hounded and brought to justice like the cowardly mad-dog bombers whose gutlessness has them prey on unsuspecting innocents and whose latest iniquity brands them for what they are." [1223]

Women and children were given special attention in the reports, as they symbolised weakness and innocence. For example, when a bomb exploded at a shopping centre in Amanzimtoti in 1985, *The Natal Mercury* exclaimed in a huge headline "Bomb atrocity" [1224] with a sub-headline "Baby, youngsters cut down in Christmas crowds" [1225] and on page five the newspaper carried a number of pictures of children on stretchers under the headline "The faces of young terror victims" [1226] (see fig. 59).

[1222] Scheper-Hughes (Unknown: 1-2), Institute of Criminology, UCT (1991: 26), Kaplan (1987: 12) and Potter (1975: 165)
[1223] The Natal Mercury (16th June 1986: 1)
[1224] The Natal Mercury (24th December 1985: 1)
[1225] The Natal Mercury (24th December 1985: 1)
[1226] The Natal Mercury (24th December 1985: 5)

Figure 59: The victims of a war that neither side could win (Source: *The Natal Mercury* (24th December 1985: 5))

Another strategy of eliciting sympathy for the victims was that of naming, a practice that stood in stark contrast to the treatment of the perpetrators. If whites had been harmed in attacks by the liberation movements, their names and other personal details were generally given while the perpetrators of the violence remained nameless. They were called 'terrorists', 'killers' and the like, but their humanity as expressed by names and faces was hidden.

In contrast with the victims of violence perpetrated by the liberation movements stood those of the so-called 'black-on-black' violence. While their plight was often described in graphic detail in the press, they were not generally named. They, like most ordinary blacks, remained anonymous 'cases'. [1227] Their purpose was not to illicit sympathy, but to emphasise the wildness of blacks and the cold-bloodedness of the black perpetrators. Once again the victim became a symbol for the 'swart gevaar'.

In accordance with this logic, the violence perpetrated by the security forces was generally portrayed as victim-less. State violence constituted incidents and trends. [1228] The people in the townships, including women and children, who were harassed on a daily basis by the security forces and the apartheid government's black surrogates were not given the privilege of being named, photographed and pitied. They were mere 'youths', 'students' or worse, 'thugs' and 'rioters'. While the victims of ANC bombs were shown in gruesome detail in the news, when it came to security force action and white violence, visually inoffensive imagery such as maps and drawings were often preferred over pictures. During the 1980s the *Cape Times* started

---

[1227] Moegsien Williams (17th July 2002) and Dennis Pater (11th April 2002) in interviews with the author, Scheper-Hughes (Unknown: 1-2) and Independent Newspapers (Unknown: 36 and 42)

[1228] Malan (1990: 86) and Posel (1989: 270)

printing a map on page two titled "Unrest: Police Report" where they indicated the locations of 'unrest incidents' that happened on the previous day with numbered dots (see fig. 60).
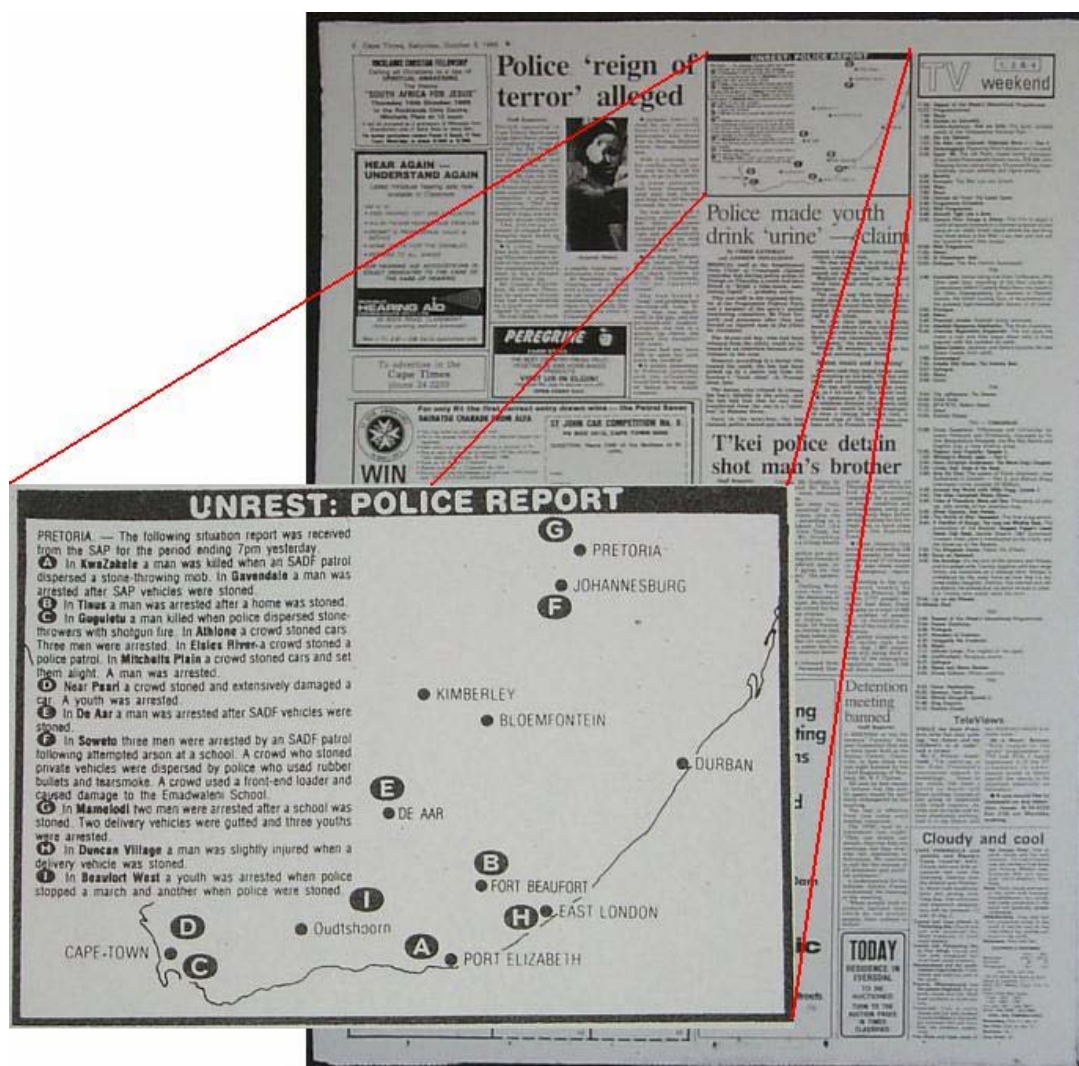
Figure 60: Climate control (Source: *Cape Times* (5th October 1985 a: 2))

It was a bit like a political weather chart, cross referenced with very brief descriptions of what the numbers stood for, a clean gloss-over for death and suffering in obscure places. For example, on 5th October 1985 (see fig. 60) the text read:

"PRETORIA – The following situation report was received from the SAP for the period ending 7pm yesterday.

A In **KwaZakele** a man was killed when an SADF patrol dispersed a stone-throwing mob. In **Gavendale** a man was arrested after SAP vehicles were stoned.

B In **Tinus** a man was arrested after a home was stoned

C In **Guguletu** a man killed when police dispersed stone-throwers with shotgun fire. In **Athlone** a crowd stoned cars. Three men were arrested. In **Elsies River** a crowd stoned a police patrol. In **Mitchells Plain** a crowd stoned cars and set them alight. A man was arrested.

D Near **Paarl** a crowd stoned and extensively damaged a car. A youth was arrested.

E In **De Aar** a man was arrested after SADF vehicles were stoned.

273

F In **Soweto** three men were arrested by an SADF patrol following attempted arson in a school. A crowd who stoned private vehicles were dispersed by police who used rubber bullets and tearsmoke. A crowd used a front-end loader and caused damage to Emadwaleni School.

G In **Mamelodi** two men were arrested after a school was stoned. Two delivery vehicles were gutted and three youths were arrested.

H In **Duncan Village** a man was slightly injured when a delivery vehicle was stoned." [1229]

One could argue that in this case the newspaper was forced to choose such representations by the emergency regulations, but even in cases where no such restraints applied the policy was not much different. When, for example, the ANC bombed the air force headquarters in Pretoria in 1983, the victims were named, shown in pictures and pitied at length in the press. On the other hand, when the South African air force retaliated by bombing Maputo, the newspapers said "41 ANC terrorists killed, says SADF" [1230] (*The Natal Mercury*), "Raid on ANC: 'Scores' died" [1231] (*Cape Times*) or "S.A. STRIKES BACK" [1232] (*Pretoria News*). No names were given and even during the coming days readers were not informed that the raid had in fact killed three workers at a jam factory, a soldier guarding a bridge, a child playing and an ANC man washing a car and injured at least 40 other people, mostly women and children. [1233]

Victimisation Today

As I mentioned above, during the final years under investigation here a victim's skin colour no longer determined the way he/she was described in news reports. That is not to say that blacks and whites were treated entirely equal. Proportionately, still more white victims made the papers than blacks. As the London *Guardian* pointed out in 1999

"The overwhelming majority of victims of rape, murder and car hijacking in South Africa are black. You wouldn't know it from reading Johannesburg's two main dailies, the Star and the Citizen. Their daily diet of crime stories is heavily weighed in favour of coverage of whites." [1234]

But those victims who were spoken about were not presented differently. Independent of race, creed, social class or gender they were most often portrayed as helpless, defenceless and in a state of shock and, more importantly, as ordinary folks who had been attacked either by

---

[1229] Cape Times (5th October 1985 a: 2)
[1230] The Natal Mercury (25th May 1983: 1)
[1231] Cape Times (24th May 1983: 1)
[1232] Pretoria News (23rd May 1983: 1)
[1233] Theissen (1997 a: 10)
[1234] The Guardian (24th May 1999: 2)

anonymous outsiders or savage brutes who had prayed on them for no reason other than personal gain or joy of inflicting pain.

Let us look at a few examples: "Five petrol attendants were shot dead execution-style at a Grassy Park petrol garage early today – and their attackers escaped with at most R1 000." [1235] "Martinique Africa, eight, was leaning over to share his packet of chips with his two-year-old sister when a flying bullet pierced the front door of his home and ripped into his body." [1236] "Killed for protecting his family" with the sub-headline "Simple act of taking out the rubbish ends tragically for dad" [1237] (see fig. 61).

Figure 61: The human face of suffering (Source: *The Star* (24th May 2002: 1))

This last example was an article that appeared on the front page of *The Star* on 24th May 2002. It starts with an emotional account of the events that led to "dad's" killing:

> "When thugs pistol-whipped his wife and bit and punched his daughter, Derrick Booysen snapped and fought back. It cost him his life.
>
> At about 7am yesterday Booysen (42) opened his back door to take out the rubbish and was accosted by four men who forced him back into his three-bedroom house in Fleurhof, Florida

---

[1235] Cape Argus (24th June 2002 a: 1)
[1236] Cape Argus (17th May 2002 b: 1)
[1237] The Star (24th May 2002: 1)

They demanded hand over his car keys, then grabbed his wife Allison and hit her on the head with a handgun, causing a bleeding gash.

One of the men also bit eldest daughter Maxine (19) in the face and slammed his fist into her mouth, as her younger sisters Shirley (17) and Roxanne (12) watched helplessly.

Angry, Booysen began punching some of the men.

"The robbers overpowered him, dragged him into his bedroom and apparently forced him to kneel down before shooting him in the head," said West Rand police spokesperson Inspector Yolande Bouwer." [1238]

The report is illustrated with a large close-up photograph of Maxine Booyden's face with her wounds clearly visible. Her mother is seen crying in the background. Presented with the story of the victims in this way, many readers would identify with them and be more likely to buy the paper. Many white South Africans were afraid of falling victim to violent crime themselves and by presenting the victim as someone just like them, as a normal people trying to lead normal lives in such abnormal times, the newspapers gave them someone they could easily identify with. That would certainly not have worked if violence had been shown to victimise mostly gang members, criminals (in the case of police brutality), prisoners and people who live on the fringe of society, such as drug addicts or prostitutes.

Like a classical morality play, the papers thus constructed a mythical good guy for the audience to identify with, who is pitted against a ghastly enemy. This way, they are reassuring themselves and, more importantly, their white readers that now they are really playing for the right team, and they do not even seem to see that this is the same belief they had held ten years earlier. It was all forgotten at this moment. The reporting transformed the pitiable victim into a symbol for the good in oneself.

A number of methods were used to bring them to the fore: Victims now featured prominently in the textual parts of the articles, not only as actors, but also as directly or indirectly quoted sources of information. The photographs often showed either the victims themselves or their next of kin and the headlines frequently made mention of the victims too. The reports generally took one of two forms (which could, incidentally, co-exist in one article): They were either sensationalistic or showed compassion. While the latter appealed to the readers' fears and pains, the former served to feed their curiosity about all things negative.

Sensationalism was therefore often invoked in the foremost elements of an article, such as the headline and the accompanying imagery, for example when on 24th June 2002 the *Cape Argus* shouted "City Massacre" [1239] in a large front-page headline (see fig. 62).

[1238] The Star (24th May 2002: 1)
[1239] Cape Argus (24th June 2002 a: 1)

Figure 62: The new kind of South African massacre (Source: *Cape Argus* **(24th June 2002: 1))**

And while the incident reported in the article – the shooting of five petrol station attendants in Grassy Park mentioned in chapter 4.6.1.a – was certainly tragic, this headline shows just how normal a country South Africa has become for the word 'massacre' to be chosen to describe the killing of five people over less dramatic formulations like 'multiple murder', 'killing', 'shooting' or 'homicide'. Only a few years earlier a massacre was normally the slaying of several dozen (see fig. 63).

Figure 63: South African massacres a few years earlier (Source: *Cape Times* (14th September 1990: 1))

Compassion became another important element in the accounts during the 1990s. The victims' pain, their tears and their suffering were shown in ample detail in texts as well as in photographs. "Brave mom saves son" [1240] the *Pretoria News* reported on the front page on 23rd May 2002. The article, which, incidentally, was cut out and given to me by a representative of the right-wing Freedom Front to show me just how bad the lives of white

---

[1240] Pretoria News (23rd May 2002: 1)

South Africans had become, is illustrated with a large photograph of a woman with tears in her eyes (see fig. 64).

Figure 64: A role model for all of us (Source: *Pretoria News* (23rd May 2002: 1))

Additional information is not only provided by the sub-headline "Woman surprises three armed robbers in her home" and the caption "A visibly shocked Eileen Smith of Bultfontein, who still has tears in her eyes hours after the harrowing incident at her house", but also by a short quote in larger type that is taken from the text and placed in a box surrounded by the article: "'I pleaded with the man, begged him not to shoot us, but he got mad. I just grabbed Twisten and ran.' Eileen Smith (mother)" [1241] Together these elements serve to elicit sympathy and admiration among readers, even if they do not read any further.

And while tears, wounds and bruises were fairly uncontentious and therefore frequently used in the newspaper reports, two attributes of the victims most often created controversy: blood and the faces of dead bodies. Blood serves as a strong visual element in colour photographs, which helps to draw people's attention, and is an indicator of injury or death even in black and white pictures, which feeds the audience's desire for sensation. In short, a photograph of a bleeding person is a lot more dramatic than a mere portrait that needs a caption to inform the

---

[1241] Pretoria News (23rd May 2002: 1)

reader what has happened to the person depicted. It expresses in an instant the difference between death and life. Blood therefore has some appeal to picture editors, especially for the front page. During the time of transition when violence was much sought-after and people's tolerance for gore was high, many newspapers tried to outdo each other in finding the most gruesome pictures (see for example figs. 65).

Figure 65: The little difference between injury and death (Sources: *Cape Times* **(14th September 1990: 1) &** *The Argus* **(14th September 1990: 1))**

At the same time, some editors felt that it was bad taste to show faces or large amounts of blood and often cropped pictures. For example, in her survey of the photographs that accompanied reports of the murder of SACP leader Chris Hani, O'Dowd found that "of the 16 pictures of Hani's body on the bricks, 10 pictures showed varying amounts of blood, some having been cropped to reduce the amount of blood visible." [1242] As time passed, editors grew more sensitive to the effects of blood in photographs and the symbol was used less and less.

However, editors did not want to lose such a powerful symbol for the suffering caused by violence and therefore continued to use the blood symbolism in the texts. "'He suffocated in his own blood'" [1243] the headline of an article about the murder trial of five white racist suspected of killing a black teenager in what was then the Northern Province in *The Star* on 1st February 2002 read. The *Cape Times*, too, chose that aspect of a witness's testimony for its headline: "Poacher choked on blood while rugby pals hit him, court told" [1244]. And the *Cape Argus* of 7th May 2002, in an article about the stabbing of a security guard, describes the man's last moments as follows: "Residents tried to revive him, but by the time the paramedics arrived, he had died in a pool of blood." [1245]

Editors feel a similar ambivalence towards the use of faces in pictures, albeit for another reason. On the one hand they are a good way to pay tribute to the victim by quite literally giving the violence a face. On the other hand, showing a face can insult the victim's dignity as well as inflicting unnecessary pain on their family and friends. [1246] And, as in the case of Chris Hani, editors sometimes feel that showing a face is too horrifying. In O'Dowd's survey only two out of a total of 21 pictures showed Hani's full face with his mouth wide open, the tongue caught between his teeth and a bullet hole discernible in his jaw (see fig. 71). [1247]

Figure 66: Raw violence (Source: *Sowetan* (17th May 2002: 3))

[1242] O'Dowd (1996: 103)
[1243] The Star (1st February 2002: 1)
[1244] Cape Times (1st February 2002: 4)
[1245] Cape Argus (7th May 2002 a: 1)
[1246] O'Dowd (1996: 158)
[1247] O'Dowd (1996: 96-97)

Of the newspapers that did not show the face, seven had no option as they had no pictures available. Three, namely the *Sunday Times*, the *Cape Times* and the *Sowetan*, did, but refused to run them at the time. All three editors felt that the images were too gruesome. [1248]

Nowadays, such gory depictions of victims have become very rare. Articles about murders are now generally illustrated with photographs of the crime scene (see for example figs. 62 and 67), of the victims' grieving relatives (see figs. 67 and 68) or older pictures of the victims from their family album (see figs. 67 and 68).

Figure 67: A more humane approach to violence… (Source: *Cape Times* (6th December 2001: 1))

Figure 68: …not only for celebrities (Source: *Cape Times* (13th May 2002: 3))

[1248] O'Dowd (1996: 96-97)

Despite this restraint in photographs, the newspapers' victim-centred reporting still frequently feeds the voyeurism of the audience. As violence has swamped the headlines, the news value of a story has often come to be measured by the brutality of the acts of violence committed and the helplessness of the victims. As Johannesburg judge Joe Ikaneng told the *Sunday Times*: "Rape has achieved the status of a national sport (...) leading to compassion fatigue in media blah blah." [1249] Ordinary rape is no longer news. Today, violence is often only of interest to the press if it is in some way outrageous, shocking or disgusting, for example if the victim is very young or particularly old, or if the crime is especially bloody.

For example page eleven of the *Cape Argus* of 6th December 2001 illustrates South Africa's fascination with abnormal (for lack of a better term) kinds of rape. It combines an article titled "Woman of 101 attacked by would-be rapist" [1250] with one about "the recent spate of child rapes" [1251]. And although it is not about rape, an article about the murder of a 75-year-old farmer, published in *Pretoria News* on 24th May 2002 under the headline "Savage farm killer jailed for life" [1252], also falls into this category. It was not only the crime that was strikingly insensitive, though. The article is too:

> "Except for his respect for the dead man and his family, a Pietermaritzburg High Court judge said yesterday he might have ordered that photographs of murdered Richmond farm resident Raymond Lundy (75) "in his butchered state" be hung in the prison cell of his killer as a daily reminder to him of his brutal and savage behaviour.
>
> "The photographic exhibits of the deceased hacked with bushknives and his throat slit can only be described as nightmarish. This murder ranks amongst the most gruesome that I have seen," Judge Pillay said when he sentenced 37-year-old Sibusiso Gatsha Ngubane to life imprisonment for the murder and to 20 years imprisonment for robbery with aggravating circumstances of the elderly man on October 27 last year.
>
> Ngubane was also sentenced to six months imprisonment for unlawful possession of ammunition.
>
> "I simply cannot imagine how any human being can act with such savagery towards a fellow human being. It sickens me and it fills me with revulsion," Pillay told Ngubane. He described as an absolute disgrace the fact that Ngubane had made use of two "young lads" aged 15 and 17 (members of his family) to commit his ghastly crimes and said in the circumstance it seemed his (five) children would be better off without him.

[1249] Sunday Times (4th July 1999: 2)
[1250] Cape Argus (6th December 2001 b: 11)
[1251] Cape Argus (6th December 2001 c: 11)
[1252] Pretoria News (24th May 2002: page unknown)

Lundy had been assaulted, bound with wire and left in a sugar cane field until the accused returned, hacked him to death with a bushknife and slit his throat.

"Those moments in the sugar cane field before he met his death must have been the most agonising for the deceased," the judge said.

He said attacks on the farming community, the frail and the aged and people living in isolated areas or alone were far too frequent and deserving of "the severest punishment".

He said members of society had to be assured that the courts would always protect them from wanton thuggery "with all the might at their disposal".

In imposing the maximum sentence allowed by law on Ngubane he was "not at all troubled" by his conscience, sense of fairness and sense of justice the judge added.

"In your case there is no room for mercy because you showed none," he told Ngubane.

The court granted two youths who gave evidence against the accused indemnity from prosecution." [1253]

I have decided to cite the entire text above because this article illustrates a number of aspects about the reporting of the English language press in South Africa. It clearly separates in-group from out-group and both are represented by individuals: the (white) victim and the (black) perpetrator respectively. The reader is made to identify with and feel pity for the victim ("Those moments (…) must have been the most agonising") while strong words condemn the perpetrator ("I simply cannot imagine", "no room for mercy") and portraying him as inhumane and savage ("savagery", "hacked with bushknives", "showed no [mercy]"). In between these two groups stands the court (in this case symbolised by the black judge), charged with protecting the good in-group from the savage attacks of the out-group. The court's views are the newspaper's (indicating that it, too, stands above the conflict and is fit to pass moral judgement on society) and the angle from which the events are presented leaves no room for judging them along any other lines than the common Western opposites of right and wrong and crime and punishment.

It could have been different. The history behind the attack could have been given, the relationship between victim and perpetrator made known. We are not told how the perpetrator was apprehended and why the judge can be sure that he, not one of the teenagers, has committed the murder. Imagine for example a scenario where the newspaper tells the story of a poor man rather than a black man in a small community in KwaZulu Natal who is trying hard to make ends meet, feed his wife and five children and put his sister's teenage sons through school. But his employer, a wealthy old farmer, does nothing to ease his situation. He

---

[1253] Pretoria News (24th May 2002: page unknown)

makes him work long hours for little money and do hazardous jobs without protective gear. When our man is tired or slow he is physically and verbally abused by the farmer and his sons. One day he witnesses the farmer hide some money in the house and out of desperation, anger and frustration decides to rob him. His nephews volunteer to help him and one quiet evening they go to the farm, confront the farmer, rob him and kill him. When they realise what they have done, panic sets in and they flee the scene of the crime. A while later, though, our man feels remorse and decides to turn himself in to the police in return for his nephews to be let off. He is sentenced by a strongly biased judge who is more interested in pleasing the wealthy farming community than in understanding the roots of the problem, and during the trial is tormented with verbal abuse. The article than finishes with a short quote from the man 'I know what I have done was wrong, but I could take no more abuse and felt I had to do something lest my children all end up in the same situation as me. I hope to God they will not follow in my footsteps'.

I am not saying that this is what occurred in the reported case. I do not know what happened, because I could not find any reference to the case anywhere else. Not even the farmers' rights groups on the internet mentioned it. But it could easily have happened this way and if the newspapers had described it like that, we might come away feeling differently towards the people involved. But the paper chose a different angle. The only person allowed to speak is the judge. He is quoted at length, at times without quotation marks, which lends the quote an air of absoluteness, as in the case of "attacks on the farming community, the frail and aged and people living in isolated areas were far too frequent". And this, I believe, is a good indicator as to why the paper reported from this particular perspective. It expressed the views of the *Pretoria News* target readership, "the upper end of the market" [1254]. Incidentally, like the article depicted in and described around figure 64, this story was given to me by Colonel Uys of the Freedom Front who thought that it served as a good example of what violence in South Africa was like.

Such sensationalised accounts of violence are not only objectionable because they paint an inaccurate picture of a county in chaos and mayhem. The *Pretoria News* article above is a clear case of 'trial by media', a virtual sentencing of the culprits without giving them a chance to defend themselves. This is seldom done, as it has here, by direct accusations and finger pointing. Rather, the media are much more subtle, using the power of the old binary opposition of identity and alterity. If the newspapers, and with their help the audience, identify with the victim, the perpetrators are automatically excluded from this group. They implicitly become a symbol of the other. And the other is a danger for the self, a source of

---

[1254] Independent Online (2002: 1)

fear. Readers of such descriptions have no way of approaching the violence in a neutral, unemotional way and to analyse it in its complex totality. Unless they actively read against the intended meaning of the text, they will unconsciously be persuaded that the accused party in fact responsible for the violence portrayed and will take sides against them. [1255]

This kind of reporting also spares the readers from having to critically reflect upon their own involvement in making South African society what it is today and the possible recognition of their own guilt. As members of a different group, they cannot possibly be responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour. The mistake has been made outside their own sphere of influence. However, as the perpetrators' behaviour is the result of the same cultural and social circumstances as that of the victims, the newspapers are creating a boundary that is not verifiable in the extra-medial world. This way, by explicitly pointing at the facts, the media are actually covering them up. [1256]

This, however, is not the only problem associated with this symbolism. It also bears the risk that, by emphasising the human drama, the papers deny the victims self-determination and the right to forgiving, reconciliation and healing. [1257] They are robbed of the positive status they have achieved by society's recognition of their being victims. They are often embarrassed before the public and even the last fig leaf that had previously protected them from the hungry looks is taken from them.

For example, several journalists and photographers and even a cameraman from the SABC were present when the self-proclaimed citizens' militia PAGAD lynched the gang leader Rashaad Staggie in broad daylight. [1258] Staggie died an agonising death, brought about by gunshots and a petrol bomb that had been thrown at him while he lay on the ground wounded. The media shared every cruel detail of the incident with their audience. Nothing remained hidden. The *Cape Times* for example delivered the images of Staggie's death to readers' breakfast tables (see fig. 69) under the headline "Night of bloody execution" [1259].

The article did not leave Staggie any dignity either:

> "One of the most notorious figures in the Western Cape underworld, Rashaad Staggie, was shot in the head, set alight, and then had scores of bullets pumped into him last night by militant anti-drugs Muslims as he lay twitching in a Salt River gutter.
>
> He lay in the street – critically wounded – for more than an hour before being driven away in a mortuary van, his blood flowing out of him, mingling with the fire-extinguisher foam.

[1255] Corner (1980: 79-80) and Simpson (1997: 2)
[1256] Simpson (1997: 1-2)
[1257] Simpson et al. (1997: 2)
[1258] The Economist (12th October 1996: 21) and McCarthy (1998: A Study of the Causes of Violence in the Post-Apartheid Era: 1-2)
[1259] Cape Times (5th August 1996: 1)

Staggie – who with his brother Rashied was a co-leader of the Hard Livings gang that has branches across the Cape Flats and Boland – took about 25 minutes to die. Handgun after handgun was emptied in his direction from across the street as members of the crowd bayed for his blood. He appeared to be wearing a bullet-proof vest. Members of the police stood by, apparently helpless." [1260]

Figure 69: Shocking images of violence (Source: *Cape Times* (5th August 1996: 1))

The other newspapers I surveyed followed a similar pattern in their reports. *The Star*'s lead article on 5th August 1996 was very close to the one cited above, but the headline – "Police look on as a crowd of Muslim vigilantes shoot and burn gangster" [1261] – was a lot more sober and the article was not accompanied by any photographs. They made-up for this the next day with a large photograph of Staggie on the front page, a man in flames, minutes before his

---

[1260] Cape Times (5th August 1996: 1)
[1261] The Star (5th August 1996: 1)

death. Inside, the paper presented its readers with a kind of slide show of the execution, image after image of violence and suffering.

An exception was *The Argus*, which was surprisingly restrained in its reporting. They showed only a photograph of Staggie's wrapped body being carried away on the front page and a picture of policemen walking past his charred body on page three (see figs. 70 and 71). The paper also gave some attention to Staggie's grieving relatives.

Figure 70: Rashaad Staggie's body (Source: *The Argus* (5th August 1996: 1))
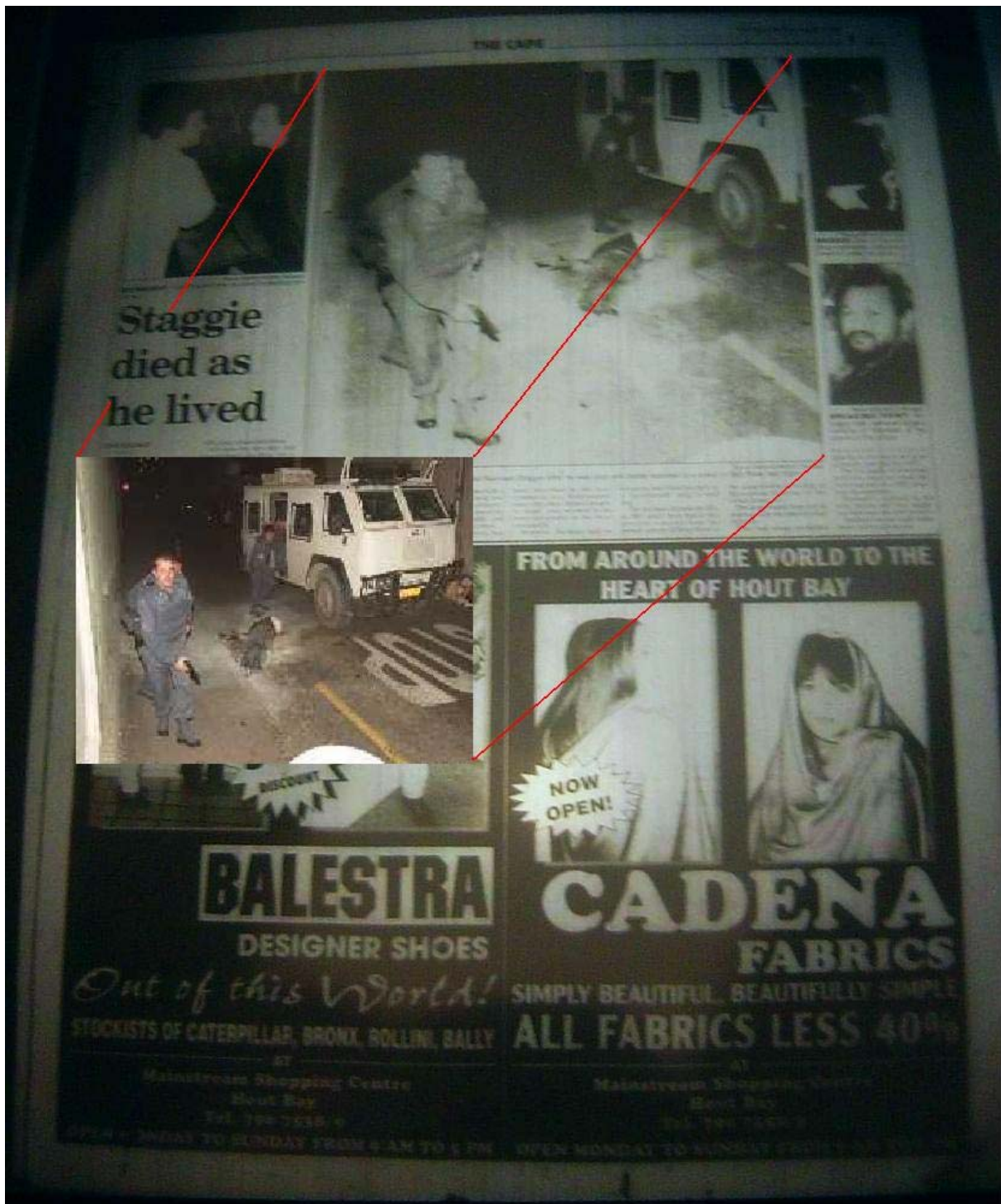
Figure 71: A mere heap of ashes (Source: *The Argus* (5th August 1996: 3))

The media justified their explicit representation with their duty to show reality the way it is. The time of cover-ups, said an editorial of *The Star*, had ended in 1994. [1262]

5. The Imagery Rediscovered: South African English-Speakers Talk About Violence

Now that I am familiar with the violence in South Africa and have scrutinised the way the newspapers have covered it in their reports, it is time to look at white English speakers' views

---

[1262] FXI (1996: 1)

of the situation in their country and to investigate whether there is a relationship between the three, whereby one influences any of the others. This is what I will try to achieve in the present chapter. Using the results of the past chapters and any relevant literature as well as my field notes and interview transcripts from South Africa, I will attempt to show that clear parallels exist between the white population's perception of reality and the media's reporting of violence ant that these are not merely coincidental. Of course, one could say that the reason for this is that the newspaper producers and their readers share a cultural background and should thus have similar worldviews. However, I believe that there is a clear pattern with the reports influencing the worldview much more significantly than the other way around.

I will try to prove this by once again focussing on recurring themes and images used to describe the ongoing violence in South Africa. On the one hand, I will investigate white South Africans' direct experience with violence. Is there a lot of violence in their lives? If so, what kind? And do they experience it as perpetrators, victims or witnesses? These parts are based largely on my interviews, my own impressions of the situation I found and on scientific studies that originated in South Africa.

The results of this preliminary work are meant to provide me with a backdrop against which I can compare white South Africans' views about violence. Uncovering them is the second task of this chapter. I will search for the code(s) that ordinary white South Africans use to talk and think about violence. I will try to explain, for example, what acts are classified as violence, how these are talked of, and what significance violence has in the lives of ordinary people. Another important question will be how these ideas came into being. Sometimes this was quite obvious, for example when people had been victims of violence themselves. In other cases, though, it remained unclear where the imagery originated, for example if my interviews partners did not specify their sources of information or when experience and idea were mutually exclusive. It was this latter group that was of particular interest to me because in my opinion they had the greatest potential of uncovering hidden processes of meaning making.

Finally, I will compare these beliefs and opinions with the imagery found in the newspaper reports as well as with reality as I experienced it during my time in South Africa and as other people from outside my target group described it. This should bring to light the shared ideas that form the foundation of English speaking South Africans' thinking about their country. But before I get back into the theory of it all, let us first look at the world of experience of my target group.

5.1 Pride and Prejudice: The Apartheid Years

5.1.1 White South Africans' World of Experience

Violence in White Areas

During the apartheid years, white South Africans remained largely untouched by the violence that was tearing their country apart. Due to the relative wealth of the white population, the policy of 'separate development' that kept them away from poor people and the SAP's heavy-handed way of policing the pass laws, criminal violence was rare and political violence virtually non-existent in the white areas. [1263]

This is not to say that there was no violence at all in the lives of white South Africans. However, it was generally committed by whites themselves and took shapes that most of them did not consider to be violence. Instead, if someone was meting out corporal punishment to workers, they were 'teaching them a lesson'; if a man slapped his wife, he was 'putting her in her place'; if guys got into punch-ups, they were 'just being men'; and acts like throwing domestic staff in the pool despite their not being able to swim – a thing that I was told about by a number of different people – were considered as just another way of 'having fun'. Accordingly, whites saw their world as being largely free of violence. [1264] I believe that Gerald Shaw summed it all up perfectly when he told me:

> "You see, the white community was protected from, … I'm talking about the white community. Everything was just fine as far as they were concerned, as long as they were not concerned about what was happening to blacks." [1265]

And most whites were indeed not too interested in the world their black compatriots inhabited.

Violence in the Townships

The violence in the townships went largely unnoticed by the white population. As we have seen in the past chapters, the media did not accurately portray the violent reality there and the majority of whites never visited black residential areas, be they townships or homelands, and not many of them spent any time with blacks. In fact, it never occurred to most people to even try. When I asked my interview partners what would have happened if they had contravened apartheid regulations and had, for example, gone to a black beach, the standard answer I received was somewhere along the lines of 'Why would I go there? They were awful!'. I did not find a single person who had ever got curious about either the repercussions of breaking

---

[1263] Shaw (2002: 1 and 9)
[1264] du Toit (1990: 97), Marinovich & Silva (2000: 9-10) and Simpson (1993: 4)
[1265] Interview with the author, 22nd May 2002

the law or the way the other three quarters of South Africa lived. No one had ever gone to a black beach or a blacks-only facility of any kind.

In places where people were forced to mix, for example at work or during the later years in some restaurants, they still tended to stay apart. Like oil and water they managed be together without actually blending. Even the English press' newsrooms and facilities, like canteens and lavatories, were segregated. Strangely enough, in my interviews the two sides often blamed each other for this situation. Some white journalists claimed that they had tried to integrate their black colleagues into the general workforce but they had chosen to stay amongst themselves. Black journalists on the other hand unanimously complained about racism among their white colleagues and a tendency to keep them separate.

The truth is hard to reconstruct today, but I must say that my experience in South Africa has been that, after years of segregation, it is the normal thing for everyone to drift apart. I was once invited to a party with several hundred guests from a number of different countries and despite intense efforts on the part of a few people to get everyone celebrating together, little unicoloured groups soon formed that seemed impossible to penetrate for members of the other group. I tried my luck with some students my age and even managed to exchange a few words with a young man, but then an uncomfortable silence set in and I decided to leave. This is not to say that anyone was hostile to me. On the contrary, every single black person I met in South Africa was friendly, helpful and more than open towards me – something that I cannot say about the white people of Bloemfontein – but as soon as I encountered groups (of any kind) the mixing became difficult.

But I am straying away from my original line of thought. There were a few situations where interaction with blacks was unavoidable for whites, such as with their workers and domestic staff. These relationships were frequently very complex, so I will not go into too much detail. Often the children used to play together while the adults did not even talk – I met a few white South Africans who, as kids had spoken at least one African language but as soon as they grew older, they stopped talking to their former friends and forgot all they had known. Whites used to entrust their homes, their farms and their children to black workers but still viewed them as if they were children themselves. Staff would often feel unhappy and humiliated in this situation, but at the same time love their employers, especially the children, like their own family. The dependency was mutual and so were the love, hate and misunderstanding. But most importantly, whites used to think of their staff as a part of their lives and never wondered if they had a life of their own or what that might look like. One young man for example told me:

> "When I was still living at home we had a maid. She would come every morning and
> do all the housework. She was there when I came home from school and made me

lunch. But we never talked. In those eighteen years I never knew how she lived, if she had kids and stuff. It was her world … just different." [1266]

So whites, as a group, had no direct access to the lives, minds and feelings of the black population. They were not in the townships during the demonstrations of 1976/77, they did not attend any meetings organised by the Civics during the 1980s and most of them did not speak to the black people they had contact with about their views, dreams and aspirations. And they most certainly did not talk about the violence they experienced on a day-to-day basis. As Johann de Villiers told me:

"Now, you can say, this is what every, ah, period of history does when it turns out it was bad, it says "I didn't know". I'm not trying to say that, but I don't think generally a lotta people knew." [1267]

The Ones who Knew

Certain individuals, like journalists, policemen or civil servants, had the chance to witness the events in the townships through black eyes, but most of them turned it down, preferring instead to view the black world from the safety of their white perspectives. They formed an island inside the townships and rarely reflected critically on the events they witnessed on a daily basis. [1268]

One young man's story in particular struck me in this regard. I was doing research in Johannesburg and living at a backpacker's hostel in a safe white neighbourhood, when one day I decided to visit Soweto. A man I had made friends with was not happy with my decision and repeatedly tried to stop me from venturing into what he considered to be a very dangerous area. When I did not listen, he decided that the least he could do was to come along to protect me. Obviously, nothing happened to us, which came as a surprise to him just as much as the fact that there were such things as roads and traffic lights there.

On the way home we stopped at the apartheid museum for a visit. Reluctant to go at first, he grew more and more interested as we walked through the exhibit, but also turned more and more surprised at all the atrocities that had been committed in the name of his protection. The final wake-up call happened when we reached a re-enacted scene from the township uprisings of the 1980s: A Casspir sitting in the middle of a room, surrounded by live-size photographs of demonstrating kids. The visitor was allowed, even encouraged to join both sides, to share their experience. So we did. At first we stood with the kids and felt the fear of being faced by this armoured beast. Then we climbed into the Casspir and looked out the small windows at

---

[1266] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004
[1267] Interview with the author, 25th July 2002
[1268] Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 133-136) and Tutu (1999: 48-51)

the shouting and running crowd, which, I must admit, was rather frightening to me. It was not as bad as it was for him, though. He went pale and quietly said: "I have to go. I can't stand this. It's the smell. It brings back bad memories." We walked through the rest of the museum in silence. At the end of it all, he went back to the cashier and, close to tears, thanked her for having shown him what had gone on. He was so taken by the experience, he later organised tours to the museum from the backpacker's. [1269]

What had happened? Obviously he had known what had been going on, he had been put on township duty during his military service in the 1980s. Had he forgotten? Was he in denial? Was he lying? Was he trying to be absolved of guilt? No, I believe, he had not registered the whole experience as an act of violence in the first place. In the official discourse of the time it was not classified as such. It had been a matter of defending his country against an outside attack. Like many other whites in the early to mid-1980s, my friend accepted this 'total onslaught' view of reality. Only when the whole situation was redefined and presented to him within the framework of post-apartheid discourse did he see that the real onslaught had emanated from the state against a permanently besieged black population. Only when they were presented to him as victims of violence did he identify with the black masses he had previously considered to be a dangerous threat. He had to be given a new repertoire of thoughts and a new framework within which they made sense before he was able to see the world in any other way. [1270]

And this is where the media come into play. They provide people with just that repertoire. The framework comes mainly – but certainly not exclusively – from their real-life experiences. Apartheid was not so much an ideology as a way of life. And whites liked and therefore supported this way of life. Their experiences told them that apartheid meant that people could live in relative wealth, relatively free from the ills that haunted many liberal democracies, such as crime, drug abuse and joblessness, and still enjoy all the benefits of a democracy. This framework was then filled with ideas that seemed to fit, from sources such as conversations with friends and family, specific experiences such as being searched for bombs at their local shopping centre, and, most certainly the media. All these, in neat cycles, constantly drew upon each other and reinforced each other. Thus, the world view that South Africa was a perfect place were it not for outside agitators inciting hordes of primitive blacks to commit atrocities against whomever they can lay their hands on in order to bring down a democratically elected government and replace it with the rule of communist mobs was not only viable, but empirically verifiable. But now I am straying from the realm of white knowledge into that of white opinion, which is, in fact, the subject of the next sub-chapter.

[1269] Johannesburg, 20th July 2002
[1270] Jackson (1993: 26) and TRC (17th September 1997: Arri de Beer, 5)

5.1.2   White South Africans' Views

Throughout apartheid, but especially during the 1980s, fear of violence, or, more precisely, of what Steve Biko called "the illusionary swart gevaar that only exists in the minds of the guilt-stricken whites" [1271] was a major factor influencing white political views and actions. It was mostly fear that got them to cling to grand apartheid and it was mostly fear that kept them from demanding true democracy. As Ken Owen, the editor of *Business Day*, once wrote in an editorial: "Pressure from the black masses (…) pushed them into psychological bunkers … In the face of threats of revolution, the voters brushed aside all other issues." [1272]

According to a survey by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), in 1985 a mere 29% of English speakers supported complete desegregation of residential areas, barely more than wanted to maintain complete segregation (25%). [1273] Another survey conducted in 1986 revealed that only 5% of English speakers favoured what the authors called "black majority government" [1274] – an ideologically laden term that whites often used to express their fear of democracy, which was not unlike the "transfer of power from whites to blacks" [1275] that Independent Newspapers spoke about in their submission to the TRC when describing why they were opposed to ending apartheid. All these expressions show the clear misperception of the reality on the ground, for what the ANC was fighting for was not apartheid in reverse, but universal franchise. However, in the minds of many white South Africans, who could not imagine that anything but skin colour could ever influence voting patterns, in a country like theirs this would automatically mean that power would always be at the hands of blacks as they were the majority. [1276]

Such considerations certainly played an important role in the white population's choice of government. During the 1980s more and more English speakers began to support proponents of apartheid. A pre-election survey in May 1987 showed that 49.3% intended to vote for the NP (43% did), with a further 7.7% planning to opt for far-right parties such as the Conservative Party (CP) or the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP). [1277] In fact, in the late eighties the NP drew over a quarter of its support from the ranks of English speaking South Africans. [1278] This shift in allegiance from the liberal Progressive Federal Party (PFP) to the NP surely had something to do with people's fears and anxieties over what would happen if their country ever came to be a non-racial democracy. One of the government's election

---

[1271] B. Steven Biko, 1972, *Introduction*. In: B. Steven Biko, *Black Viewpoint*, p. 8, quoted in Franks (1987: 176)
[1272] Quoted in Rhoodie & Cooper (1987: 230)
[1273] Rhoodie & Cooper (1987: 203)
[1274] Rhoodie & Cooper (1987: 226)
[1275] Independent Newspapers (Unknown: 28)
[1276] Friedman (2001: 3)
[1277] Rhoodie & Cooper (1987: 189) and Rule (2000: 219)
[1278] Magubane (1989: 114)

slogans had been: "Over my dead body will I vote for the ANC." [1279] And due to their ignorance of what was really going on in the townships they did not know that this could quite literally be the statement of thousands of South African blacks.

The Role of the Press as a Shaper of Ideas

White people's ignorance of the ongoing violence was, as we have seen in the last sub-chapter, partly the result of their lack of direct experience with it. But it was also due to the media's inadequate reporting of the bloody reality in the townships. There were other sources of information, but they need to be looked at with caution. As I have shown, whites did not tap the source that was closest to the events that needed explaining – the black population. In his survey of attitudes to political violence in South Africa Burton found that 33% of white people cited "contacts with fellow human beings" [1280] as their main source of information about political violence. But again, as we have seen, these contacts mainly took place within their in-group, so that, ultimately, their knowledge of the situation in the townships would not have increased much in the process. The education system, the churches, friends, family, and co-workers should be seen as shapers of attitudes rather than sources of information.

The press therefore had an immense influence on peoples' views. 44% of Burton's respondents cited the media as their main source of information (10% cited both, contacts and the media and 13% declined to specify) with the newspapers being mentioned twice as often as television. [1281] These figures differed slightly from my findings. Of the people I spoke with, 67% cited the media as their main source of information (44% newspapers, 39% television, 17% radio), 13% cited both the media and contacts with other people and 20% either did not answer or we did not get to the question. No one cited only personal contacts. In any case, it seems to be safe to assume that during the past years the media, and particularly the newspapers, have been the main source of information for white South Africans.

And this source was indeed limited by government intervention. The media could not have informed them of certain things if they had wanted to. In the eyes of Allister Sparks, the former editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, "it is difficult to exaggerate the impact of this systematic brainwashing on white attitudes" [1282]. This is not the whole story though. In my opinion, the main reason why the newspapers did not adequately inform white South Africans about the violence they did not experience directly was the same as why they did not find out on their own: Their lack of interest in all matters pertaining to blacks.

[1279] Quoted in Franks (1987: 182)
[1280] Burton (1994: 249)
[1281] Burton (1994: 249)
[1282] Sparks (1999: 80)

There was information out there for whites to be found had they wanted to. But many did not. In order to find out what was happening in the townships and prisons of the apartheid state, white people would have had to overcome their mental barrier and pick up an alternative newspaper, a newspaper aimed at the black population or a township edition of their usual read. And very few of them ever did. [1283] On the contrary, as the failure of the *Rand Daily Mail* compared with the success of *The Citizen* has shown, they tended to turn away even from white papers if they covered too much news from the townships. [1284] This led a great number of South Africans to believe that what they saw around them every day was the real extent of violence in the country. As Kane-Berman noted:

> "The segregation of news and opinion, coupled with social and residential segregation, thus helps to limit white perceptions (including the perceptions of businessmen) of black living conditions, views, grievances, and demands." [1285]

In an opinion survey in 1982 for example, 71% of white respondents indicated their belief that blacks were basically content with the status quo and had no reason to want political change. Such a staggering lack of understanding of the real feelings and wishes of the black population a mere three years before the country descended into a veritable civil war shows just how little whites knew about blacks. [1286]

Or rather how many of them mistook beliefs for knowledge. From what I understand, most white South Africans were quite convinced that they knew exactly what was going on in their country, where the causes for these events lay and how to solve the problems in the townships. Few ever questioned this 'knowledge', so few ever realised that it was not based on information, but on impressions and hearsay and as such constituted no more than a belief. Some people were so convinced of the superiority of their own insights that they came to disbelieve even eyewitness accounts or newspaper reports that did not conform to their ideas. Bob Steyn, the conciliator and registrar of the Media Council, for example told Jackson in 1989 that one day

> "I was on the phone with a woman complaining about a headline in that morning's *Cape Times*. The headline dealt with an incident of police beating schoolchildren in Cape Town's streets, a story she saw as yet another fabrication by a troublemaking newspaper.

[1283] Manning (1987: 30-31and 135), Tutu (1999: 171), Frederikse (1987: 224), Massing (1987: 36-37), Brewer (1986: 320) and Kane-Berman (1979: 159)

[1284] Babs Abba Omar in an interview with the author, 5th June 2002

[1285] Kane-Berman (1979: 159)

[1286] Sparks (1999: 80), Pakendorf (1987: 265), Manning (1987: 135) and Malan (1990: 189)
One of my interviews showed how little they know to this day. A man told me: "Under apartheid we benefited from…, but the blacks benefited too, from good roads, a good legal system, a good army." (Interview with the author in Cape Town 24th May 2002) And my impression was that he was not alone with this belief.

As they spoke, Steyn noticed out of his window a group of uniformed black schoolchildren walking in single file in Darling Street below. Then out of nowhere and for no apparent reason came a group of policemen, batons flailing as they dispersed the children. Steyn described to the woman what he was witnessing.

"I don't believe it," she said. Then, referring to what she assumed must be his political bias, she added: What's more, you must be Prog [a progressive] and shouldn't have the job you have." [1287]

Such a story should, in theory, disprove my hypothesis of the media influencing people's opinions right here. In my view it is quite compatible with it though. An account of policemen wielding batons, running after a few children who were walking peacefully down a road contradicts the image of South Africa that was common in public discourse until then. As I have shown in the last chapter, policemen were generally viewed as calm and controlled, not running and violent, while the group of blacks was supposed to be big, uncontrollable and threatening, not consisting of a few children on their way home from school. Therefore, what is at question here is what happens when the newspapers present their readers with information that does not fit in with their worldview. In such a case, they have a choice: They can modify their worldview, they can ignore or re-interpret the new information to fit in with their view of reality or they can reject the message outright. [1288]

This is exactly what happened in our case here. The author of the article in the *Cape Times* tried to write against the grain of what had by then become common wisdom, namely that a disciplined police force was fighting a small but annoying township uprising instigated by outside terrorists with the help of anti-apartheid forces among liberal whites who greatly exaggerated its extent and tried to vilify the Republic's efforts to defend its law-abiding citizens. Many readers, in my opinion, rejected such an interpretation not because the newspapers could not reach them, but rather because the readers actively chose not to believe them. Once they had acquired a certain view of the world, they were no longer willing or able to simply discard it and replace it with something new. We must not forget that, while newspapers are integral to constructing public discourse, the individual article is always an addition to the existing world of knowledge of a society and will be judged by its readers in terms of its compliance with the principles of this world. [1289]

In South Africa, there was an additional paradox at work. If the numbers presented at the proceedings of the National Conference on English-Speaking South Africa Today in July 1974 are even remotely correct, it would seem that such rejections of media messages were

---

[1287] Jackson (1993: 159)
[1288] Hartley (1982: 140), Fairclough (1995: 46) and Retief (2002: 216)
[1289] Hartmann & Husband (1971: 268-269), Goffman (1974: 28-29) and MacKuen & Coombs (1981: 122-123)

not rare. According to de Villiers, only 31% of English speakers thought that the English language press gave the "the most reliable and unbiased news on South African politics" [1290]. More respondents found the press "too critical" of the government (24%) than thought that it was "not critical enough" (14%). [1291] And yet, they did not stop reading. This leads me to believe that, while they rejected the obvious content, the subliminal message the newspapers sent was fully consistent with their views. This is also what had influenced them in exactly the opposite direction for too long. Or rather, to take a less deterministic view of the press, new ideas were rejected because newspapers had made it too easy for readers to find the information that confirmed their preferred version of reality while ignoring and quickly forgetting all uncomfortable news.

Furthermore, due to the relaxing of influx control and other reform measures taken by the government, whites saw more and more blacks an a day-to-day basis. They saw that they were different, but they also saw that, as long as they abided by the rules, they were not hassled by anyone. So why would they believe that such things were going on in other places? Manning was told in an interview:

> "I know there are riots in some places (…). But I think the press overstates what is happening. Most blacks want to live in peace. I see them on the bus and in the streets and where I work, and they seem satisfied with life." [1292]

Obviously, the people who were running into trouble with the police must have done something wrong in the first place. [1293] After all, although distant and generally easy to ignore, all blacks were a potential threat and the ones who overstepped the line deserved to be put back in their place. [1294]

5.2   Slow Changes: The Period of Transition

The general framework began to change in 1990, but neither the reality on the ground nor the ideas conveyed through the news did. The townships were still in turmoil and the white areas were still islands of calm. And this was still explained in the old terms of cultural differences. The alternative press came into its own during this time, but the mainstream papers largely failed to take advantage of their new freedoms. While the *Weekly Mail* uncovered the Inkathagate scandal and *Vrye Weekblad* exposed police death squads, the big newspaper talked of 'black-on-black' violence and 'mob justice'. The alternatives' stories were only taken up hesitantly, if at all. [1295] And in my view, Ken Owen's admission of not having

---

[1290] Quoted in de Villiers (1976: 354)
[1291] Giffard (1976: 657-658)
[1292] Quoted in Manning (1987: 35)
[1293] Malan (1990: 154) and Manning (1987: 135-136)
[1294] Malan (1990: 158) and Mike Tissong in an interview with the author, 16th July 2002
[1295] Burnett (Unknown: 7), Claassen (2000: 430-431), TRC (17th September 1997: Vrye Weekblad, 2-4) and TRC (17th September 1997: Arri de Beer, 4)

believed the accusations of top-level involvement in the 'third force' violence shows that this was not an accident but the result of their journalists' specifically white, middle class point of view and their general integration in the socio-political mainstream. [1296]

As most whites used the mainstream press rather than the alternative newspapers as their source of information, they stayed in the dark about what was really going on in their country. The group mindset and the siege mentality were accepted as facts to build on, rather than flaws that needed to be corrected if the country was to have a future. For example, before the referendum on whether to continue the reform course, the NP ran a massive advertising campaign telling voters to "vote yes, if you're scared of majority rule" [1297].

The shroud of silence was only officially lifted on 15th April 1996 when the TRC began its investigations. [1298] This was not only achieved through the hearings, but also through the TRC's policies. The members of the commission remarked in their final report:

> "A distinctive feature of the Commission was its openness to public participation and scrutiny. This enabled it to reach out on a daily basis to large numbers of people inside and outside South Africa, and to confront them with vivid images on their television screen or on the front pages of their newspapers." [1299]

The newspapers gave the TRC their full attention. Some of the large dailies (such as *The Cape Times*, *Daily News* and *The Star*) had correspondents assigned purely the TRC. The papers dealt with the commission's work and with apartheid's atrocities in their news sections, in commentaries, on their letters pages and in special reports. [1300] There were some smaller provincial newspapers that, at the request of their advertising customers, remained true to apartheid policies and refused to report on TRC's activities. [1301] But by and large the newly uncovered atrocities (committed by all sections of South Africa's population) were described in the media on a daily basis. For the first time the victims were given a chance to leave the cave of anonymity and fear they had been forced into by a public that did not want to hear nor believe and, independent of their skin colour and origin, the perpetrators were put on public display. Their actions were described in detail to illustrate the extent of their guilt. [1302] As Antje Krog, who headed SABC Radio's reporting of the TRC, explained:

[1296] Interview with the author, 30th May 2002
[1297] Quoted in Waldmeir (1997: 199)
[1298] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 5, Para 5
[1299] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 5, Para 5
[1300] TRC Report, Vol 1, Chap 11, Management and Operational Reports, Media and Communication Department, Para 14-15, Tutu (1999: 84) and Garman (1997 a: 1)
[1301] Electronic Mail & Guardian (19th September 1997: 2)
[1302] Garman (1997 a: 2), du Plessis (1998: 4-5) and Sparks (1999: 86)

> "Week after week; voice after voice; account after account. It is like travelling on a rainy night behind a huge truck -- images of devastation breaking in sheets on the windscreen." [1303]

The TRC was not perfect, but it was certainly a good solution. Because of the possibility of receiving amnesty, many perpetrators confessed their deeds. On the other hand, this meant that the victims did, in many people's eyes, not get justice (or revenge, as some observers put it). But they at least found out the truth. Without the TRC they would most likely have had neither. The circumstances surrounding Steve Biko's death could, for example, only be cleared up when his murderers testified voluntarily to the TRC. Three earlier investigations had not produced any results. [1304] Donald Woods, the former editor of the *Daily Dispatch* and a friend of Steve Biko, remarked: "[The TRC will] at least supply the vital ingredients for finding out what happened, which, in the final analysis is the most important thing." [1305]

As a result of the commission's work, South Africa's white population was for the first time confronted with the full extent of political violence perpetrated under apartheid. A telephone survey carried out in 1997 by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) showed that particularly white South Africans had long believed that what they had seen in the media during the apartheid years had been a realistic reproduction of every day life in their country. Of 124 respondents, 23% said that they had heard about the atrocities committed by the apartheid regime for the first time in the reports about the TRC, and another 55% said that they had known that some violations of human rights were happening, but were unaware that they were an everyday occurrence. This means that, before 1997, merely 22% of white South Africans were, as they themselves judged it in retrospect, adequately informed about what was happening in their own country. [1306]

Did the TRC change that? In many ways it did, for now no one can believably claim anymore that they are ignorant of the atrocities that were committed in the name of apartheid, black liberation, and, in many cases, power. Still, I do not believe that the TRC fundamentally changed white South Africans' views of their country, for they deeply misunderstood the nature of the Commission. Despite the negotiated transition as well as the TRC's independence from the ANC government and its mandate to investigate all sides involved in the conflict, many white South Africans saw it as a kind of victors' justice, not as a service provided to them by neutral outsiders. Former President P.W. Botha decried the Commission as a "circus" [1307] and an ANC witch-hunt against Afrikaners and refused to appear before the

---

[1303] Quoted in Sparks (1999: 87)
[1304] Gevisser (1997: 1)
[1305] Quoted in Hugon (Unkown: 2-3)
[1306] Hamber (1997 b: 1), Theissen (1998: 6) and TRC (17th September 1997: Independent Newspapers, 5)
[1307] Time Magazine (4th May 1998: 1) and CNN Interactive (7th January 1998: 1)

panel. Many institutions, such as the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk, the South African Agricultural Union and the Afrikaans newspaper houses, declined to make official submissions. They did not understand that the TRC's objective was not to put them on trial for supporting apartheid, but to reconstruct, as far as possible, a lost part of South Africa's history and to break with the old culture of secrecy. [1308]

This message was lost on many ordinary white South Africans, too. They did not accept the Commission as the builder of a new ideological framework of non-racialism and reconciliation, but instead approached it with their old mental framework of group-based divisionism and suspicion. [1309] Their worst expectations often turned into self-fulfilling prophecies. Very few attended hearings directly, instead relying on the media's reporting, which they used selectively. They witnessed their leaders being "grilled" [1310], but they often did not see members of the ANC being questioned or hear victims tell their stories. Thus, no new discourse about violence emerged among the white public, because, by and large, they refused to leave the old one behind. The TRC made them see, but it could not get them to think. [1311]

The same is true, to a lesser extent of the newspapers. Many journalists, too, felt that the TRC was set-up to point fingers and dig-up past misdeeds, not to help the country move into the future. In February 1998, Desmond Tutu, the chairman of the TRC, expressed his sadness at this attitude in a speech in Pretoria:

> "Rapport and Die Burger (…) have sought from day one to vilify and to discredit the TRC so that they would pre-emptively have discredited its report. They have made no bones at all about their nostalgia for a past which we ought all corporately and individually to lament. They want to recall a past when they, the Afrikaners, were in charge, even though they now claim never to have supported apartheid. They have been unashamed, quite brazen in their support of a defiant Mr P W Botha and they actually said after his first court appearance that it was a pity he was not so young any longer, for this was the leader their beleaguered community needed so desperately and they pointed with pride to some of his quite outrageous comments; that he had nothing to apologise for and that apartheid was really only good neighbourliness." [1312]

Even years later, when it should have been amply clear that the TRC was an independent body that investigated the crimes committed by the liberation movements with the same vigour as those of the former rulers, *The Citizen* was not ashamed to state in an opinion piece about

---

[1308] Tutu (1999: 171) and Theissen (1997 c: 16-17)
[1309] For such opinion see for example van Staden (Unknown: 2) and Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 130-135)
[1310] van Staden (Unknown: 2)
[1311] Tutu (1999: 84 and 184-185), Berger (1997: 1), Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 135-137), Burnett (Unknown: 4-5), Garman (1997 a: 3), TRC (27th November 1996: 10) and TRC (17th September 1997: Arri de Beer, 2)
[1312] Tutu (1997: 11)

presidential pardons: "In fact, all of these crimes were too much even for the openly pro-ANC TRC to stomach, and that took some doing." [1313]

This attitude explains their reluctance to take part in the TRC and have their own businesses scrutinised. Unlike many black journalists and their more courageous white colleagues who felt that they too had been victims of apartheid, those journalists closer to the political mainstream felt that they would be unjustly accused of collaboration. [1314]

More importantly, though, it helps to explain why they reported the violence uncovered by the TRC in terms of the old frames and using the old imagery. The newspapers generally acknowledged that the TRC was a tool for showing apartheid's misdeeds and for South Africans to find their history, but somehow they did not understand that through their reporting, not just of the TRC but of any event, they were actually constructing the history of the future. Instead they saw their role as merely relaying the commission's message. Hence, they did not go beyond simply describing what was happening before the TRC and did not question the entire ideological framework that had allowed such human rights abuses to be committed in the first place.[1315]

Therefore, the old views prevailed and white South Africans were largely allowed to keep their impression that during the 1970s, and to a lesser degree also during the 1980s, their country would have been peaceful and calm had it not been for a number of isolated incidents of political violence for which the black population was largely to blame. The real culprits, the violent structure of apartheid and the lack of respect for human rights among large sections of the population (black and white), were not identified. [1316]

5.3 Between Knowledge and Fear: The New South Africa

5.3.1 The White Populations Experience with Violence Today

Since the end of apartheid white South Africans have certainly experienced more violence in their daily lives. For one, the end of influx control gave the poor township residents a chance to finally take crime out of their own areas and into white South Africa. Secondly, as the repressive apartheid machinery that had kept a lid on black anger for so long was lifted, the path was indeed opened for revenge attacks against the former oppressors. And finally, the police was restructured and presented with a new mandate to patrol the entire country, rather than just the wealthy white neighbourhoods. This often stretched resources beyond their capacity and reduced their ability to combat criminal violence. Accordingly, while before

---

[1313] The Citizen (23rd May 2002: 18)

[1314] This was lamented by many observers in literature, but was also brought up by Pallo Jordan in an interview with the author, 22nd May 2002
See for example Business Day (21st January 1997 b: 1-2) and Skjerdal (1997: 6-8) for editors arguing against special media hearings and Business Day (21st January 1997 b: 2-3) for arguments for participation.

[1315] Garman (1998: 2) and du Plessis (1998: 2-3)

[1316] Pallo Jordan in an interview with the author, 22nd May 2002, Hamber (1997 b: 2) and Garman (1998: 3)

1990, white South Africans rarely fell victims to crime and knew almost no one who had, these days, most people know at least one person in their direct vicinity who has been the victim of a violent crime.

However, the impact of such incidents far exceeded their frequency. Even in the new South Africa, white South Africans are not very likely to fall victim to violence. Numerous surveys as well as the official crime statistics show that whites experience least amount of violent crime of all population groups. A victim survey in Durban, for example, found that while black and coloured residents reported high levels of both, property and violent crime, Asian and white Durbanites had mainly been the victims of property crime with only a comparatively small percentage experiencing violent crime (see fig. 72). [1317]
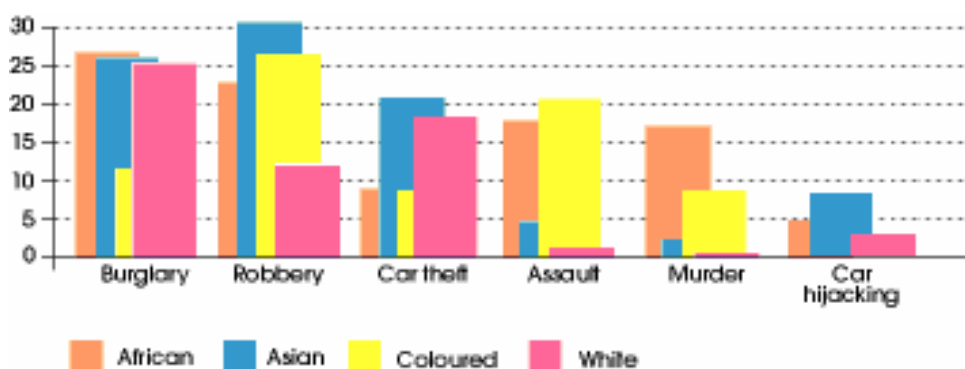
Figure 72: Crimes experienced by blacks, Asians, coloureds and whites in Durban (Source: Shaw & Louw (1998 a: 3))

Comparable surveys in Cape Town and Johannesburg showed similar results. Black and coloured residents of Cape Town were found to be disproportionately affected by violent crime, while whites were largely the victims of property crime. Similarly, black residents of Johannesburg were disproportionately victimised by violent crime, while Asians and whites encountered mostly property crime. [1318] Furthermore, while between one quarter and one third of respondents in the Johannesburg survey who had experienced property crime in the traditionally black areas – informal settlements, townships and the inner city – reported the use of violence, only 14% of victims living in the suburbs did. And one quarter of black victims had been subjected to violence during burglaries, compared with only 9% of whites. Similarly, in Durban 46% of black victims reported the use of violence during burglaries compared to 14% of Asians and 10% of whites.

My interviews, too, showed that most whites had not witnessed or experienced violence themselves. Time and again I heard things like "Our life has not been touched by it." [1319] "We've had no violence in the immediate family." [1320] "No, we've been the lucky ones." [1321]

[1317] Shaw & Louw (1998 a: 3) and Robertshaw et al. (2001 a: 1-2 and 5)
[1318] Camerer et al. (1998 a: 1) and Louw et al. (1998 a: 1)
[1319] Woman in her early 30s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 20th May 2002
[1320] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1321] Answer in a street survey in Bloemfontein, 1st July 2002

Of the fifteen people I spoke with during my street surveys, four said that they had personally been the victims of violence: a homeless man who had been physically assaulted several times while sleeping outdoors, a woman who was "currently going through physical and mental abuse from my ex-husband" [1322] and a married couple who had escaped an attempted hijacking of their car (for more detail on car theft and violence see this chapter below). Three told me about people in their close vicinity who had experienced violence: An 83-year-old pensioner who said that some people in her retirement home were "pushed around by the staff" [1323], a (white) stall owner on the Durban beachfront who told me about one of his neighbours having been shot and another having been hijacked, and finally one man, who said: "My brother, yes, me personally, no," but would not qualify his answer any further. The remaining eight were straight no's. Only one of them, a Durban attorney in his 30s, qualified his answer a little further: "No, people generally haven't" [1324]

These findings have been confirmed by other research. For example, a study in Pretoria showed that only 5% of the white population had fallen victim to violent crime between 1993 and April 1998, compared with 22% of blacks. And in a survey of victims of crime in Durban in 1998, only 14% of respondents who lived in the suburbs reported having been subjected to violence during the criminal incident. [1325]

Also, despite what the media and common sense might tell us, the majority of victims of car hijackings are not wealthy whites, but in fact ordinary blacks. According to the ISS victim survey in Johannesburg, the city with the highest proportion of car hijackings in the country, 82.3% of all victims of car hijackings were black. [1326]

Interestingly enough, my own personal experiences in South Africa confirm these findings. While I was living in Cape Town my car was stolen. It was, from what I can gather, a typical car theft: One Friday afternoon after coming home from an interview, I had parked my little Ford Laser (the South African equivalent of the European Escort) where I always parked it: right outside my building in Sea Point, a neighbourhood with an OK safety record but a bad name among whites as being the home of gays, prostitutes and dodgy characters (all of whom you could find if you looked, I should add, but none of whom generally bothered anyone else). My boyfriend and I spent Saturday at home not doing much, so we did not use or check on our car. On Sunday morning, we were awoken by a knock on the door. Two uniformed policemen greeted us with a smile. "Sir," they said looking at my boyfriend, "do you own a white Ford Laser with the following registration?" and read off our license plate number.

[1322] Answer in a street survey in Bloemfontein, 1st July 2002
[1323] Answer in a street survey in Durban 14th April 2002
[1324] Answer in a street survey in Durban 14th April 2002
[1325] Shaw (2002: 51-52)
[1326] Louw et al. (1998 a: 4) and Robertshaw et al. (2001 b: 2-3)

When he confirmed, the next question was: "Where exactly is your car at the moment?" (In retrospect a strange question considering that they knew full well where it was.) "Right…," my boyfriend answered pointing at an empty parking spot where our car had been, "there it was." "No, Sir," one of the policemen continued with a proud smile on his face, "it is actually in Guguletu. We recovered it this morning."

And so it was that we spent Sunday morning at the police station filing a report and Sunday afternoon at a police pound inspecting our 'stolen' car. We had not lost much. The distributor was missing as were the spare tyre (which was fairly bald anyway) and our parasol from the trunk (not a big loss as it was winter and the thieves were kind enough to leave their umbrella). The locks on both sides had been destroyed as had the immobiliser and the radio. I personally do not believe that the car thieves were the same people who stole these things, but this is pure speculation. In the glove compartment I found an invitation to the funeral service of Mongameli "Torr" Pelem, a 21-year-old man. He was to be buried in Guguletu on 25th May 2002 – the Saturday my car was stolen. In my opinion whoever took the car needed a lift to the service and could not get there any other way. The parts were probably stolen later; an abandoned car in Guguletu is a prime target. But I am losing myself in emotions that I will get back to later. What I really wanted to tell is that while we were at the pound, two young black men approached the car next to ours. We exchanged greetings and hoping to get someone else's views of car theft in South Africa, I asked: "So, your car was stolen too?" "No," one of them replied. "We were hijacked."

5.3.2 White South Africans' Views about Violence Today

As I have already hinted in the previous sub-chapter, the feeling of personal safety among the white population in South Africa has steadily declined since 1994. [1327] According to a survey by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), in February 1992 a striking 44% of white South African respondents reported feeling unsafe every-day life. By February 1998 this number had shot up to 82%. [1328] As one of my interview partners said: "Anyone can be a victim of violence. It's getting worse and will get worse. It will get dramatically worse in the next 20 years." [1329] Strikingly, according to the HSRC, over the same period as the white population's fear grew, the proportion of blacks (in the old apartheid sense) who reported feeling unsafe fell from 56% to 49%. [1330]

[1327] Ehlers (1998: 2)
However, Hamber & Lewis point out that the official police statistics surely do not reflect people's reality. Still, it is fairly safe to say that crime in South Africa is no longer rising (Hamber & Lewis (1998: 1).
[1328] Alence (1999: 3)
[1329] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002
[1330] Alence (1999: 3)

Violence was certainly a key reason for such discomfort. When asked what they feared most about crime, white respondents in a victim survey in Durban showed disproportionate concern about violence. More than half feared loss of life during crime, and nearly a quarter feared sexual violence (see fig. 73). [1331]
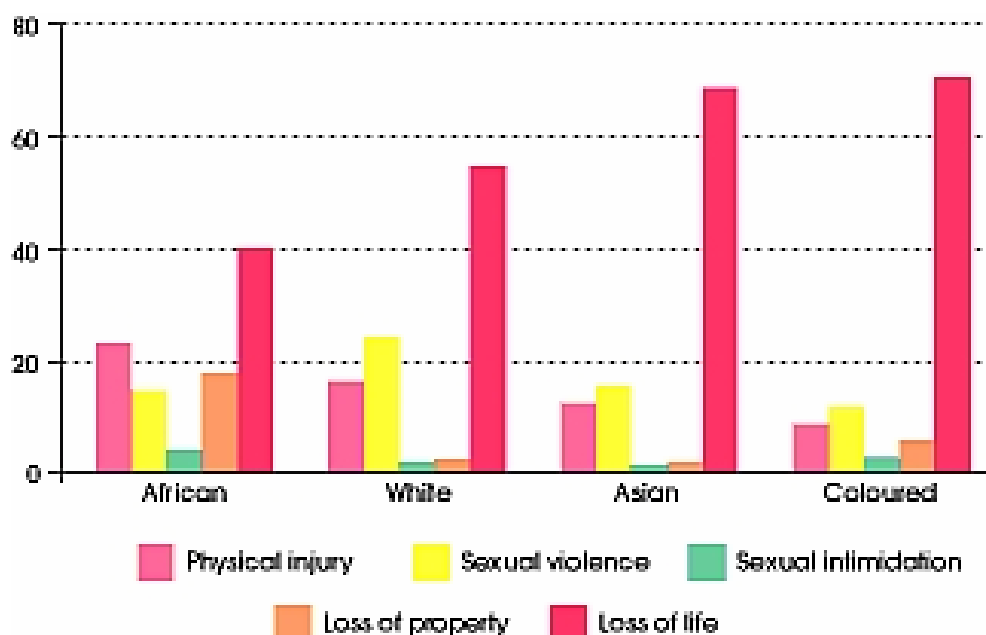
Figure 73: What people in Durban fear most about crime (percentages) (Source: Shaw & Louw (1998 a: 4))

Fear of violence was even more marked in 2001. According to a survey conducted by Robertshaw et al., 55% of respondents feared loss of life, 26% sexual violence and 16% physical injury. By comparison, only 3% were afraid of loss of property. [1332]

Not surprisingly, fears of violence were also frequently expressed in my interviews. One young woman in her early 20s for example warned me shortly after my arrival: "South Africa is hectically violent and you always have to fear being robbed, raped, killed or otherwise assaulted." [1333] And an older man confirmed: "Could be the victim of violence at any time. I used to travel with a firearm, but no longer. You can't win." [1334] And another told me: "The violence part is getting worse by the day. There are so many illegal immigrants who don't work. How do they live?" [1335]

My street surveys confirmed that this was the overall view. 11 out of 15 people whom I asked "Is violence a problem in South Africa today?" answered affirmatively. Three people saw the situation gloomily, but more nuanced. One girl in her late teens said: "Sometimes yes, other times no." [1336] And a couple I spoke with in Durban stated: "[Him] In certain areas, but large

---

[1331] Shaw & Louw (1998 a: 3) and Schönteich (2000: 1)
[1332] Robertshaw et al. (2001 c: 5-6)
[1333] Conversation with the author in Cape Town, 31st December 2001
[1334] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1335] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1336] Street survey in Bloemfontein, 1st July 2002

parts are violence-free. [Her] I believe that South Africa is naturally non-violent." [1337] Only one man, a retired bank-manager in his 70s, gave a clear "Not actually." [1338] But the majority of answers were along the lines of "Yes, yes, very much so" (Bloemfontein); "yes, I really think we should bring back the death penalty, that would bring crime right down"; "absolutely"; "extremely" (Durban) and the like.

The Who is Who of Violence Revisited

Despite their lack of direct experience, most people had a very clear idea of what they considered the violence to be. At the most basic level, the concept could be summed up as 'stranger danger'. It was felt to come from the outside, to be encroaching on people's lives. As one lady told me: "I'm afraid at night of people coming in." [1339] And she was no exception. My interviews showed that overall there is a distinct feeling among whites of being besieged. But not everyone unknown to the interviewees seemed to be identified as dangerous. White strangers were only rarely viewed with suspicion, except when they did not fit the image of what most white South Africans take their own group to be, such as drug addicts, prostitutes or the homeless. One lady expressed this sentiment in one short sentence: "Taxis, parking attendants, beggars and street vendors are a form of racism. Whites feel threatened by them and yet they are allowed to be there." [1340]

The editorial staff of *The Big Issue* agreed. They told me of numerous occasions of vendors being verbally abused, spat at, or worse, because they were perceived to bring danger to the suburbs. I must admit I encountered no violence during my day as a street vendor, nor did anyone seem too afraid of me. I was met with arrogance from quite a few people, but, as the editor pointed out to me, even though I dressed down, I simply do not look like a very threatening street person.

Still, my day of embarrassment and sore legs was not in vein, because I learned one important thing. Next to me stood a (coloured) fruit seller and the difference in treatment the two of us received from the general public was enormous. I received a job offer, an invitation for coffee, free cigarettes and donations totalling nearly 50 Rand .The security guard of the mall I stood in front of periodically allowed me to sit down on a box if I got too tired. The incredibly sweet young man next to me, on the other hand, was met with fear and scorn. People would not look at him and some even jumped out of the way when he approached them. He was not allowed to sit down even though the guard must have known him. And throughout the day barely earned enough money to feed his wife and daughter. In fact, I would not be surprised if he

---

[1337] Street survey in Durban, 14th April 2002
[1338] Street survey in Bloemfontein, 1st July 2002
[1339] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 20th May 2002
[1340] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002

made less by selling fruit than I received in donations. This experience is a clear indicator of an overall trend. Deviants are perceived as a danger by white South Africans, but by far the bigger threat seem to be black people. As one man told me: "If you think of violence in South Africa, you automatically think of interracial violence." [1341] And he was not talking of white people abusing blacks.

John Pilger put it quite bluntly: "To many white South Africans, "crime" is the euphemism for the migration of impoverished, workless blacks across the old racial dividing lines." [1342] My interviews confirmed this view. "The threat comes mainly from disadvantaged communities. They have low self esteem (…), lack of respect and a lack of education," [1343] one lady told me. Another agreed: "It's poverty. The reason for violence is poverty, everywhere in the world." [1344] And while these two did not say it openly, the terms 'disadvantaged' and 'poor' to me seemed to be stand-ins for 'black'. A man in Durban was slightly more direct in making this connection:

> "You know the Afrikaans farmers like my father, he was in the war and when he came back from the war he had to bring us up, he had to feed us. So he had to work the land and build everything we have. And now they are trying to reverse all that and give it to the black people. I think if the Turkish people in Germany were to say: "Well, I'm a naturalised German now, I want what you have". Your dad would have something to say about this." [1345]

I do not think that he realised that, being the descendent of European immigrants, his father would in fact be the equivalent of the naturalised Turkish person in Germany while the blacks he hinted at being the "have-nots" would really be the equivalent of my father. To him, somehow, the black population represented outsiders.

Even more plain in her wording was a woman in Cape Town who complained to me about a black tenant who had rented the former maid's quarters behind her little suburban house. He had dared to have friends visit him whenever he pleased, something that seemed to really trouble her. "You know, these groups of black people come to my house at every time of day and night, it's just scary." [1346]

The white population's fear of unknown blacks first emerged during the Soweto Uprisings. Before 1976, whites had never truly been scared in their own country, but on 16th June "the tide of history had turned" [1347]; white South Africans would never feel safe again. [1348] Leon

[1341] Man in his mid-60s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1342] Electronic Mail & Guardian (24th April 1998: 5)
[1343] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002
[1344] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1345] Answer in a street survey in Durban, 14th April 2002
[1346] Conversation with the author in Cape Town, 30th December 2001
[1347] Malan (1990: 78)
[1348] Tutu (1982: 92), Malan (1990: 78) and Leatt et al. (1986: 83)

Mellet hinted at this in our interview. "Look," he told me when I asked whether white South Africans had actually realised how sheltered their lives were,

"I think that a lot of the white people realised that they lived a shel…, but a lot of the people were very scared. Because the message was "We're gonna, transfer that violence to the white areas." And perceptions were that we are now going to be under attack and people like that, they were frightened, they were scared." [1349]

This view was echoed by people during my interviews. One woman told me: "In '76 I was in school and I remember the fear, you know, now the thing that has been sweeping through Africa is now coming to us." [1350]

This sentiment was exploited by P.W. Botha's ideologues, who made the 'total onslaught', an external threat emanating from an external aggressor, one of South Africa's intellectual priorities. [1351] They could, however not have succeeded without the media, for in this case without the messenger there is no message.

Most newspapers readily took-up the popular myth of young black males as violent, dangerous, and bent on taking what white people have built for themselves, because it served as an easy template for a number of different crime stories. Moreover, the journalists could be sure that readers would by and large recognise the message they were trying to communicate. Now, I am not saying that the English language press in South Africa was openly racist or that they only showed black violence. This would simply be untrue. What I am saying is that they are frequently using their own stereotypes, and those of their white readers, to construct a sort of logic in their reports, which, if decoded as intended, is biased against young black men.

This whole logic starts with little things, such as the omnipresent advertisements for "Australia/New Zealand Canada Emigration" or "EuroMigrate" (see fig. 74).

[1349] Interview with the author, 26th June 2002
[1350] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 20th May 2002
[1351] Shaw (2002: 43)

Figure 74: What a wonderful place to leave

But it mainly includes hidden elements like the symbolisms I have documented above and goes all the way to terribly biased opinion pieces, such as the one that appeared in *The Citizen* on 23rd May 2002 after President Mbeki had pardoned a number of criminals. The story was titled "Prepare for the total onslaught" [1352] and the author states his views quite plainly:

> "It is obvious that the ANC wants to drive whites out of this country. (…)
>
> For every one of the thousands of senseless, brutal white murders and rapes on farms and in the towns, an average of six other whites leave the country.
>
> Many whites are of the opinion that the government silently condones these crimes.
>
> Can you blame them when the President of the county condones heinous crimes against whites with pardons for the perpetrators?" [1353]

Such messages were not lost on the majority of white readers, who react to the perceived threat and either leave – Sparks estimates that 75,000 have left South Africa between 1994 and 1999 [1354] – or seek to insulate themselves in the suburbs by what the London *Economist* once termed "siege architecture" [1355]: ever-growing walls, electric fencing and razor wire. Others are moving to gated communities or have existing roads closed to public use in order to prevent non-residents from entering (see fig. 75).

[1352] The Citizen (23rd May 2002: 18)
[1353] The Citizen (23rd May 2002: 18)
[1354] Sparks (1999: 76)
[1355] The Economist (15th July 1995: 1)

311

Figure 75: Law Road – A suburban paradise

By 2000, the city of Johannesburg had closed off 360 roads for suburban security compounds. Many people keep guard dogs and an even larger number owns guns. [1356] A growing number of South Africans also place their faith in firearms. According to the police's Central Firearms Registry, for example, in 2000 a total of 3.2 million South Africans legally possessed some 4.2 million firearms. [1357]

The number of private security firms, often promising 'armed response' (see fig. 76), has grown rapidly since the 1980s as more and more whites sought to buy safety in the face of radical change. This trend was accelerated by the transition as policing resources were spread thinner and crime increasingly moved out of the townships. Nowadays, a lot of houses are wired-up by private security services and outfitted with alarm systems and panic buttons. [1358] In a survey that the Institute for Security Studies conducted in Cape Town, just under 70% of white respondents reported to have access to some form of protection of their household against crime. [1359] According to Schönteich, the number of active security officers registered with the Security Officers' Interim Board increased by 44% between September 1997 and March 2000 to 166,000. This number does not include approximately 50,000 'in-house security officers' employed throughout the country. By comparison, in 2002 South Africa had

---

[1356] Ehlers (1998: 1), Louw et al. (1998 c: 2), van Niekerk & Ludman (1999: 42-43), Marks & Andersson (1990: 58) and Shaw (2002: 94)

[1357] Schönteich & Louw (2001: 6)

[1358] Cock (1989: 11), The Economist (15th July 1995: 1), Louw et al. (1998 b: 10-11), Electronic Mail & Guardian (28th April 1997: 5) and Shaw (1996 c: 168-170)

[1359] Camerer & Louw (1998: 1) and Camerer et al. (1998 c: 2)

102,349 sworn police officers, which means that there are now more than twice as many people working for the private security industry than the SAPS. [1360]

Figure 76: All is safe and sound

Localising Fear

As the past few paragraphs may have indicated, in the eyes of many white South Africans, violence is not only a matter of population groups, but also of geographic areas. In its victim survey of Johannesburg the ISS broke the figures relating to feelings of safety down by race, gender, age and place of residence and found that less than 40% of whites and residents of the suburbs felt safe in their own neighbourhood at night. The figures for women and the elderly were even lower, with more than 70% admitting to feeling very unsafe. [1361]

What is even more striking is that, when asked where they felt most unsafe, white respondent in the ISS's Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town victim surveys all regarded the suburbs they live in more dangerous than either the townships or informal settlements (see figs.77, 78 and 79). [1362]

[1360] Schönteich (2000: 1) and Legett et al. (Unknown: 6)
[1361] Louw et al. (1998 b: 9-10)
[1362] Shaw & Louw (1998 b: 2-3)
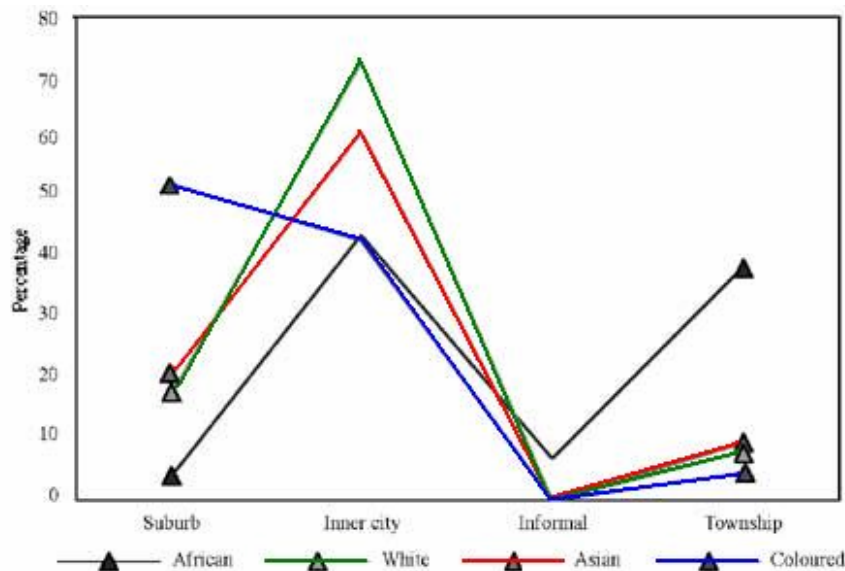
Figure 77: Parts of Johannesburg regarded most unsafe (Source: Shaw & Louw (1998 b: 2))
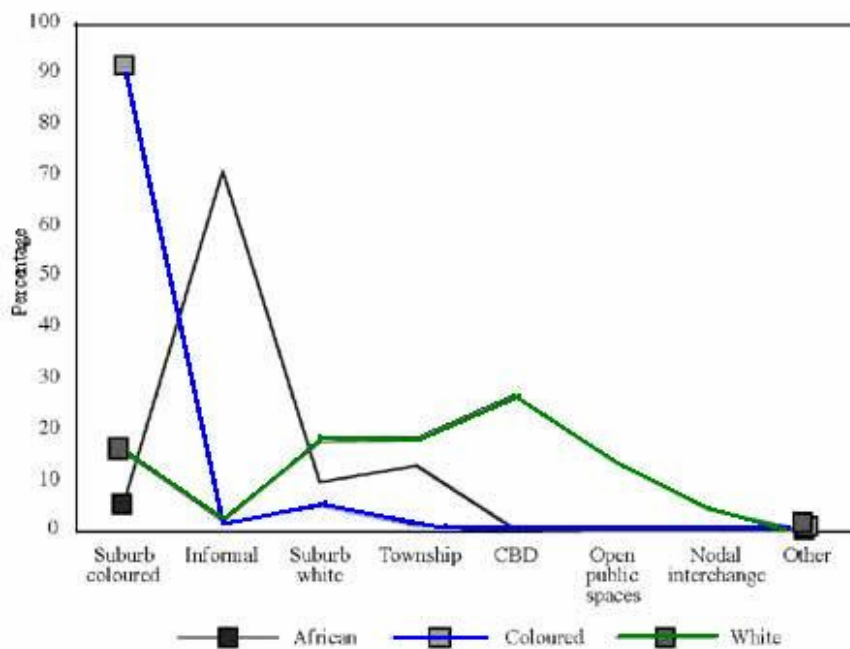
Figure 78: Parts of Durban regarded most unsafe (Source: Shaw & Louw (1998 b: 2))
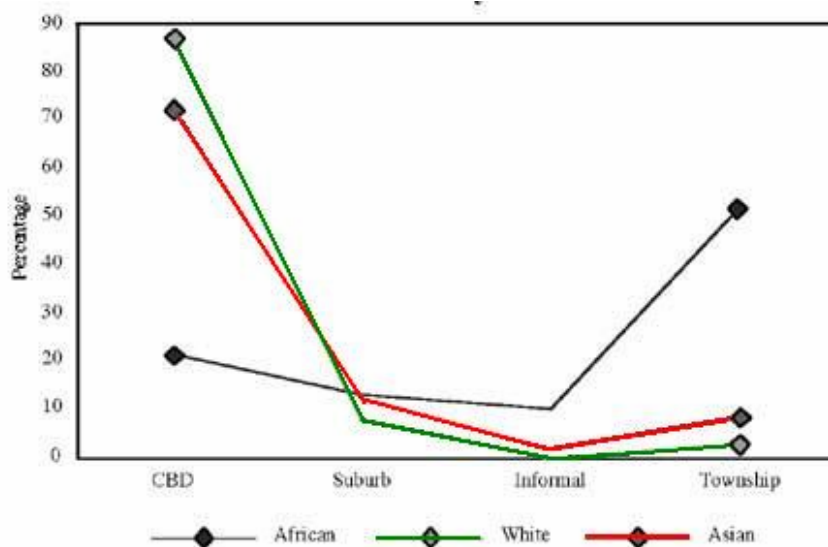
Figure 79: Parts of Cape Town regarded most unsafe (Source: Shaw & Louw (1998 b: 3))

314

I was also surprised that people in Durban and Johannesburg considered the inner city areas to be more unsafe than any other part of town – despite ample evidence that in terms of crime the townships are the most dangerous. Shaw & Louw explain:

> "The fact that more than two-thirds of whites and Asians thought the inner city was the most unsafe part of Durban and Johannesburg, could reflect actual experiences of crime in the inner city relative to the suburbs. However, these fears are more likely to be based on impressions of the inner city formed through the media, as well as through environmental factors which characterises many of these areas, such as overcrowding, litter and street hawking." [1363]

Personally, I have to agree with their (speculative) findings. I have walked the streets and back alleys of both cities alone and with a friend and, despite the fact that at 1.61 metres I am neither the tallest nor strongest of all women, I never felt unsafe or threatened in any way. I did encounter street vendors, litter and the occasional homeless, drunk or drugged person, but no more so than in any major city I have been to in other countries. And they certainly did not interfere with me. On the contrary, some of these seeming threats provided invaluable services to me by giving me a source of good fruit, cheap clothes and directions every time I was lost. A sangoma in Johannesburg was of great help when I walked into her shop after an interview at *The Star* with a bad cold and a young man in Hillbrow saved me from a long walk through Johannesburg looking for a bus stop.

In fact, let me tell you his story to illustrate the contrast between the South Africa I experienced and the world white South Africans live in: As I mentioned before, during my time in Johannesburg, I was staying at a backpackers' hostel in Observatory. One day, I had an appointment with a journalist in his office downtown. My boyfriend was not feeling too well so, unusually, I went on the minibus taxi on my own. The ride there went smooth – well, except for the roadblock where we were all searched by police armed with automatic weapons – as did the interview. When I was done, I went for a little walk around downtown and, as it was a sunny winter's day, I decided not to board the minibus at the main station, but instead to walk along the road home for a while and catch a passing taxi there.

After a while, the area started to look just a little dodgy so I decided that it was time to catch a ride out of there. I had heard on the radio that, unlike in Cape Town, in Johannesburg taxis only take passengers at designated stops, none of which was anywhere to be seen. So, what could I do except walk on? I was alert, but not scared until my cell phone rang. "Now this is just what I need," I thought to myself, "a young white woman walking around a black [yes, I had such racist thoughts and I hated myself for them] area talking on the phone." It was my

---

[1363] Shaw & Louw (1998 b: 2-3)

boyfriend, worried, asking where I was. I walked on to the next intersection, read off the street names and asked him to come fetch me by car. He agreed and we hung up. Then the phone rang again. It was him again. "I have asked around where exactly you are and have been told that this is the middle of Hillbrow. The locals have told me that I cannot come pick you up because that would mean losing the car and probably getting killed. How did you get into that situation?" We discussed it no further. I just promised to get the next taxi.

Unfortunately none seemed inclined to stop for me, so I kept on walking, when suddenly a young man came towards me. He was about 25 and black, but not exactly menacing. " 'Scuse me, what is a white girl doing walking around here like this?" He seemed nice enough so I told him my story. He started laughing. "They've taken down the taxi stops a while ago 'cause the drivers refused to stop anymore." Great. How would I get home? He directed me towards a little wall in front of a block of flats and said: "Let's sit down here. Look, this is where I live," he said pointing at a balcony somewhere, I don't know where. "You can call your boyfriend and tell him that he can come get you. I will protect you and him while you're here." And this is exactly what happened. To this day I do not know if he actually protected me from a danger I was too blue eyed to see or if there really was none, but we had a nice chat, my boyfriend came, they shook hands and then we drove off – much to the amazement of our South African friends, to whom Hillbrow seemed to be about the most frightening place on the planet.

The Role of the Press in Creating such Feelings

These feelings were certainly reinforced by the way the newspapers reported violence. Time and again they focussed on the, admittedly very high, levels of some kinds of violence, but completely ignored the stark reduction of other forms. Rape, robbery, hijackings and murder were omnipresent in media discourse, but who no one ever wrote about the decline of bombings, police shootings or politically motivated executions. The fact that the average white South African was no longer at risk of falling victim to a terrorist attack was quietly ignored; the non-existence of something is not generally considered to be news. Moreover the situation was described as a 'crime wave' and 'explosion of crime' a 'culture of violence', when in fact a territorial expansion or a democratisation of public violence or a gradual deracialisation of victimisation would have been more accurate terms. The historical context of the present situation – such as the disregard for human rights among the security forces, the low respect of state authority on the part of the black population and the poor training of the police in crime solving techniques – was not investigated. Instead, the perceived increase in violence was decried as the failure of the present government to keep order.

This sudden rise in reports about violence led white South Africans to believe that the number of perpetrated acts of violence had also exploded after the end of apartheid. [1364] That this is really not the case has not only been shown by numerous studies on the subject (see chapter 2.4 for details), but also confirmed by people who have direct experience with the subject. John Jansen, the head of Pollsmoor Prison, for example told me:

> "Another thing is that, yes, the media is now writing about this high crime rate and I can understand. But sometimes I'm asking myself a question: How high is this crime rate, really, in comparison to the apartheid years? That is the question that I'm asking. Is it really out of hand? Or is it being portrayed through the media as being out of hand? And I tend to see it is more in the latter way." [1365]

The media's new openness about violence, or rather about crime, has thus fed public hysteria and encouraged feelings of helplessness in the face of an ever-growing threat. [1366] The newspapers' portrayal of the situation fit perfectly with white South Africans' existing views on crimes and violence and were therefore readily taken up. One lady explained to me:

> "Just look at the number of incidents reported in the media. Rape for example. It's just soared. People say we were shut off from it. We never used to have the news, CNN and that. They say it was always there, but I don't buy it. It has just escalated." [1367]

And, of course by the emphasis placed on crimes as they happened as opposed to the previous approach of portraying crime only after it had already been solved, his created the impression that the authorities were no longer in control of the situation, which led many people to the conclusion that if criminals were not at risk of being punished they would not have an incentive to stop their activities. [1368] The press thus helped create the common impression that the end of apartheid was the beginning of anarchy. As Hamber & Lewis explain:

> "The media's extensive coverage has created a skewed picture of it (the violence). Based on the reporting, most South Africans subscribe to the view that crime continues to spiral out of control. According to recent police statistics, however, the crime rate has been falling." [1369]

Longing for the Iron Fist

As we have seen, the views of violence among the white population have not changed much since the end of apartheid. The same is true of the definition of the concept in public discourse. While it is no longer seen as a matter of 'law and order' or counter-terrorism, it has

---

[1364] Simpson & Rauch (1993: 6) and Shaw (2002: 15 and 84)
[1365] Interview with the author, 19th June 2002
[1366] CSVR (1999: 19)
[1367] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1368] Simpson & Rauch (1993: 6), Camerer & Louw (1998: 2 and 5-6) and Shaw (2002: 83-84)
[1369] Hamber & Lewis (1998: 1) and CNN Interactive (1998: 1)

not been redefined in terms of, for example, social pathology or human nature, but in terms of law enforcement. Violence is still seen as a problem of the criminal justice system and people are still predominantly occupied with individual acts, not with the broader context that produced them.

This view is reflected in South Africans' perceptions on how best to combat crime. In a survey conducted by the ISS among victims of crime in Johannesburg, only 11% of all respondents called for social development, compared with 84% who suggested changes to the criminal justice system such as more police (39%), better policing (22%) tougher legislation (10%) or a reintroduction of the death penalty (12%). Only 1% suggested the slightly more socially oriented option of community policing (see fig. 80). [1370]
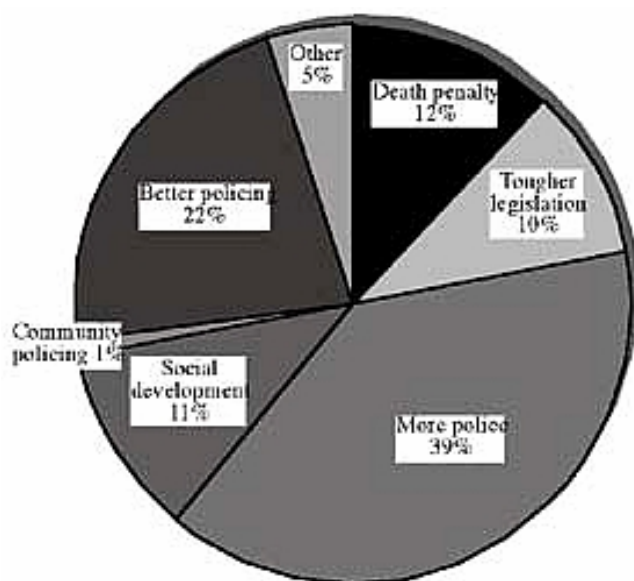
Figure 80: Measures suggested by victims of crime in Johannesburg to make the city safer (unprompted) (Source: Louw et al. (1998 b: 13))

These results highlight another problem that concerns not just violence and crime. South Africa has by and large not built a culture of respect for human rights. On the contrary, the majority of South Africans support capital punishment and many see nothing wrong with torturing suspected criminals in order to extract a confession. In a survey of 122 white South Africans in 1996, the CSVR found that 21% of respondents 'strongly agreed' and 27% 'agreed' with the statement "The police should be allowed to use their guns more frequently to maintain public order" [1371]. A striking 80% called for the reintroduction of the death penalty which was outlawed by a Constitutional Court Judgement in June 1995. According to the authors, their findings are a close reproduction of those obtained in a nation-wide public opinion survey in October 1995 [1372] among 2163 South Africans belonging to all different

---

[1370] Louw et al. (1998 b: 13)
[1371] Theissen (1997 b: 11)
[1372] Kotzé, Hennie, 1996, *The Working Draft of South Africa's 1996 Constitution: Elite and Public Attitudes to the "options"*. Johannesburg: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung: Occasional Papers, February 1996.

population groups. [1373] It is therefore safe to say that, rather than considering a reduction in state violence as a contribution to a reduction in violence overall, the majority of people blame the move away from repression for the rise of crime and violence. [1374]

How can that be? In my opinion it is due to their not seeing capital punishment and police violence as forms of violence, but rather as forms of the legitimate use of force. Violence to them is still what it has always been, illegal acts perpetrated by members of the out-group.

5.4　Final Triangulation: Comparing Reality, Opinion and News Reports

Now that I have laid out all information needed to understand the violence in South Africa since 1976, the newspapers' reporting of the subject and white South Africans' experiences and views, it is time to take the final step and investigate the links between the three factors. I will do so beginning with the white population's views of violence and, equally importantly, race all the time measuring them up to the historical reality as documented in a number of studies and as I found on the ground. Then, I will move on to a comparison of the results with the news reports I analysed. But as I said in the introduction, a mere resemblance is not the same as a causal relationship. Finding that will be the task of my final step. This will hopefully help me trace the origins of the white population's views to either experience, the news reports or both.

Fearsome Negroes

The first aspect I need to investigate in order to make a meaningful statement about the world white South Africans live in is that of race. I had expected mild racism in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in conservative places like Bloemfontein. Unfortunately I was to discover that bigotry, prejudices, and racism are not confined to small towns or rugby playing Afrikaners who never got past primary education. It was an omnipresent phenomenon which, even though it only occasionally reared its ugly head, could somehow always be felt. It was like a quiet ringing in your ear that you were not really aware of because the noise of everyday life drowned it out. But if you were in a quiet room or if you listened carefully, it could be heard clearly. And every once in a while it would get loud and impossible to ignore. In some cases, I must admit, I was shocked just how racist people were and how little others objected to their opinions. Some views were so incredible to me that I have decided to let myself get sidetracked in the present chapter and spend some time portraying the views that otherwise nice, normal, and friendly people were not ashamed to share with a complete

---

[1373] Theissen (1997 b: 11-12) these figures were confirmed again in 1999 in Reality Check, 1999, *Reality Check Survey of the Attitudes of South Africans*. Cape Times, The Star, The Mercury, Pretoria News, Diamond Fields Advertiser and Sunday Independet. 28th April 1999. (Quoted in Hamber (1999: 6 and 8))

[1374] van Niekerk & Ludman (1999: 43), Hamber (1997 b: 2) and Chibnall (1977: 79)

stranger. I believe that they form an important background, if not even a part, of their views on violence and that the latter can therefore not be understood properly without having heard the former.

By and large most of white South Africans felt that black people were somehow different than them. One of my neighbours let me in on an interesting bit of insight one day when she said: "Black people's eyes are different. They are physiologically different. They are long sighted: They see things further away than they are." [1375] I never did get out of her how she imagined this to work and what she thought long sightedness in Europeans was all about. And a man I interviewed told me: "I believe that there is an inherent genetic difference between the races. I don't understand this Western European blindness to this." [1376] But the most striking were another woman's opinions on black physiology:

> "They're genetically different than people. They're more like monkeys. Their brains work differently, a bit like a jug. You know, they can only learn so much. We've got one working for us. We've trained him to paint walls, but you can only teach them so far. We tried to teach him to do patterns and he's good after we show him, but the next time, he's forgotten. We have to show him every time. The jug is full. It won't take in anymore." [1377]

So here we have it. Blacks are not even people. They are genetically different and it is therefore not surprising that they are physiologically different, too.

However, South Africans did not just perceive a difference between them and their black compatriots. As this last statement shows, their perceptions of blacks often involved a value judgement. My interviews confirmed Friedman's [1378] findings that many whites still consider blacks to be incapable of rational thought. One man for example told me:

> "Scientific research has shown that there are differences in intellectual capacity between the races. You know, on maths, the Japanese do best and the Blacks will be at the bottom. Studies have shown that, with every percent of Caucasian blood, your IQ will go up." [1379]

This pseudo-information is applied uncritically not only to black people in the person's own vicinity, but to all blacks, including the people in government. One lady in Cape Town said it quite plainly:

[1375] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1376] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1377] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002
[1378] Friedman (2001: 9-10)
[1379] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002

"I don't think African men should run a country. They cannot do that. They cannot do anything of their own volition. They need to be told. They need to be told often. They need to be instructed step by step ... They can't do it on their own." [1380]

She had obviously not read any of the hundreds of books, scientific studies or NGO reports (including the TRC report) that have documented the failures of the all-white apartheid government. She somehow knew that the current government "could not do it", but never considered the fact that the numerous raids on wrong targets in neighbouring countries, the failure to pacify the townships or the high number of people killed by agents of the state were an even bigger sign of 'not being able to do it' than beggars, squatters and street vendors in the city centre. A little while into our conversation she explained (after admitting to not knowing any blacks inside South Africa or elsewhere):

"This is what we are dealing with. These people are running the country. They cannot shake their tribal ancestry. There is cannibalism, trade in body parts, ancestral worship, they let goats bleed to death. There are people in government who throw bones." [1381]

Now we are getting somewhere. The difference between blacks and whites is not only perceived to be genetic, but also cultural. And at this point we rediscover the theories and findings of Volkekunde that live on in South Africa in the form of a popular myth of the 'African other' as intrinsically backwards, primitive and dangerous. As one of my neighbours explained to me: "Black people are still pretty savage in a way." [1382] And a lady in Cintsa East, a small town in the Eastern Cape, told me that she never left her village anymore because the bigger cities were just too unsafe since the end of apartheid.

"When I last went to Durban, I wanted to enjoy the beachfront, but we were told that it is too dangerous to walk there. You know, it's been redone for lots of money, but you can't go there. The kaffirs [1383] shit in the pool. They do their laundry in the pools." [1384]

Two things struck me about this statement. Firstly, like so many of her white compatriots she miraculously acquired this knowledge about the black population without ever having had any contact with them. As she said herself, she had not visited the beachfront. I have done so, I might add, and I can assure all of us that not only was the area beautifully redone, very clean

---

[1380] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1381] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1382] Conversation with the author in Cape Town, 29th May 2002
[1383] Kaffir is the Arabic word for non-believer. It made its way into the Afrikaans language during the early years of the Cape Colony when Arab slave traders used it to describe African slaves. Today it is a derogatory term, used by both Afrikaans and English speakers, roughly equal in meaning to the English 'nigger'. It is a highly objectionable, racist word and should in my opinion not be used. I have avoided it throughout this paper, but for reasons of scientific preciseness find myself compelled not to censor this lady's quote.
[1384] Conversation with the author in Cintsa East, 18th April 2002

and quite safe to walk around, I also did not encounter any dirty laundry or faeces (human or otherwise) in any of the pools.

The second thing that I noticed was that this woman viewed black people washing clothing as a threat. Now, from my point of view, this would seem nonsensical at best. But if it is looked at in context, it becomes more understandable. To a middle-aged white South African the Durban beachfront and its pools would feel like home territory – 'our' world. Many times in my interviews was I told that blacks cannot swim and that, for that very reason, throwing them in a pool was fun; and that even at the beach they do not go in the water. Beaches and pools, or at least the ones that were worth visiting, had previously been reserved for whites and the exclusive privilege of using them was certainly among the things they lost after the end of apartheid. This loss is what the lady laments here, the invasion of blacks into a formerly white space, their encroaching on what she considers to be hers.

Her pain is exacerbated by the fact that the pools had only recently been redone, something she feels was done for her as she can appreciate it, not for the people who are there now and who cannot. They put the pools to another use, which to her is an excuse for why they should not be there. The rationale is that if they cannot do it properly, they should not be allowed to do it at all. Moreover she chose to believe that they use it in a way that she strongly disapproves of, for the lowest (in her eyes) of human activities – ridding themselves of dirt. If looked at this way, the statement begins to make sense in that blacks are perceived to bring decay into a perfect white world.

This, however, still does not explain why they are dangerous. Despicable maybe, but dangerous? To understand this feeling, we have to take a historical perspective. Since their arrival in South Africa, the European settlers (as opposed to the British colonialists) had perceived the Africans around them as a threat. The Afrikaners were convinced that unless a way was found to contain the black population, their numerical superiority would ultimately mean the end of white civilisation at the tip of the African continent. In an attempt to insulate themselves and protect their world from this danger, a number of political, social and psychological mechanisms were created over the years – the culmination of which was the system of apartheid.

Apartheid encompassed everything from politics to the minds of individuals and, like a disease, spread through the population until it seemed to be the only viable way of life for everyone. After over 40 years of racist rule and anti-communist indoctrination, the majority of white South Africans, English and Afrikaans speaking, had internalised the 'total onslaught' mentality and accepted apartheid as natural. Thus, when it finally collapsed in 1990, they were more obsessed than ever with the fragility of their world and with their own self-preservation. The 'swart gevaar', a societal myth created in the 19th century through the struggle of a small

322

white group in the midst of blacks in competition for land, became the embodiment of the ultimate evil threatening the modern South African nation.

Thus 'the African', the primitive, the native was by his/her very nature a threat. No explanation was needed. They are a menace because they are who they are. And to many of my white interview partners there was no doubt that blacks were 'different', 'African' in a very dark and dangerous way. "South African blacks are not like other blacks, in the US and the UK," one Capetonian told me. "Believe me, they're **African**. They perform witchcraft and the like. And, you know, not just a few of them, but 90 percent!" [1385] (Original emphasis.) And she seemed to know all this despite never having left the African continent or having had black friends, as she later admitted. And she was not the exception, either. Another woman in Cape Town explained: "They've all just come out of the bush. They have no education. You speak to a bunch of imbeciles. They don't even speak English." [1386]

The bush popped-up several times in conversations as a symbol for the metaphorical step on the evolutionary ladder, beyond which blacks – at least in South Africa – had not climbed yet and beyond which they might not be able to ever climb at all. Putting an interesting twist on an American saying about girls and trailer parks, a (quite well educated) gentleman told me: "You can take the African out of the bush, but you can't take to bush out of the African." [1387]

Well, that just about says it all. The black person has come to be imagined as a strange package of inferior genes and cultural backwardness which, if let loose in the world of its white opposite, will wreak havoc and destroy everything in its path.

Maybe I am overemphasising the importance of such views for everyday life in South Africa. I must admit that, coming from Germany, where to this day few people even dare to openly criticise Israel, let alone express racist views in public, hearing such stories was probably particularly difficult for me. I had never been directly confronted with these ideas and did not know that people actually believed such things, unless they liked to wear hooded gowns and danced around burning crosses in their spare time or shaved their heads and celebrated Hitler's birthday. Still, I think that my coming across these images of primitive savages is not just a case of my sensitivities leading me to thoroughly lop-sided impressions. The majority of white South Africans were to some degree afraid of blacks.

And their fear was largely one of violence. The bone throwing, the faeces in the pools, the low IQ, all these were mere metaphors for the perceived primitiveness of the black population. And primitive, to most whites, was synonymous with violent. As one man explained to me:

[1385] Conversation with the author in Cape Town, 30th December 2001
[1386] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002
[1387] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004

- "We have always had tribal violence, faction fighting and the like. (…) It's always been there. It's traditional." [1388]

And a woman agreed:

- "Life is cheap to the black person." [1389]

Life is cheap. An interesting formulation, and one that I came across again in another interview:

- "The Nigerians, it's its own factor. They take all the jobs of the locals. Life is cheap for them. They are greedy. Murder, robbery, mugging… Big black men." [1390]

Let me quickly add another couple of links in this chain of thoughts:

- "They just let any black man into the country, but they won't let any whites in. That's where all the problems start. You know, the Nigerians and them." [1391]
- "The illegal immigrants are a problem. Cape Town is so far away from everything – why has it got to have a shack city full of Nigerians outside its gates?" [1392]

Wow, here it is, a perfect image of the 'swart gevaar' sketched as an impressionistic drawing of individual dots, each contributing their meaning to the completion of the whole: savages who besiege the locals from outside the city's gates and who, if they manage to get in, take all they can and in return bring crime and violence. And who exactly are they? Big black men. I think one man I spoke to in Johannesburg summed it up perfectly when he told me:

> "With regard to the violence of some of the crime, I have my own opinion, which I don't think is very popular and it's not based on anything, but I think there is, I mean, there is, almost largely on a sub-conscious level, because it's quite young men doing it. But I think there is a lot of revenge, there is some kind of revenge factor at work. I mean when you've actually got, for example, as you have had a few times …, young black robbers in their early twenties who could take what they want and go, and they actually torture people. Or rape very old white women. I think there's something quite strange at work. It's got to do with the past. I think it's about revenge." [1393]

This little collection of racist thoughts and apartheid fears should be viewed with caution. Obviously, I have chosen particularly striking quotes. This is not to mean that South Africa is plagued by racial bigotry and intolerance with no light at the end of the tunnel. I did hear some very enlightened voices, not least among the journalists I interviewed.

Still, if we look at whom violence is most commonly associated with, we will find that the majority of white South Africans perceive groups of young black strangers as the biggest

---

[1388] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 13th March 2002
[1389] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1390] Woman in her late 30s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002
[1391] Woman in her 50s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1392] Man in his mid-60s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1393] Man in his 40s in an interview with the author in Johannesburg, 31st July 2002

threat. "Seeing two black men in the street makes you tense, it's inborn," [1394] one lady told me. And another agreed:

> "If I go into Cape Town and get surrounded by three black men, my first reaction is fear. I get frightened. The next thing is aggression. I just want to hit them over the head with a blunt object and get rid of them." [1395]

And when I questioned her about her feelings if she were to experience the same with three white guys, she told me: "Yes, I would react the same. … No, actually, I would look them straight in the eyes and I would tell them…" [1396]

These last two statements are indicative of a trend that I noticed fairly soon after my arrival in South Africa. Men were generally more open towards, and less afraid of, their black compatriots, despite numerous studies showing that men are more likely to become victims of crime than women. The same was true for younger people despite their increased risk of falling victim to violence compared with older South Africans. [1397] This intrigued me. Why would there be a difference between the ages and the sexes?

Sexual Predators

My interviews soon provided an answer to this question. A number of middle-aged white women mentioned black sexual desires during our interviews in order to illustrate to me either that blacks were truly different than 'us' or that blacks posed a threat to them. One lady for example warned me in a very motherly way: "Don't ever smile at a black man, he'll take that as an invitation." [1398] And another insisted:

> "If an African male can't have successful sex three to four times a day, he's not strong, he's not a man. (…)The witch doctors play an important role in this. That is where the body parts come in. You know, they are consumed for strength. A man will eat a woman's vagina, but it must be removed while she is still alive. And it's ground up and made into muti." [1399]

This link between black sexual desires and pagan religions seems to be a common one in white women's imagination. The first lady I quoted, the one who had warned me not to underestimate a black man's sexual desires, also told me: "Incest is common among Coloureds and Blacks. (…) Semen is holy among them." [1400]

[1394] Woman in her early 30s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 20th May 2002
[1395] Woman in her early 30s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002
[1396] Woman in her early 30s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002
[1397] For victimisation studies see for example Prinsloo (2002: 7-8), Shaw (1996 a: 2), Robertshaw (2001 c: 2-4), Louw et al. (1998 a: 1-3), Camerer et al. (1998 a: 1-2) and Schönteich & Louw (2001: 8-9)
[1398] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002
[1399] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1400] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002

Such sexual stereotypes are not uncommon. Numerous studies dealing with group-based discrimination, such as racism or homophobia, have shown that people generally describe their in-group in positive terms, while forbidden and negative attributes, such as brutality or sexual abnormality, are projected onto the out-group. Abbott & Calonico for example showed in their analysis of rape and race in the press in New Orleans that many white Americans not only see blacks as being driven by uncontrollable sexual desires, but also envisage these desires as directed specifically towards white women. [1401]

This study is of great interest to me, for, despite its age – or rather because of it – its findings are still valid in the South African context. South Africa in 2002 in many respects resembled the American Deep South of the early 1970s. Both societies had recently repealed racist and segregationist legislation and neither had overcome racism yet. The education levels and relative wealth of the white populations as well as their experiences with black people were similar (although by no means the same), and, although the demographics of the two regions differed markedly, all other factors specific to the problem of rape and press reports thereof were almost identical: The demographics of rape were fairly similar, as was the general pattern of the individual incidents. Moreover, in both countries the police were dominated by white men and had a long history of conflict with the black population. Accordingly, blacks and whites in both areas were fairly similar in their attitudes towards reporting crime, with blacks generally showing much lower rates of reporting. Women from the two population groups also had similar experiences with the police in both countries, with some officers ridiculing or even abusing them when they reported rapes.

The white population's views of rape in both countries were also near identical. Both tended to view rape as a crime perpetrated mainly by black men against white women, with black men raping black women a close second. The only difference seemed to be the intensity of fear of being raped. Many white South African women think that they are very likely to be raped at some point in their lives. If we look again at figure 73 in chapter 5.3.2, we will see that white Durbanites mentioned sexual violence as their second biggest concern in relation to crime, even before physical injury. 26% of white respondents said that sexual violence was their biggest fear, the highest percentage of any race group and a striking figure in a sample that was 48% male. [1402]

And while this rate is the highest I could find for any area in South Africa (the Cape Town equivalent was just over 10% [1403]), the general profile is the same nationwide. A study done by the ISS in 1998 confirmed that the one thing most women (49% of respondents from all

---

[1401] See for example Quasthoff (1989: 187) and Abbott & Calonico (1974: 141-142)
[1402] Abbott & Calonico (1974: 149), Shaw & Louw (1998 a: 3) and Robertshaw et al. (2001 c: 5-6)
[1403] Camerer et al. (1998 c: 7)

population groups) feared was sexual assault, followed closely by loss of life (47%). The types of crime feared the most were housebreakings (28%) and rape (26%). Thus, the threat is perceived to be coming from the outside. Not surprisingly, 79% of women questioned felt most unsafe in public areas. Only 14.7% felt most unsafe in their own home. However, when asked directly how they felt at home, only 59% answered that they felt safe. [1404]

For white women, the imagined perpetrator of rape is generally a young black man, or even a group of black youths, who, driven by wild sexual desire, waylay strangers in unfamiliar places. However, according to researchers, trauma clinics, and the police, this scenario is far from the prototypical rape. Only a minority of perpetrators are in any way mentally or sexually unstable. Most rapes are committed by men who are accepted by society as entirely normal, average citizens. In their victim survey Bollen et al. found that 67.5% of perpetrators of the worst incidents of abuse were employed and 63% earned over 2000 Rand a month. [1405] And they rarely ever attack complete strangers, either. On the contrary, most victims know their assailants. [1406] In fact, date rape, rape by neighbours, friends, male partners, fathers, and other relatives are by far the most common types of rape. [1407]

Also, rape rarely happens in the dark alleyways and parking garages that it is commonly associated with. According to Vogelman, rape is generally committed in places where the perpetrator is alone with his victim, out of sight and sound of others, and, most importantly, where he is certain to not be caught. His home or that of the victim are therefore the preferred scene. 81% of rapes reported to Bollen et al. happened either in the victim's home (52.4%), the perpetrator's home (19.2%) or in the homes of friends or family of the victim (5.2%) or the perpetrator (4.2%). Only 19% of rapes were committed in public places. Camerer et al.'s survey of crime in Cape Town showed similar patterns. [1408]

Like most violent crime, rape also seems to be largely a problem of the black population. Of the 19,368 rapes recorded by the police in 1988, only 819, or 4.22%, were reported by white victims. The remaining 18,549 were black. The results become even more striking when we consider that the white population made-up almost 15% of the population.[1409] In 1997, the numbers came closer to reflecting demographics with 78.8% black (in the old apartheid sense) victims and 9.2% white victims, but black women were still clearly at greater risk of being victimised than whites (see fig. 81). [1410]

[1404] Bollen et al. (1999 e: 1-2 and 5) and Simpson et al. (1997: 1)
[1405] Bollen et al. (1997 d : 1) and Simpson et al. (1997: 1)
[1406] Simpson et al. (1997: 1) and Vogelman (1990 b: 96)
[1407] Simpson et al. (1997: 1)
[1408] Bollen et al. (1999 c: 3) and Camerer et al. (1998 b: 4-5)
[1409] Vogelman (1990 b: 96), Simpson et al. (1997: 1) and The Government of the Republic of South Africa (1996: 1)
[1410] Gilchrist & Butchart (1998: 4), Prinsloo (2002: 7-8) Friedman (2001: 1) and Louw et al. (1998 a: 8)

RACE OF VICTIMS (N=786)

BLACK (78.8%)

ASIAN (1.5%)   WHITE   COLOURED (10.6%)
                 (9.2%)

A majority of rape victims are black and a relative small number belong to the other ethnic groups. This not only reflects the demographics of the population, but indicates the increased vulnerability of black women to rape, due to their socio-economic circumstances.
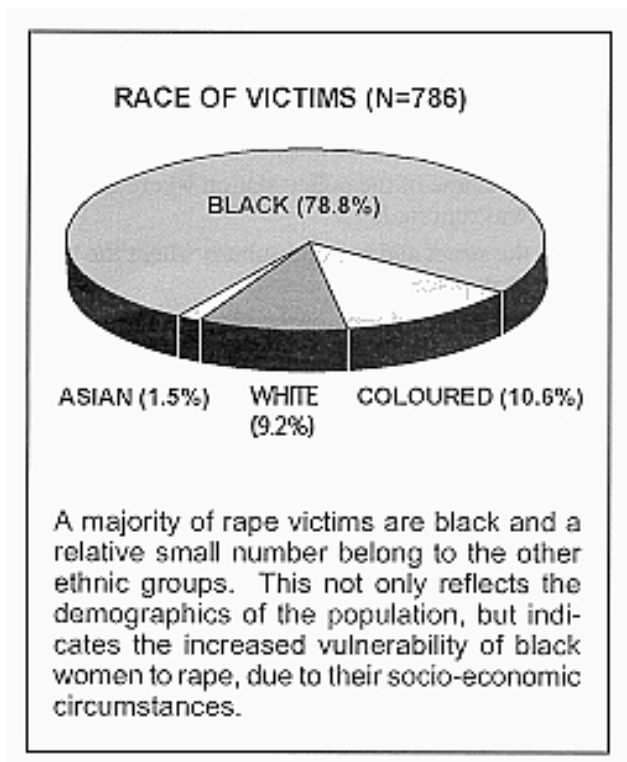
Figure 81: Race of rape victims in South Africa in 1997 (Source: Gilchrist & Butchart (1998: 2))

These numbers throw up two questions: Firstly, what, if not rape in dark alleyways, should white women be afraid of? And secondly, being as I have so far not provided any proof that young black men are of no danger to them, who, statistically speaking, should white women fear?

Fear Thy Neighbour

Both questions can be answered simultaneously by focussing on question number two. One look at the numbers provided by victim surveys and crime statistics will reveal the real danger: The majority of violent crimes are committed by people known to the victim. [1411] In 2001, a CIAC national docket analysis showed that

> "in most cases (more than **70%**) the victims and offenders were known to one another". [1412] (Original emphasis.)

The national Victims of Crime Surveys have persistently come up with similar ratios. In 1998 for example, 60% of assault victims and 63% of victims of sexual offences knew the offender by name and a further 17% of assault victims and 12% of victims of sexual offences knew the offender by sight. Only 20% of assault victims and 24% of victims of sexual offences did not know the offender. The ISS documented similar ratios in respect of murder (see fig. 82). [1413]

[1411] Shaw (2002: 43 and 59)
[1412] CIAC (2001 a: 17)
[1413] Louw (1999: 4), Camerer et al. (1998 b: 8-9), Bollen et al. (1999 e: 3) and Schönteich & Louw (2001: 10-11)
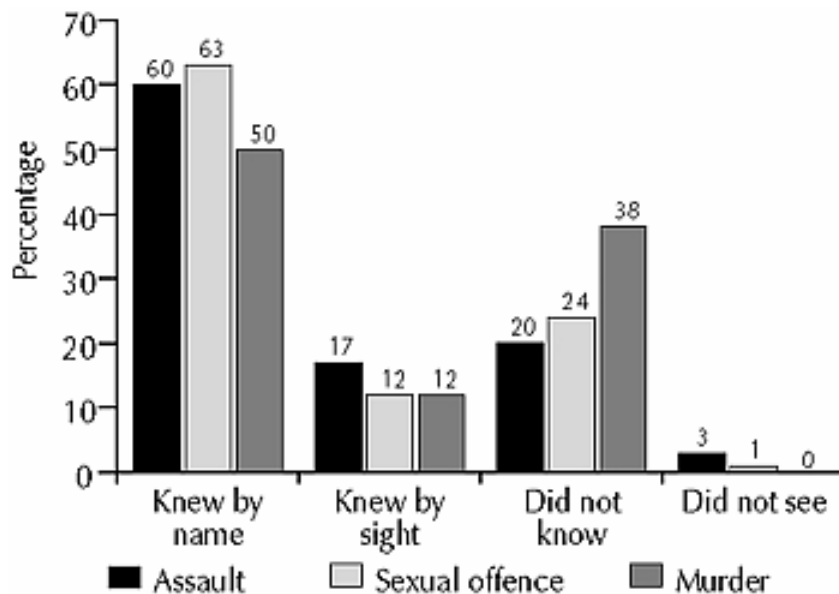
Figure 82: Proportion of assault, sexual offence and murder victims who knew the offender in some way (Source: Schönteich & Louw (2001: 11))

Moreover, several surveys [1414] found that the incidence of violent crime reveals clear cyclical trends with levels at their highest during the Easter and Christmas holidays as well as Fridays and Saturdays, a fact which according to Schönteich & Louw points towards violence being committed when "acquaintances, friends and family members come together over holiday periods and on weekends in the context of increased alcohol consumption" [1415].

If we focus solely on sexual assault, the violent crime discussed above, the figures are even more striking. Of the women who reported abuse to Bollen et al., 86% said that the perpetrators of the worst incidents were known to them. In 59% of cases abusers were their partners, lovers or spouses. [1416] This highlights one of the most remarkable aspects of violence against women in South Africa: A large proportion of women in South Africa will at one point in their lives have an abusive partner. Bollen et al. have found that at present "as many as one in four to one in six women are in an abusive relationship and that one women is killed by her partner every six days." [1417] 90% of all women interviewed in the study had been physically abused. The two most common forms of physical abuse reported were being pushed or shoved and being slapped or hit. [1418]

These findings were confirmed in my interviews. A frightening number of women told me that they had experienced what I personally would call domestic violence in at least one of their previous relationships. Some only hinted at it or gave rather vague answers, like a lady in her late 50s that I spoke with during my street survey in Bloemfontein. When I asked her if

---

[1414] Camerer et al. (1998 b: 1-2) and Schönteich & Louw (2001: 11)
[1415] Schönteich & Louw (2001: 11)
[1416] Bollen et al. (1999 d: 1)
[1417] Bollen et al. (1999 a: 5)
[1418] Bollen et al. (1999 b: 5)

she had ever been the victim of violence, she told me: "I'm currently going through physical and mental abuse from my ex-husband." [1419]

Other women were surprisingly open and detailed in their accounts. A woman in her early 30s for example told me that she had grown up with a father who had regularly beaten her mother. She then saw two of her three older sisters marry abusive men and the third get into a long-term relationship with a drug addict who would occasionally hit her. And despite all these negative examples she married an abusive alcoholic herself. She stayed with him, despite repeated beatings, for more than five years before she finally had the courage to leave. Her two sisters took a few years longer to get themselves to divorce their husbands and, although I had several conversations about the subject of violence with both of them, neither ever told me more about their experiences except that they had happened. Their mother, who is now in her 60s, is still living with their father and never said a word about her experiences during my entire time in Cape Town. The third sister who now lives in Johannesburg was the quickest at ridding herself of her abusive partner and was quite open about the pain and fear she had gone through. The same goes for my friend in Cape Town. Both confirmed that they had gotten involved with very charming men and only once they were in a serious relationship found out that there was another side to their partners, one that came out under the influence of drugs and alcohol and that knew no respect for anyone else's needs and weaknesses. [1420]

Interestingly enough, even one of the men confirmed this assertion. He has since sobered-up and receives treatment. He can now openly talk about what he did, although he has still not understood why he did it. One thing he knows for sure, though. His father used to beat his mother and him all the time and it was the normal way of dealing with conflict when he grew up. Learning that hurting the one you love can eventually be an act of self-destruction was a long process for him. The couple are now divorced and for the sake of his daughter, he is making every effort to change his ways. The child lives with him and his new girlfriend – incidentally a young woman who had two abusive relationships before him, and who he has hit before he gave-up drinking – and, as far as I could see, the chain of domestic violence seems to be broken in this family.

All this leads to my next and final question: Why, if their own partners are the greatest danger, women tend to be most scared of black strangers? I believe the answer to be twofold, and think that both arguments can basically be traced back to the newspapers' reporting about the phenomenon of violence in general and rape in particular. I will specify this in the final sections of this chapter.

[1419] Interview with the author in Bloemfontein, 1st July 2002
[1420] Several conversations with the author, December 2001 to July 2002 (Cape Town and Johannesburg)

The Non-Violent Wife-Beater

My interviews have shown that many people do not distinguish between the concepts of violence and crime; they equate the first with the second. However, not all violence is necessarily criminal. As I have shown in the chapters on violence perpetrated by the supporters of the apartheid state, one can act violently and still stay within the limits of a country's legal system. Legitimacy and legality are not to be equated. On the other hand, far from all crimes are violent. For example in 1999, only 32.6% of crimes recorded by the SAPS were violent in nature. This is still a much higher proportion than in many other countries – in the United States the figure came to 15% and in Great Britain it reached a mere 6% – but the majority of crimes committed in South Africa are generally property crimes, such as theft, fraud, or vandalism. [1421]

The mixing of these two concepts, or rather the subsuming of both under the cover-term 'crime' has had a lasting effect on the way white South Africans define violence. Legal violence is not perceived as such and neither are violent acts that South Africans consider to be just a normal part of every normal person's life, rather than a police matter. My first line of reasoning is therefore that domestic violence is frequently not perceived as violence by either its perpetrators or its victims. [1422] This is why it plays no role in defining women's violence schema and does not register as violence done to them in their memory. Several women who had answered my question of whether they had ever experienced violence with a firm 'no', later hinted at having been physically abused at home. For example, one girl in her early 20s who had previously denied ever having experienced violence told me calmly about her boyfriend having thrown a butterfly knife at her head. Luckily he missed, so that was not violence in her eyes. Besides, he was drunk, so that really did not count anyway. [1423]

The Violent Car Thief

The second argument runs in exactly the opposite direction, namely that crimes committed by young black men are often perceived as violence even if they are de facto non-violent. Car theft and house break-ins, for example, were both mentioned as forms of violence by several people (not only women) I spoke with and both were frequently associated with black people. One man for example told me: "When I grew up, we never locked a car. There was no risk of violence." [1424] Similarly, my question whether people had ever been the victims of violence were answered affirmatively several times when people had in fact experienced theft or break-

---

[1421] Schönteich (1999: 2) and Schönteich & Louw (2001: 4)
[1422] Bollen et al. found that a striking 34.5% of women who experienced sexual or physical abuse did not think that what had happened to them was a crime. (Bollen et al. (1999 c: 5)
[1423] Conversation with the author in Cape Town, 14th March 2002
[1424] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002

ins. A man in Cape Town (who incidentally described himself as "a bit of a news junkie" [1425]) said: "Compared to the newspapers we've been very fortunate. (…) We've had cars broken in and our house burgled." [1426] And a man in Durban (I spoke with him and his wife) told me:

> "Yes, we were hijacked. Well, they tried… We were stopped at a robot [traffic light] when two black men walked up to the car. My wife was driving. They put a gun to the side of my stomach and told me to get out of the car and told her to stay. So I told them that they could have the car and the keys, but not her! But they refused, so I just got out of the car and pulled her with me right across the passenger seat. We ran into a shop and called the police, but the thieves were not good enough to deal with the immobiliser, so the car was not actually stolen." [1427]

The latter quote is in my opinion a good illustration of Thornton's point that what exactly violence is very much dependent on factors outside the control of those people involved. [1428] Is the hijacking that went wrong an act of violence? The gun that was not fired? In the opinion of my interview partner it is. I must admit in this case I agree. But the first quote is in my opinion only understandable in the South African context. From a German point of view, locking cars does not seem like a very effective method for preventing violence.

Defining Violence by Skin Colour

This points to a difference between the average white South African and me in defining for oneself the contested concept of violence. I make the definition dependent on the effect of a certain act. If a person (or animal for that matter) is harmed in the process, I personally classify an act as violence. By contrast, the determining factor for many of my white South African friends and interview partners seemed to be not the action itself, but the actor. A crime committed by a black man is a lot more likely to be classified as an act of violence than one committed by a white person. And a non-criminal act that does physical or psychological harm to another person is a lot less likely to be seen as violence if it is committed by a white person than if the perpetrator is black. These are preliminary findings only, that could certainly be refuted by further research, but all factors that I tested point towards this definition being applied more or less across the board.

In my opinion this is the result of a particular social stereotype among white South Africans, which led to them conceptualising violence along racial lines. Martin Schönteich, a senior researcher at the ISS in Pretoria, hinted at this when he told me:

[1425] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 18th May 2002
[1426] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 18th May 2002
[1427] Answer in a street survey in Durban, 14th April 2002
[1428] Thornton (2002: 50)

> "Until '97 there was a belief that hijackings were committed purely by blacks against whites, until the ISS Victims of Crime Survey in '97 proved that you're just as likely if not more to be hijacked in Soweto as in Sandton. Hijackings symbolise white middle class fear – recently replaced by rape during burglary." [1429]

In order to explain my theory I must go on a brief excursion detailing some previous research on the nature and functioning of stereotypes. According to Snyder the basic function of stereotypes is to render the flow of cognitive input predictable and manageable thus enabling the individual to live in a social world. Stereotypes are important in our interaction with others, because it is they, rather than specific situational cues, that tend to guide our behaviour. Life would be unmanageable if we had to go looking for new input in every individual situation. However, if such simplification is taken to the extreme, or if negative values are attached to a category, stereotypes can easily have the opposite effect of making the coexistence of different groups increasingly difficult. Let me explain. Social stereotypes work by categorising people on the basis of highly visible characteristics, such as gender or race, and assigning each of these groups a number of attributes. Once established, these mental models take on a dynamic of their own and individual members of the target group will generally no longer be able to change them, because the way stereotypes work in people's minds perpetuates their unaltered existence. [1430] As Snyder explained

> "[T]here exists considerable evidence that stereotypes can and do influence information processing such that new evidence that confirms these stereotypes is more easily noticed, more easily stored in memory, and more easily brought to mind than is disconfirming evidence." [1431]

Thus, stereotypes do not merely influence our perception of other people, but actually guide the individual's experiences and memories in such a way as to emphasise facts that confirm them while filtering out those that refute them. Dissimilar behaviour among members of a group is less readily noticed and more easily forgotten, and so are similarities among people who are not seen as belonging to a common group. However, stereotypes might even make the transition to reality not via our thoughts, but through our actions. When dealing with people of a group other than our own, there is a risk that we influence their behaviour in such a way that confirms our stereotypes. For example, if we expect a person to be friendly due to group membership, we will frequently be more friendly towards them too, thus eliciting a friendly response. [1432]

[1429] Interview with the author, 23rd July 2002
[1430] Altheide (1976: 11), Fowler (1991: 92), Retief (2002: 193 and 198), Hamilton (1976: 83) and Snyder (1981: 183)
[1431] Snyder (1981: 192)
[1432] Hamilton (1976: 89), Chibnall (1977: 206-297), Wilder (1981: 218-220) and Snyder (1981: 191-193)

However, in relation to stereotypes causality is generally not attributed to individuals' behaviour, but to group properties. If people act in a way that our stereotypes lead us to expect, such behaviour is generally used as a confirmation of the validity of the stereotypes, and the group membership is frequently identified as the cause for the individual's actions. The question whether their membership in the perceived group is in fact the reason for their behaviour is normally not asked. [1433]

When dealing with negative stereotypes, there is the added problem that they generally heighten emotional arousal (fear, anger, embarrassment and the like) when we are confronted with them in real-life situations. And, as Wilder has found, aroused people tend to oversimplify their social environment by relying increasingly on groups-based stereotypes while ignoring individual variations among the people around them. [1434]

The Role of the Media in Constructing Violence

If we apply this theory to the case of South Africa, my white interview partners' statements no longer seem paradoxical. Throughout the past three decades, the media, which, as we have established, served as their main source of information about violence, have slowly built a powerful stereotypical image of violence as an illegal act and as more or less a black phenomenon. Although during the crucial years of 1976 to 1994, the newspapers concentrated mostly on political violence, and often pointed out the security forces' involvement, the underlying imagery showed violence as something that is criminal in motivation and is mostly perpetrated by young black men. Moreover, the extensive use of the mob as a symbol of violence soon made any larger group of blacks seem like a potential threat. [1435]

Their fear was further enhanced by the fact that white violence and 'legal police killings' had been continuously de-emphasised by the press and were largely lexicalised in non-violent terms such as 'strength', 'force' or 'maintaining order'. Violence was thus always portrayed as a black phenomenon and all violent blacks as criminals. The impression soon emerged that all violence was in fact criminal and that violent crime was exclusively the domain of the black population. [1436]

Some people I spoke with approached the media messages with the necessary critical attitude to understand that many of them were merely visibly symptoms of an underlying racist attitude. A couple that I interviewed in Cape Town, for example, told me:

[1433] Retief (2002: 194), Hamilton (1976: 85-86) and Wilder (1981: 219-221)
[1434] Wilder (1981: 238-239)
[1435] Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 2) and TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 3, Para 66
[1436] TRC Report, Vol 2, Chap 3, Para 66

> "[Him] You know, there's still a lot of racism. For example the other day the post
> office here was robbed. "And it was a <u>white</u> guy," people would say. As if it matters.
> But in the media all criminals are black … [Her] and all victims are white." [1437]

However, such balanced views and rare, especially when it came to talking about violence.
Most people I spoke with conceptualised violence purely in terms of racial difference and
'law and order', and showed no great interest in broadening their horizons. They share the
outdated and inaccurate view of crime and violence expressed in *The Citizen* story quoted
above and readily take-up the ideas provided by the press. A lady in Cape Town told me:
"When you read all this [pointing at an article in that day's *Cape Argus* about gang violence
on the Cape Flats], it really pisses me off." [1438] When I questioned if she was really sure that
the newspaper reports could be taken at face value her very enlightening answer was: "The
media report truthfully. The reporters are mainly black." [1439]

Such views were further reinforced by the newspapers' choice of stories. The cases that
received most attention during the first few years were incidents of public violence in the
townships. After the end of apartheid, attention shifted to crimes where the perpetrator could
be shown to have maliciously intruded a white victim's home or car. Violence was something
that originated in the streets of the townships during the 1950s to 80s and from there spread to
the white suburbs during the 1990s because it was no longer contained by the police.

As Jeremy Gordin put it: "It is a 'See, they took over and now it's a mess'-type thing." [1440]

And a man in Bloemfontein agreed: "Since our friends, the Grunewalds have taken over
everything has gone bad." [1441] So did a lady in Cape Town. While we were talking about the
government, she told me: "The reason South Africa is getting worse is because there are no
whites telling them what to do." [1442]

And 'bad' and 'worse' to them did not just mean disorderly; it meant dangerous. Indeed, the
majority of white South Africans I spoke with saw groups of young black strangers as a
menace. And while they were only rarely associated with sticks and stones, the old imagery
still re-appeared every once in a while. A woman in Cape Town for example complained
fairly early in our conversation that street violence was a big problem in her city:

> "Taxi drivers take big part. It's been going on for five to seven years. Some are
> controlled by Blacks, some by Coloureds, some by Muslims. They stone and burn
> busses. They terrorise people on busses and trains." [1443]

[1437] Married couple in their late 40s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 18th May 2002
[1438] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002
[1439] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002
[1440] Interview with the author, 31st July 2002
[1441] Conversation with the author in Bloemfontein, 2nd July 2002
[1442] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1443] Woman in her 40s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 19th May 2002

And another told me: "We are a violent society." Then she paused for a while before she added: "But the crowds are getting less." [1444]

And this points towards the last important factor in defining violence: Even though so-called 'black-on-black' incidents and, more recently, domestic violence and rape among blacks received ample coverage, they did so with a focus on the perpetrators. Victim-centred reporting was generally reserved for black violence against whites. Therefore, once again, white readers were presented with a scenario where they could identify with the victim and clearly saw the perpetrator as their enemy. Such messages fit with white South Africans' general worldview and were therefore readily accepted as the way things are. They became real in people's eyes.

Indeed, most white South Africans have internalised this view of violence to the point where they are unable to see violent acts that do not fit this template. Just as they did not see the cruelty of apartheid, they are unable to understand the real nature of the violence in South Africa because no one has provided them with a repertoire of mental and linguistic concepts with which to grasp it. Their primary source of information consistently defined violence as being criminal acts perpetrated by black strangers and most people soon accepted this view as the only possible definition of violence.

With this in mind, we can now understand why a white South African woman who accepted the stereotype of young black males as sexual predators that are generally active in groups and chose public places for their crimes, will react with fear when she is confronted with a group of young black men, instead of going into the new situation with an open mind and seeing what it will bring. Furthermore, her stereotypes will lead her to interpret a greeting or a move towards her as a stereotype-confirming threat, while filtering out stereotype-disconfirming evidence, such as the fact that she was not raped. At the same time, if she signals her fear to the men, they might for various reasons, such as opportunism or humour, actually make a pass at her. In any case, what she will remember a day later will generally be the fact that she felt threatened in the presence of black men.

If, on the other hand, the same woman is beaten by her husband, there are two forces working against her remembering the experience in terms of violence. The first is the fact that from the perspective of white women, white men are not a distinctively defined social group. On the contrary, they are perceived as members of the in-group and are as such judged to be non-violent. The second is that violence is predefined in their heads as public acts committed by blacks. Accordingly, what is happening to them at home does not fit the stereotype of

---

[1444] Married couple in their late 40s in an interview with the author in Cape Town, 18th May 2002

violence and is most likely to be explained in other terms, such as authority, anger or desperation.

The same rationale works to explain a number of white views about violence. One man I spoke with for example recalled an incident at the University of the Witwatersrand during the 1980s where a group of black students had supposedly burnt the library. He was convinced that they had done this purely because they were black and therefore had no understanding of the value of education, but a lot of desire for destruction. And he readily admitted that the fact that it had happened also led him to expect nothing else from blacks in the future. What he did not notice, however, was that by no means all black students engaged in acts of sabotage against white universities. Neither did he question what might have motivated this particular incident, other than the race of the perpetrators. [1445]

The incident, if it took place as he reported, could just as readily be explained in terms of 'the struggle'. Dennis Pather explained:

> "If you, if you burnt what was symbolically, sort of in your eyes, things that represented wealth and that was white wealth, that was a sort of victory for you as a black person. And so you thought to burn buildings and burn cars. It's, it's just something that I remember from that era. That not being able to match the military might of apartheid, any destruction of what white privilege protected, you, you wished to destroy. And I mean kids burnt down, they destroyed their own schools. And some people say: "How can children destroy what was important to their own lives?" But when you look at it from their point of view, that was, I mean, it was certainly nothing compared to what white education represented. So it, it meant, it represented all that was evil in education. It represented Bantu Education, so-called Bantu Education and so it needed to be destroyed." [1446]

Suddenly, what the white man, using his conceptual system, had interpreted as an act of violence, in Mr. Pather's words turned into an intellectual struggle. It was still an act of destruction, but one that had a positive value attached to it. A bit like a young bird has to break the eggshell when it hatches because it limits its freedom to see the world with its own eyes, the kids felt they had to destroy the education system that was designed to blind them.

Similarly, we can now explain why whites saw the theft of their cars as acts of violence against them. It fitted the pattern of violence as understood using the rationale of the 'total onslaught'. Blacks were coming out of the townships, intruding the world of middle class whites, destroying things that were dear to them, and in one violent instant taking away what they had earned through hard work. My own interpretation of car theft is different as I come

---

[1445] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004
[1446] Interview with the author, 11th April 2002

from a different background and conceptualise things differently. Accordingly, when my car was stolen I went through a whole range of different emotions. I did not feel violated and I did not think that anyone had invaded my private sphere. I was insured so I had not lost anything but time and I had no qualms about using public transport while my car was fixed. So what did I feel? At first not a lot I must admit. It was a kind of 'oops' when the police told us about it, but being as the car had been recovered already, there was no anger or despair.

I became a little more emotional later on when it came to inspecting the car. As I mentioned above, I found the invitation to Mr. Pelem's funeral in my glove box. His young face looking at me silently from the crinkled bit of paper, the poem on the back titled "Goodbye", the writing in a language I could not understand, all that aroused a deep sadness in me. I cried, I cried in the police pound – not for my car or my loss, but for the people who had to break the law in order to pay their last respect to a friend. "I would have driven them myself, given them money for the bus, gone to the funeral with them," I sobbed, "anything to prevent them from becoming criminals." Evidently, I did not take the thieves to be members of an out-group who had attacked me. I did not experience violence against me. I interpreted the incident as history having failed all of us. We were in the same boat, we had all been prevented by the reality in South Africa from working together, jointly solving a problem and in the process making the country a better place for everyone. And out of this feeling of closeness and imagined solidarity, I did something that would probably be condemned by any white South African who feels that crime is a matter of law enforcement rather than social psychology; I did not report my find to the police in order to protect whomever had been kind enough to provide me with such powerful insight into my own conceptual world.

In my opinion, these examples show that experience is determined by culture, that is, that cultural assumptions and values are not something we can place upon experience. They are part and parcel of it and as such cannot be filtered out by those who make the experience. This is why one and the same situation can be experienced differently by people of different cultural backgrounds. [1447] In our case, things that are classified as violence in South African culture are perceived as such by members of the South African public, even if I or other outsiders would classify them differently, while things that I might perceive as violence are not experienced as such by a South African.

The Link Between News and Views

If we now look back again at what things South Africans mentioned when I talked to them about violence and what they did not bring up, we can see clear parallels between the image

---

[1447] Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 57 and 146)

of violence that has been cumulatively constructed in the press over the years: Violence was generally associated with young black men who are active in groups and who seek whites as their primary targets. Moreover, most people seemed to believe that violence most commonly occurs among strangers. Car hijackings and robbery were listed disproportionately more often as 'acts of violence' than, for example, domestic violence, which was at times not even seen as a form of violence. Violence was seen as criminal, and a large number of people were convinced it had a racial component. For example, while they believed that blacks hijacked cars out of a general criminal inclination, they also thought that the hijackers made a conscious choice to target white drivers. Thus, violence was not only closely associated with the black out-group, but also seen as something that was intruding into the white in-group's world, an invasion that was only possible because South Africa now had a government that was incapable of ruling properly and secretly supported blacks who took revenge against whites.

Even more striking than this overall image is my list of the individual acts that were brought-up in connection with violence during interviews and conversations, both in answer to my questions and unprompted. It reads almost like page two of *The Star* on an ordinary day: By far the most common were robberies and murder with six references each. Second place on the attention scale went to assault and car hijackings with each being mentioned four times. A close third were rapes and farm attacks (black against white) with three hits each. Then came a number of acts and concepts that were all referred to twice: police violence, street children, domestic violence, burglary, car break-ins, muti murders, and burglaries. The tail end went to a number of more specific concepts that were only mentioned once and could be subsumed under some of the terms above, but I chose to keep them separate to maintain as precise an image as possible: informal courts in the townships sentencing people to death, white farmers assaulting black workers, stoning and burning busses, mugging, gang violence, crowd violence, stabbing, bombings, and shootings.

This list closely reflects the findings of the ISS 2003 National Victim Survey. In fact, of the survey's top six crimes that South Africans are most afraid of, five are the same as my top five: 25% of respondents (of all population groups) said they worry most about murder, 23% cited burglary, 18% sexual assault, 13% robbery, 5% assault and 4% car hijacking. [1448] The main difference is the positioning of burglaries. I personally feel that this is not a matter of different priorities, though, but should be explained with the difference in the questioning. The ISS asked about 'crime' while I was specifically concerned with 'violence'. Some of my

---

[1448] ISS (2004: 2)

interview partners might therefore have refrained from mentioning non-violent house break-ins that they had experienced or heard of.

If we compare this list to the official police statistics, it becomes quite obvious that people's concern is not with those crimes that are most common (see fig. 83). The police statistics for 2001 show that murder and common robbery at 47.5 and 222.0 cases per 100,000 of the population respectively are far from being the most common violent crimes in South Africa. Of the crimes mentioned by people, the three most common ones are in fact burglary at residential premises (680.5 per 100,000), assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (597.7 per 100,000) and common assault (575.8 per 100,000), closely followed by theft out of, or from, motor vehicle (454.0 per 100,000), although the latter includes all theft not only that after break-ins. The middle of the field was occupied by rape (122.3 per 100,000), burglary at non-residential premises (203.3 per 100,000), and theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles (221.0 per 100,000). Carjacking is way down the list at 34.3 per 100,000 and farm attacks, including attacks on black farm workers, but not including assault perpetrated by farmers stand at a mere 2.3 per 100,000. [1449]

Domestic violence and police brutality were not listed separately in the statistics. Nor were any of the more specialised forms of violence, such as stabbings or informal township courts. These statistics should be looked at with scepticism, but they do indicate trends. And those trends are not the same as those experienced by my interview partners – neither with respect to the total quantity of crime (it is stable or falling while people mostly feel that it is increasing [1450]) nor to what crimes are most common in South Africa.

In order to find out if they more closely resemble the newspapers' reporting, I randomly chose three issues of *The Star* (23rd April 2002, 18th July 2002 and 4th November 2002) and counted all reported incidents of violence and crime that had been listed as violence by South Africans. The newspapers' priorities are slightly different than both the crime statistics and people's views. The most commonly reported crime was by far murder, with eleven cases mentioned. Number two was rape with four references (six if we include two reports about sexual assault against boys, which the newspaper did not classify as 'rapes'). Car hijackings, robbery and burglaries were each brought-up twice and bombings, right wing hit squads, rioting, car theft and assault were reported once.

[1449] All figures except farm attacks from SAPS (2003 b), the figure for farm attacks is my own calculation using the number of attacks given in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks (2003: 418) and the population count in The Government of South Africa (2002: 1)

[1450] ISS (2004: 2)

Crime in order of frequency	Cases per 100,000	No. of references in interviews (+ ranking)	No. of references in newspapers (+ ranking)
Burglary at residential premises	680.5	2 (4)	1 (3)
Assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	597.7	- 2 if stabbing & shooting included (5)	-
Common assault	575.8	4 (2)	1 (4)
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	454.0	2 (4)	-
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	268.1	Not applicable [1451]	1 (4)
Common robbery	222.0	6 (1)	1 (4)
Theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles	221.0	-	1 (4)
Burglary at non-residential premises	203.3	-	1 (4)
Rape	122.3	3 (3)	4 (6 including 'sexual assault') (2)
Murder	47.5	6 (1)	11 (1)
Carjacking	34.3	4 (2)	2 (3)
Farm attacks	2.3	3 (3)	-
Riot	1.8 (public violence)	2 if crowd violence & stoning busses included (5)	1 (4)
Bombings	n/a (0.2 [1452])	1 (5)	1 (4)

Figure 83: Crimes of violence in South Africa: the police's view, the public's view and the newspaper's view (Colour coding: Green: Public opinion close to media opinion; Yellow: Public opinion close to police statistics; Red: Public opinion seemingly independent; blue: all three similar)

The table in figure 83, which is the result of this final triangulation, shows that the case for an agenda-setting function of the media is anything but clear-cut. On some issues, such as murder and rape, there is a remarkable agreement between the press and the public and little resemblance between those two and the police statistics. In other cases, though, public opinion is much closer to the statistics than to the news (for example with regards to assault) and in yet another group of cases, such as farm attacks, it seems to have its own dynamic.

However, in my opinion these findings do not refute my theory of some form of media influence on thought. Instead, I believe they point towards a version of the theory advanced by MacKuen & Coombs. In areas where people have little personal experiences (murder or rape) the media exert a stronger influence over their opinions than in those cases where people have witnessed violence directly or have themselves been victimised (such as assault). [1453]

[1451] Generally no specifics of the circumstances of the robberies were given, either in personal accounts or in examples, so I cannot judge which category my answers fall in. However, if we combine the statistics into one big meta-category of 'robbery' they come close to reflecting public opinion.
[1452] Figure for the Period January to September 2001 from SAPS (2001 b: 1)
[1453] MacKuen & Coombs (1981: 59-101)

I believe that my study has also exposed a phenomenon that MacKuen & Coombs have not addressed in their work: that of ideology. If we look at the incidents that are marked red, that is, those where public opinion seems to be independent of the newspapers and the statistics, we will find that the ones that were mentioned (as opposed to the ones that are marked red because no reference was made to them) – car break-ins, carjackings and 'farm attacks' – are all highly ideologically charged categories. At one point or another in the history of South African news reporting all three of these received ample attention in relation to black violence. In my opinion they, along with others such as rape and robbery, form a meta-category of 'swart gevaar' in people's heads, which more closely resembles the newspaper reporting over the past decades than the reality during that time.

This becomes particularly clear when we consider what is missing from the newspaper articles and my conversations and interviews with South Africans. The most striking is probably the complete absence of all forms of state violence committed by the apartheid regime from the personal accounts of my interview partners. A few people made reference to the ANC's 'ungovernability' campaign, the comrades, or the people's courts as reasons for today's high levels of violence, but not a single person mentioned the oppressive system of apartheid. It was as if to them the torture, the deaths in detention, the hit squads, and the many massacres of protesters by heavily armed policemen had just not happened.

The newspapers did mention them every once in a while, for example when Wouter Basson, the former head of South Africa's chemical and biological warfare programme, was acquitted of 64 charges, including murder. However, many of them focussed more on the trial and modern reactions to the verdict than on the gruesome crimes he had been accused of. Moreover, with a few exceptions (such as the *Mail & Guardian* and the *Sowetan*) the mainstream papers did not lexicalise his actions in quite the same terms as those of a black youngster who runs into a convenience store and shoots three clerks. Somehow his murders were different, less murderous.

Another big blank spot was right-wing violence. Several people again talked of racially motivated attacks by blacks, a term that often included the infamous 'farm attacks', but not a single one raised racist violence against black people, such as the beating of black farm workers by their employers. I am sure the results of my study would have been slightly different if I had interviewed people directly after the bombings in Soweto in November 2002, but I do not think that they would in fact have changed their long-term view of right-wing violence. The newspapers fared a lot better than public opinion in this respect.

They did cover a number of smaller attacks and closely followed the trial of five rugby players accused of murdering a black teenager in early 2002. And, of course, they gave a lot of attention to the bombings in November that year. However, overall they certainly did not

reflect the gravity of the problem, nor did they analyse it critically. Neither the perpetrators not the victims were really given a voice. Rather, the papers relied on expert sources, such as politicians and scientists, to comment from the outside or just took it upon themselves to explain reality to their readers, which often led to a one-sided view.

The perspective taken by the people in our conversations also closely resembled that of the newspapers. Violence was regarded in largely an a-historical manner. It happened. It had causes and backgrounds and it had perpetrators and victims, who were, at times, even portrayed as real people with real stories, but it was not in any way related to society as a whole. Let us take for example the article from the *Sunday Times* of 9th December 2001 [1454] about the rape of a five-month-old baby that I analysed in chapter 4.6.4 b. The newspaper gives a detailed account not only of the event, but also of the surrounding circumstances and the socio-economic background of the child's mother. It even puts thing into perspective by explaining the wider phenomenon of child rape:

> "In almost all the incidents of infant rape that have hit the headlines recently, the profile of the mothers is the same: poor, largely uneducated and single. Their ages range from late teens to early 20s. They are usually unemployed.
>
> The perpetrators, too, fit a profile: unemployed, young and known to the mothers." [1455]

And finally the government is attacked for its poor social policies. What the paper does not do is go into the question of why these young people are poor, uneducated and single. It does not explore how a mixture of apartheid policies, the anti-apartheid struggle's disregard for education as well as the lack of opportunities today and the ease of access to drugs and alcohol have had an impact on these people's lives. Neither is the role of sex discussed. It obviously plays a role though, otherwise there would not be any young women with children and young men waiting to rape those children. The role of sex in culture could be addressed in both contexts.

Similarly, white South Africans talked as if crime was a problem of the here and now. They mentioned individual acts they had heard of or encountered and at times offered present-day explanations, such as poverty causes violence. The historical perspective of how violence was cultivated throughout all sectors of the population, independent of skin colour, social class or gender, is generally absent.

[1454] Sunday Times (9th December 2001 b: 15)
[1455] Sunday Times (9th December 2001 b: 15)

6.   Conclusion

Have I in fact managed to prove that the newspapers have influenced South Africans' ideas through their reporting on violence? It is true that I found little evidence that South Africans' views about the violence in their country are directly shaped by the newspapers. Neither have any other scholars before me been able to prove such a simple, stimulus-response-type link. However, I think I have shown that the press do structure and limit people's interpretive frameworks. In my opinion, I have provided ample proof that the English language press not only helped to define what was seen as violence and what was not, but also provided the language to describe the individual incidents and thus constructed the point(s) of view from which the public interpreted them. At times the newspapers' reporting may even have influenced some people's behaviour towards their fellow South Africans. In short, mediated meanings are important for structuring the way they see the world – even the world of experience.

There are sure to be people who will never be convinced of such direct media influence, partly because proving its existence always involves a certain number of presuppositions. I want to remind these doubters that this alone does not mean that they cannot be scientifically investigated. As van Dijk has pointed out:

> "No 'facts' in the social sciences are being proven beyond any reasonable doubt, and we always work with more or less plausible assumptions, consensus, and (for quantitative studies) statistically more or less significant outcomes. So, by selecting a problem for study, we do so on the basis of incontrovertible 'facts' as the consensus of people or scholars define them." [1456]

As I said in the introduction, my work is based on the 'fact', established by anthropologists and linguists like Franz Boas, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, that people do not live in an objective world independent of perception, but lead their lives according to the pictures in their heads. They live in a world of ideas.

The next important 'fact' that guided my work was that ideas are not innate. People are not born with a worldview; it is acquired during the process of socialisation. Adults in any culture teach their children what is real and what is not, what is right and what is wrong, how to make sense of the world around them and how to evaluate their experiences. The outcome will be different from culture to culture and from language group to language group. English children, for example, can and will learn about the concept of 'God' because their language permits them to; and if their parents are believing Christians they will generally accept that God is

---

[1456] Private correspondence with the author

real. Similarly, if a South African English speaker is provided with a concept like 'black-on-black violence' by his/her language/culture, they will seem real to them. [1457]

The process of learning does not stop at the end of childhood. People acquire new knowledge throughout their lives and often change their ideas accordingly. The next question therefore is where this new input comes from. Experience certainly plays an important part in this learning process. However, as we have seen, very few white South Africans have actually experienced violence, let alone been the victims of black assailants. The education system, organised religion, and everyday interaction with friends, family members and co-workers are all important sources of information and shapers of ideas for the majority of South African English speakers. [1458] However, we should not forget that, due to the continued racial and class-based segregation of everyday life, the people they come in contact with are generally from the same background as them, so that they are not likely to have experienced violence either. They do not create information, they merely relay it.

What I wanted to discover was the primary source and I believe that I have found it in the media. It is true that the media is not 'pure' information either, but rather constructs a world in language, much like anyone else telling a story. However, its importance to the creation of social reality goes beyond that of a town crier. For one, media discourse is not only all-pervasive in modern society, but has in fact become one of the pillars that our way of life rests on. And secondly, despite many people expressing minor reservations towards the information they receive from the media (along the lines of 'How can they be so sure that something happened, I've never seen it?'), they generally place a great deal of trust in the fact that what the overall picture of the world that they are presented with is as realistic as it gets. Due to these two factors, and because of the fact that the majority of white readers of the English language press either lack access to alternative definitions of the situation in their country or reject the alternatives they do know of because they seem inconsistent with their worldview or their own best interest, they will generally accept the definitions presented in the press as self-evident.

Interestingly enough, South African journalists and media experts themselves are divided on this issue. A number of editors and former editors clearly disagreed with my assertion that their newspapers did or do influence the way white South Africans see their country. Others could not have agreed more. I should point out that, among journalists, a fairly clear pattern of opinion soon emerged. Those who subscribed to the British-style libertarian view of the media as having a duty to report objectively (incidentally, all older white men) tended to be opposed

---

[1457] Rauch (1993: 2), Grace (1987: 1-2 and 120-121) and Searle (1995: 1-2)
[1458] John Jansen, Deputy Director of Pollsmoor Prison, in an interview with the author, 19th June 2002, Robertshaw et al. (2001 c: 1), de Gruchy (1997:160-161) and Altheide (1997: 654)

to notions of media influence. Johann de Villiers and Gerald Shaw for example voiced a certain degree of scepticism towards my ideas. Mr. Shaw told me: "We always found over many years that leading articles, that the opinion or the comment of the newspaper has very little … influence." [1459]

Proponents of advocacy journalism (especially black journalists who had worked in the mainstream press during the apartheid years) and more cynical observers of the media, on the other hand, were convinced that the media have an important influence on how the public views the world around them. Among others, Dennis Pather, Mike Tissong, Pallo Jordan, and Jeremy Gordin all told me that they believed that the media could and did influence the way white people think of their country. When I asked him if he thought that the media had an influence on white South Africans' views of their country, Tony Ehrenreich, the Provincial Secretary of COSATU, told me:

> "Absolutely, white and black. The media absolutely shapes people's perceptions. It's a powerful medium the radio, the TV, the newspapers. People don't get any other views." [1460]

Several South African social scientists and media scholars also share this view. [1461] Martin Schönteich of the ISS told me: "[W]hite middle class fear (…) is certainly reinforced by the media." [1462] Even the TRC in its final report stated that "the South African media played a crucial role in helping reflect and mould public opinion during the years under review" [1463] And Shaw, in his study of violence in South Africa, pointed out:

> "It is far more likely that the public impressions of high levels of crime and poor policing are not only a result of personal experiences but also of press coverage of particular sensational cases of crime and poor police performance." [1464]

My own research has, as we have seen, confirmed Shaw's assertion that the papers' choice of subjects has influenced how South Africans define violence. Concern with particular kinds of violence has tended to grow with their portrayal in the media as a problem that is of relevance for readers' lives. During the 1970s and early 1980s, when violence was shown to be a remote form of disorder in the townships, people did not worry too much about it.

Attention to, and fear of, violence increased during the 1980s as President Botha's propaganda machinery painted an ever-clearer picture of the 'rooi gevaar', even while the

---

[1459] Interview with the author, 22nd May 2002
[1460] Interview with the author, 10th June 2002
[1461] See for example Camerer & Louw (1998: 1), Shaw & Louw (1998 b: 1), Friedman (2001: 2) and Shaw (2002: 85)
For non-South African scholars of diverse backgrounds who see the media as an important source of beliefs and opinions see Hall et al. (1978: 29-30), Wodak (2002: 7-8), Chomsky (1989: 148-149), Glasgow Media Group (1976: 344-345), McCombs & Gilbert (1986: 3), van Dijk (1998: 31), van Dijk (1994: 17-18) and Altheide (1991: 1)
[1462] Interview with the author, 23rd July 2002
[1463] TRC Report, Vol 4, Chap 6, Para 1
[1464] Shaw (2002: 85)

total amounts of newspaper reports on unrest declined. After the bombing of the air force headquarters in Pretoria on 20th May 1983, the *Weekend Argus* for example dedicated an entire page to the 'red peril'. At the top stood a box titled "A dossier of terror in SA" [1465] which listed all bombings since April 1982. Underneath was a fairly long article about "Red threat stepped up" [1466], and beneath that we could read: "Communists behind attack" [1467].

Such reporting, along with the general anti-communist campaign in the broadcast media, political speeches, the schools, the military and the police, seems to have had a visible effect on the South African public's worldview. In a 1982 opinion survey a frightening 80% of whites said that communism, not black discontent, was the greatest threat to South Africa's future. [1468] One of the people I spoke to confirmed: "You don't understand. The police, they were having a tough time in the townships. They could not let communism take over or else everything would have gone down the drain." [1469] Even Tony Heard admitted that when he met Oliver Tambo in 1985

> "I was honestly surprised. Because I thought he might be a bit more bloodthirsty sounding. 'Cause he'd been demonised in South Africa as a bloodthirsty communist and all that. You know, we were all influenced by propaganda. And I was actually surprised at this rather gentlemanly guy with black shoes, dark suit and saying the most wondrous things about calling for a climate of peace in South Africa." [1470]

The sudden freeing of the press and the subsequent explosion of violence onto the front pages of every newspaper went hand in hand with an ever-growing fear among the white population. This, however, is where the predictability ends. According to MacKuen & Coombs' model, one would have expected concern for violence to fall in the new millennium as the media grew tired of violence and shifted their interest to other topics. This was not the case, though. Fear of violence grew significantly in the past years. According to the ISS 2003 National Victim Survey results

> "significantly less South Africans feel safe in 2003 than they did in 1998. In 1998, 60% said they felt very safe walking in the areas where they live during the day; this figure dropped to only 25% in 2003. At night, only 25% said they feel very unsafe in 1998 compared to 58% in 2003. These views differ markedly by race, with a minority of Indians (11%) and whites (35%) feeling very safe during the day, compared to a majority of coloureds (62%) and blacks (64%)." [1471]

[1465] Weekend Argus (21st May 1983 a: 3)
[1466] Weekend Argus (21st May 1983 b: 3)
[1467] Weekend Argus (21st May 1983 c: 3)
[1468] Sparks (1999: 80)
[1469] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004
[1470] Interview with the author, 17th May 2002
[1471] ISS (2004: 2)

This suggests that the newspapers do more than inform readers about the world. They create reality; make history so to speak. By defining certain aspects of reality as distinct events, they bring them to people's attention. If the readers trust a newspaper to portray the world truthfully, then the events described will be real to them, regardless of what others around them might see as facts. Furthermore, newspapers also have the power to change the meaning and the significance of events, for example by highlighting certain aspects or by retrospectively connecting them with other events (or, in fact, by disconnecting them from their context). [1472]

However, as Fairclough has pointed out, "the discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people's heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material, social structures" [1473]. The new knowledge people derive from the newspapers is tested against a stock of pre-existing ideas and interpreted, changed, or rejected in accordance with them. [1474]

Thus, if we take the example of what happened in South Africa after 16th June 1976, and look at how the media contributed to the creation of the event, we will find that its influence was substantial, but it was always in line with their readers' worldview. The newspapers defined the violence as a distinct event, namely as a riot. This way, it acquired an air of completeness, a beginning and an end, and equally importantly, it was characterised as an incident of a certain type of violence, which made it perceivable as one in a series. This, however, is not the only way that things could be seen. They could, for example, have been defined either as an ongoing conflict between an oppressive regime and the subjugated population, which had started decades earlier, or as a shooting followed by a number of acts of sabotage. This would have given the events an entirely different character, a change, which most likely would have influenced people's perception of them.

The media owe this power to define reality partly to their use of language. It contributes to the construction, transformation and reproduction of knowledge and belief. Language does not merely refer to the world, but creates it by giving meaning to it. Things are given shape and assigned meaning by language. It creates identities, relations and concepts in individual language users' minds. Our experiences and the meanings we assign to them are thus constructed out of the repertoire offered by our individual language. Our subjective world is what Hartley has called "language-potential realized in use" [1475]. [1476]

[1472] Tuchman (1978: 4 and 184), Altheide (1979: 243), Lang & Lang (1981: 671) and Schulz (1976: 28)
[1473] Fairclough (1992 a: 66)
[1474] Bignell (1997: 105), Hartley (1982: 139), Altheide (1997: 650) and Fairclough (1992 a: 66)
[1475] Hartley (1982: 140)
[1476] Whorf (1956 (1940): 212-213), Altheide (1985: 158), Fairclough (1992 a: 64) and Grace (1987: 120)

For example, while the extra-linguistic reality that the ANC had taken-up arms against the apartheid state is undisputed in the South African media, the value given to this struggle is not. The labelling of opponents of apartheid variously as 'terrorists', 'guerrillas' or 'fighters for democracy' constituted them as different social subjects. And while the labels were not created by the newspapers, they were readily taken up in the media discourse of the day, and through their repeated use were given an air of absolute reality. Thus by presenting something as a historic reality, the media were in fact writing history. [1477]

This becomes particularly obvious when we closely scrutinise publications about violence in South Africa, such as the ones quoted in the present dissertation. At first sight they seem to be quite ordinary scientific works that adhere to the principle of objectivity as far as this is possible to any human researcher, and are based on empirical findings and verifiable facts. A look at their literature lists, however, soon reveals clear indications of the media influencing even science. When facts are stated they often come from newspaper reports, especially when crime statistics and other numerical information is involved. [1478] Quotes by government representatives and other authoritative persons are also often taken directly from newspaper articles. [1479] This was especially true during the apartheid years, because, due to the limited reliability of official accounts, monitoring groups such as the Human Rights Commission and the South African Institute for Race Relations frequently had to make use of newspaper reports in their efforts to estimate the extent of the ongoing violence in South Africa. Their publications then in turn became the source of much scientific work and subsequent media output, a fact that highlights the intertextuality of every newspaper article. [1480]

By pointing this out I neither intend to criticise the practice nor do I doubt the quality of such work. I myself have made use of media sources for the factual parts of this dissertation. What I want to do is expose the pervasiveness of media messages in our modern world. In this respect it is not so much what the media say that is of importance, but how they say it. The way they structure the facts reported is frequently accepted as 'the way things really are' by society. For example, President Botha's speech in 1985 became known as the 'Rubicon' speech after the media had given it this name. In fact the whole speech is largely a media creation. Beforehand, the media hailed it as the beginning of a new era and afterwards, they redefined it as a turning point at which the country did not turn. Most people had no alternative but to believe what they were told because they were not there when the president spoke. Instead they heard his words on television or the radio and read about it in the press.

[1477] Hall et al. (1978: 58-59), Altheide (1979: 243) and Chibnall (1977: 12)

[1478] See for example Johnston in Gutteridge & Spence (1996: 102-103), Haysom (1989 b: 193), Marks & Andersson in Manganyi & du Toit (1990: 29), Theissen (1992: 38-40) and Jackson (1993: 27)

[1479] See for example Nathan in Cock & Nathan (1989: 68), Cock in Hoffmann & McKendrick (1990: 45-46) and Hachten (1984: 77)

[1480] Johnston (1996: 82-83)

And they seem to have accepted the media's definition of the event. No one questioned if South Africa had really reached the proverbial Rubicon and Botha had ever intended to cross it. Thanks to the international media, 1985 still represents a missed opportunity in the history of South Africa. [1481]

In my opinion it would be naïve to think that the press does not influence people's attitudes and behaviour towards the world in any way. People react to new information, and in many cases they have no other way of obtaining it than through the media. This does not mean that I support the old 'hypodermic needle' view, nor that media influence is simply a matter of cause and effect. However, as many scholars before me have pointed out, if the new information presented fits with people's existing ideas, it is very likely to be given a place in their view of the world.

This has been shown time and again to be true in South Africa. In their analysis of the relationship between 'People's Courts' and necklacings, Schärf & Ngcokoto state that, in order to discredit the alternative structures of government in the townships during the 1980s, "the state has attempted to have the two terms (necklacing and people's courts) understood as virtual synonyms" [1482] – an assertion that echoes the findings of Simpson & Vogelman [1483] – and conclude that "considering the official monopoly over legal news and analyses on the subject it has probably succeeded in persuading a considerate proportion of the gullible public of this connection." [1484] I found evidence in literature [1485] and during my interviews that confirms this view. One young man I spoke with for example used "the comrades with their kangaroo courts that terrorise the township population" [1486] by instilling fear through setting examples (he mentioned the forced feeding of dish washing liquid and soap powder as well as necklacings as instances of commonly used punishment) as an illustration of black barbarism and the ANC's complete lack of human emotions. When questioned, he admitted that he never spoken to a comrade, nor witnessed a 'People's Court' session or a necklacing. As he said at a different point in the conversation though, him and his family had seen enough of all three in the newspapers and on television.

And his was neither the only, nor the most striking case of media reports being used as evidence to support a point of view in conversation. Some people admitted openly that they had derived their views from the media. One lady, for example told me:

[1481] Daran et al. (1986: 1-5) and Joyce (1990: 124)
[1482] Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 361)
[1483] Simpson & Vogelman (1989 b: 1)
[1484] Schärf & Ngcokoto (1990: 361)
[1485] See for example Chubb & van Dijk (1999: 133)
[1486] Conversation with the author in Prague, 8th April 2004

> "There was a series of bombs last year and the Christians gathering at Newlands prayed against it. And since then, there have been no bombings. I hadn't realised this before, but I heard it on the radio and it's true." [1487]

And not just general feelings of being influenced by the media were voiced. In conversations about violence I was repeatedly told to look at the newspapers to get a good image of the ongoing violence, even though my interview partners did not know that I was even remotely interested in the media. One man, for example, told me: "Violence is a problem. Just open a newspaper." [1488] Another man I spoke with on the Durban beachfront who had recently emigrated from South Africa and was back visiting his family explained: "Just look in the paper, violence is hereditary in South Africa." [1489] And a woman I spoke with in a small town in the Eastern Cape even admitted to placing more trust in the newspaper reports than in her own experiences. We were talking about her last visit to Johannesburg when she told me:

> "It's the papers. You read so much doom and gloom about murders and robberies and rapes, you don't really want to go out anymore. (…) I really didn't find it unpleasant, but now I appreciate what we have here." [1490]

To me, the fact that a number of people used newspaper reports to prove to me that their interpretation of reality was in fact the real one offers ample proof that they construct their opinions towards violence on the basis of this 'evidence'. Not only do the newspaper images reappear in people's ideas about violence, they are openly and consciously used as sources of information about reality.

One question remains, though. Throughout this paper I have repeatedly emphasised that the newspaper producers came largely from the same cultural background as my target group and would as such hold similar ideas about the world. Obviously, this poses the problem of finding cause and effect. Did the newspaper reports influence the people or was it in fact the other way around that popular ideas made their way into the newspapers via the minds of the journalists and editors? I believe that both are the case, that there is mutual influence between the newspapers and the public.

The long-term influence, however, is clearly from the report to the reader. The imagery used to describe violence in South Africa today has been build-up over decades. The black stranger as the prototypical perpetrator of violence that I have drawn up in the last chapter is the result of long-term ideological work. Official discourse portrayed the world as split between the good white state and the bad black opponents of the government. And, as all the big publishing houses, including its most critical members, were part of the system, as well as due

---

[1487] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 1st June 2002
[1488] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 24th May 2002
[1489] Conversation with the author in Durban, 14th April 2002
[1490] Conversation with the author in Cintsa East, 18th April 2002

to the strict censorship laws during apartheid, the English language press generally stayed within the mental framework proscribed by the government. The newspapers' description of the violence along government-set lines greatly contributed to them soon becoming the limit of the thinkable for much of the population. [1491] As an editorial that was published in *The Star* on December 19th 1986 admitted:

> "One of the most insidious features of censorship is people's tendency to become too easily habituated to it. Let alone the information-starved man in the street; even the media can start to believe that what may not be reported is no longer happening." [1492]

Thus, by choosing to report from one point of view only and by continually using the same imagery to portray the world, the newspapers provided the intellectual foundation that the status quo was built on.

This effect was further reinforced by their behaviour after the lifting of the media restrictions at the end of the state of emergency in 1990. Despite being free to report what they took to be true, the newspapers mostly stuck with the old concepts and ideas and simply increased the frequency of their use. While before, people were led to believe that their country was calm and peaceful, they now witnessed an explosion of violence, which they believed to be take place in reality as well as in the papers. They thought that the 'total onslaught' was now happening right in front of their eyes.

In the opinion of many white South Africans their country was going from a peaceful paradise to hell on earth and all because the black peril was no longer under control. During the period of political change, the imagery of wild black mobs sitting in the townships simply waiting to spread mayhem in the orderly white world was burned into the white psyche purely by their extensive use. [1493] And again there were indications that the journalists who created those images were among the first to believe them. Only eight years after the above-quoted editorial was published in *The Star*, the newspaper's then deputy editor, David Hazelhurst, explained to Catherine O'Dowd why he had published a story about a necklacing: "We were saying this is just another and another death and this is the society we have **become**." [1494] (My emphasis.)

Now that such ideas are widely accepted, they cannot be struck from public consciousness purely through the change of heart that has taken place among journalists. As van Dijk put it:

> "Once established, the ideological framework serves such fundamental functions in all cognitive and social information processing, that changes in such a framework are usually slow, difficult and only partial." [1495]

[1491] Business Day (19th September 1997: 1) Ferreira da Rosa Ribeiro (1995: Summary, p. 2) and Tomaselli et al. (1987: 24)
[1492] Quoted in Teer Tomaselli (1992: 128)
[1493] Tomaselli (1991 a: 26)
[1494] Quoted in O'Dowd (1996: 65)
[1495] van Dijk (1988 a: 147)

The recent reduction in the number of reports about violence and the change in emphasis have not helped to counter the growing fear. The images have become common sense and as such are firmly anchored in people's minds. Nowadays, many white South Africans would rather trust their decade-old beliefs, which they see as experiences, than the new media reports. One lady for example told me: "The media report only the violence they hear about. There is a lot happening that they don't tell. I think they seriously underreport." [1496]

This quote, I believe, shows quite nicely what this entire thesis has attempted to prove: The newspapers play a part in creating certain perceptions of reality and are important tools for maintaining and modifying them. These processes should, however, not be understood in the behaviouristic way that some students of media 'effects' have done. The impact of the media goes beyond simple stimulus-response models. It is a complicated, social process, not unlike that of acculturation. Rather than being a separate entity that can have an impact on an otherwise stable system from the outside, the media is part of the total cultural fact and its messages help to create this culture from within. Thus, its influence lies in it being part of the framework for people's everyday thoughts. [1497]

As such, media power / media effects is not an individual event, but a long-term process. This, in my opinion, is why previous research that has measured people's opinions before and after the consumption of certain media contents was bound to fail. The individual act of communication may well seem ineffectual if looked at in isolation. Yet over time, the underlying message, rather than the overt content, can have the power to shape people's opinions in a certain way.

I believe this has in fact been the case with regards to the reporting of violence in the English language press in South Africa. The newspapers constructed violence to mean crime perpetrated by groups of nameless, faceless young black men, a meaning that was readily found and internalised by the majority of white English speaking South Africans. After a thorough review of my material there can therefore no longer be any doubt that the South African press has, over time, influenced, or even shaped, the knowledge, beliefs, values, social identities, and social relations of white English speaking South Africans; it has been an important factor in the construction of their world.

[1496] Interview with the author in Cape Town, 22nd May 2002
[1497] Gerbner (1985: 14-15)

Appendix A: Questionnaire used in my interviews with ordinary South Africans

- Tell me a bit about yourself

Violence

- Is violence a problem in South Africa?
  If so, what kind of violence?
- Has it been getting better during the last 10 years?
- Is violence a problem in your life?
  If so, in which way?
- Have you ever experienced violence?
  If so, what kind and how?
- Do you feel at risk of becoming the victim of violence?
- Where do you see the main threat?
- Do considerations about violence influence you in your life (for example when going out, choosing a holiday destination or moving home)?
- What about domestic violence?

Race:
- What role does skin colour play in every day South African life?
- Is it an issue in your life?
- Do you have friends from other race groups? Or is this not a factor that influences your choice?
- Do you believe that there is a difference – biological or cultural – between the different racial groups in SA? (Warning, I do not mean between language groups!!)

Racism:
- Is racism a problem in South Africa?
- Has it been getting better during the last 10 years?
- Is it a problem in your life?
- Have you ever witnessed open racism?
- Have you ever experienced racism towards yourself?

Media:
- What source do you get your news from?
- Do you read newspapers?
  If so, which ones?
- What factors influence your choice?

Media and violence:
- What do you think of the media's reporting of violence? (too much, not enough, factual, sensationalistic etc.)

Appendix B: Questionnaire used in my street surveys

Violence:
- Is violence a problem in South Africa today?
- Are things better now than they were 10 years ago?
- Have you personally ever been the victim of violence?
  If so what kind?

Racism:
- Is 'race' still an issue in the country today?
- Is it in your life?
- Have you personally experienced discrimination or hostility due to your skin colour in the last 5 years?

Media:
- What source do you get your news from?
- Do you read any newspapers?
  If so, which one(s)?
- What factors influence your choice?

Appendix C: Institutions I visited during my time in South Africa

Institution	Date of Meeting	City
Cape Community Newspapers	01-03-02	Cape Town
Centre for Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal	09-04-02	Durban
The Mercury	11-04-02	Durban
Sunday Tribune	10-04-02	Durban
Independent on Saturday	11-04-02	Durban
Cape Town Supreme Court	07-05-02	Cape Town
Institute for African Studies, University of Cape Town	08-05-02	Cape Town
Department of Modern Foreign Languages, Stellenbosch University	10-05-02	Stellenbosch
Die Burger	14-05-01	Cape Town
Press office in the Office of the State President	17-05-02	Cape Town
Parliament	22-05-02 and 12-06-02	Cape Town
E-tv	29-05-02	Cape Town
Independent Online	05-06-02	Cape Town
South African Union of Journalists	10-06-02	Cape Town
Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)	10-06-02	Cape Town
The Big Issue	13-06-02	Cape Town
Pollsmoor Prison	19-06-02	Cape Town
Media Liaison Office for the Minister of Safety and Security	21-06-02	Cape Town
Volksblad	01-07-02	Bloemfontein
Democratic Alliance in the Free State	02-07-02	Bloemfontein
Centre for Citizenship Education and Conflict Handling	02-07-02	Bloemfontein
Diamond Fields Advertiser	03-07-02	Kimberly

Media Monitoring Project	11-07-02	Johannesburg
New Africa Publications Limited	16-07-02	Johannesburg
Mafube Publishing	16-07-02	Johannesburg
The Star	17-07-02	Johannesburg
Institute for the Advancement of Journalism	18-07-02	Johannesburg
Freedom of Expression Institute	18-07-02	Johannesburg
Media Tenor	18-07-02	Potchefstroom
Mail & Guardian	19-07-02	Johannesburg
Southern Africa Report	19-07-02	Johannesburg
Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation	22-07-02	Johannesburg
Department of Anthropology, University of the Witwatersrand	22-07-02	Johannesburg
Institute for Security Studies	23-07-02	Pretoria
Freedom Front	23-07-02	Pretoria
Pretoria News	24-07-02	Pretoria
Beeld	24-07-02	Johannesburg
The Citizen	25-07-02	Johannesburg
City Press	30-07-02	Johannesburg
Independent News Network	31-07-02	Johannesburg

Appendix D: People I spoke with during my time in South Africa

Name	Institution / Position	Date of meeting	Location
Rolf Annas	Department for Modern Foreign Languages, Stellenbosch University	10-05-02	Stellenbosch
Mansoor Jaffer	Deputy editor of Cape Community Newspapers	01-03-02	Cape Town
Asked to remain anonymous	Former manager of the Argus Company	13-03-02	Cape Town
Glenda Nevill	Editor of The Big Issue	13-06-02	Cape Town
Keyan Tomaselli	Director of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal, Durban	09-04-02	Durban
Ruth Teer-Tomaselli	University of Natal, Durban	09-04-02	Durban
Ryland Fisher	Former editor Cape Times	23-04-02	Cape Town
William Bird	Director of the Media Monitoring Project	11-07-02	Johannesburg
Bronwyn Harris	Researcher at the Race and Reconciliation Project at the CSVR	18-07-02	Johannesburg
Lisa Vetten	Manager of the Gender Unit at the CSVR	22-07-02	Johannesburg
Dennis Pather	Editor of The Mercury	11-04-02	Durban
Greg Dardagan	Assistant editor of The Mercury	10-04-02	Durban
Peter Davis	Editor of the Sunday Tribune	10-04-02	Durban
Debbie Reynolds	Acting editor of the Independent on Saturday	11-04-02	Durban
Cyril Madlala	Editor of UmAfrika	12-04-02	Durban
Sipho Khumalo	Political Reporter for all Independent publications	12-04-02	Durban

Cosmas Desmond	- Editor of ChildrenFIRST - PAC candidate in the 1994 elections	11-04-02	Durban
Tony Heard	- Head of the President's press office - Former editor of the Cape Times	17-05-02	Cape Town
Raymond Louw	- Former editor of the Rand Daily Mail - Editor & Publisher of Southern Africa Report	19-07-02	Johannesburg
Nick Shepherd	Senior Lecturer, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town	08-05-02	Cape Town
Justice Essa Moosa	Supreme Court Justice	07-05-02	Cape Town
Moegsin Williams	Editor of The Star	17-07-02	Johannesburg
Johann de Villiers	Senior executive editor of The Star	25-07-02	Johannesburg
Vusi Mona	Editor City Press	30-07-02	Johannesburg
André le Roux	Deputy Editor City Press	11-07-02	Johannesburg
Martin Schönteich	Senior researcher at the ISS	23-07-02	Pretoria
Robert Thornton	Head of the Anthropology Department, University of the Witwatersrand	22-07-02	Johannesburg
Willem Breytenbach	News editor of Die Burger	14-05-01	Cape Town
Henry Jeffreys	Political editor at Beeld	24-07-02	Johannesburg
Mike Tissong	Managing Director of New Africa Publications Ltd.	16-07-02	Johannesburg
Thami Mazwai	- CEO of Mafube Publishing - Former President of SANEF - Former Chairman of the Black Editors Forum	16-07-02	Johannesburg

Johann du Plessis	Deputy editor Diamond Fields Advertiser	03-07-02	Kimberly
Kevin Ritchie	Managing editor Diamond Fields Advertiser	03-07-02	Kimberly
Thabo Leshilo	Editor Pretoria News	24-07-02	Pretoria
Name unknown	Deputy Editor of Pretoria News	24-07-02	Pretoria
Pallo Jordan	- Former head of Radio Freedom - Director of the ANC'S first internal mass propaganda campaign - Former Minister for Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting	22-05-02 and 12-06-02	Cape Town
Andre Martin	Media liaison officer of Mr. Charles Nqakula, Minister for Safety and Security	21-06-02	Cape Town
Babs Abba Omar	Content Manager of IOL	05-06-02	Cape Town
Piet Uys	General Secretary of the Freedom Front	23-07-02	Pretoria
Antoinette Louw	Head of the Crime and Justice Programme at the ISS	23-07-02	Pretoria
Jeremy Gordin	Managing Editor Independent News Network	31-07-02	Johannesburg
Gary van Standen	News editor of the Citizen	25-07-02	Johannesburg
Ayesha Ismail	Senior reporter and news editor at E-tv	29-05-02	Cape Town
Gerald Shaw	Former deputy editor of the Cape Times	22-05-02	Cape Town
Willem Steenkamp	Former defence reporter at the Cape Times	12-06-02	Cape Town

Ken Owen	- Former deputy editor of the Rand Daily Mail - Former editor of the Sunday Express, Business Day and the Sunday Times	30-05-02	Cape Town
Arnold de Beer	School for Communication Studies, Potchefstroom University	18-07-02	Potchefstroom
Ronnie Morris	Western Cape Vice President of the SAUJ	10-06-02	Cape Town
Tony Ehrenreich	Western Cape Regional Secretary of COSATU	10-06-02	Cape Town
John Jansen	Deputy Director of Pollsmoor Prison	19-06-02	Cape Town
Name unknown	Head warder at Pollsmoor Prison	19-06-02	Cape Town
Name unknown	Former leader of a prison gang at Pollsmoor Prison	19-06-02	Cape Town
Gert Coetzee	In-depth reporter at Volksblad	01-07-02	Bloemfontein
Stefaans Brummer	Reporter at the Mail & Guardian	19-07-02	Johannesburg
Leon Mellet	Former director of information for internal media at the Bureau for Information	26-06-02	George
Liana van Wyk	Member of the Democratic Alliance in the Free State	02-07-02	Bloemfontein
Willem Ellis	Director of the Unit for Conflict Resolution & Mediation Programme at the Centre for Citizenship Education and Conflict Handling	02-07-02	Bloemfontein

Appendix E: Questionnaires used in my interviews with South African journalists

Questions put to journalists

Getting to know the journalist:
- Tell me a bit about yourself.
  This is meant to be an open question. I'm really looking for whatever you yourself consider relevant to introduce yourself. However, issues that do interest me are: How long have you been working as a journalist? What was your career path? How long were you xxx (job description)? What can you tell me about that time? How did being a journalist influence your view of events? Theses are purely suggestions, though, and I certainly don't insist on them being answered if these questions do not seem relevant while others should be asked.

Your time at the xxx (newspaper):
- What did you consider your newspaper's role in South African society?
- What can you tell me about your relationship with the government and the management?

The media in South Africa:
- What can you tell me about being a journalist in South Africa? Does the profession have a specific significance in this country? And is it different being a journalist here compared to, for example, Europe?
- What is your view of the South African media landscape past and present? What do you take the role of a newspaper to be? Do others share this view?

The media during the apartheid years:
- What did it mean to be a journalist in South Africa in the past?
- In your opinion, did the English language press propagate racial differences and/or separation?
- A former member of management at the Argus Company told me in an interview that there was a complete news blackout, "We didn't know what was going on." Did the management really not know what was going on during the apartheid years? Or did they suppress information, for example about state violence?

Violence as an item of news:
- Can you give me some insight into the process of news production? How stories get chosen for publishing in a newspaper? What criteria determine what gets printed, how it is presented and where within the newspaper it is put?
- What importance does violence have as an item of news?
- While at the xxx (newspaper), what kinds of violence did you consider to be newsworthy? What made them newsworthy?
- Do you think violence is represented in a reasonable and fair way in today's newspapers?

The issue of race/skin colour:
- What role does skin colour play in every day South African life?
- What role does it play in the media's reporting?
- In your opinion, are either social class, or rather income, or skin colour connected to violence?
- What do you think the majority of South Africans would answer to this question?

My research question:
- Do the media shape the way white South Africans perceive the world around them and the violence that is going on in this country?
- If so, how?

Questions put to the spokesman of the South African Union of Journalists

The media in South Africa:
- What is your view of the South African media landscape past and present?
- What do you take the role of a newspaper to be?
- In your opinion, does/did the English language press propagate racial differences and/or separation?
- A former member of management at the Argus Company told me in an interview that during the apartheid years there was a complete news blackout. "We didn't know what was going on," he said. Did the management really not know what was going on or did they suppress information, for example about state violence?

Being a journalist in South Africa
- What can you tell me about being a journalist in South Africa? Does/Did the profession have a specific significance in this country? And is it different being a journalist here compared to, for example, Europe?
- What can you tell me about your relationship with the government and the management?

Violence as an item of news:
- Can you give me some insight into the process of news production, particularly during the trying times of apartheid? How do stories get chosen for publishing in a newspaper? What criteria determine what gets printed, how it is presented and where within the newspaper it is put?
- What importance does violence have as an item of news?

The issue of race/skin colour:
- What role did race play in the media's reporting during apartheid?
- What role does it play today?

My research question:
- Do you believe that the media shape the way white South Africans perceive the world around them and the violence that is going on in this country?
- If so, in which way?

Appendix F: Newspaper Ownership and Circulation in 2000

Newspapers under scrutiny in the present dissertation:

Newspaper	Place of Publication	Language/Frequency of Publication	Owner	Readership Figures [1] (and Circulation [2])
Cape Argus	Cape Town	English Daily	Independent	351,000 (79,326 *)
Saturday Argus	Cape Town	English Weekly	Independent	397,000 (106,749 *)
Sunday Argus	Cape Town	English Weekly	Independent	304,000 (106,749 *)
Cape Times	Cape Town	English Daily	Independent	255,000 (51,193 *)
The Star	Johannesburg	English Daily	Independent	855,000 (163,746)
Saturday Star	Johannesburg	English Weekly	Independent	503,000 (135,936)
Pretoria News	Pretoria	English Daily	Independent	202,000 (27,402)
Pretoria News Weekend	Pretoria	English Weekly	Independent	73,000 (15,226)
The Mercury	Durban	English Daily	Independent	249,000 (40,389 *)
Daily News	Durban	English Daily	Independent	367,000 (61,978 *)
Independent on Saturday	Durban	English Weekly	Independent	338,000 (62,159 *)
Sunday Independent	Johannesburg (nationwide)	English Weekly	Independent	184,000 (40,875)
Diamond Fields Advertiser	Kimberly	English Daily	Independent	40,000 [2] (8,264)
Citizen	Johannesburg	English Daily	Caxton	897,000 (121,435 *[1])
Daily Dispatch	East London	English Daily	TML	218,000 (37,927 *[1])
Eastern Province Herald	Port Elizabeth	English Daily	TML	181,000 (unknown)
Evening Post	Port Elizabeth	English Daily	TML	116,000 (unknown)
Sunday Times	Johannesburg (distributed nationwide)	English Weekly	TML	2,300,000 (506,474 *[2])
Mail & Guardian	Johannesburg	English Weekly	Mail & Guardian Media	192,000 (37,456 *[2])

[1] Source: All Media Products Survey (AMPS) 2000A quoted in The Government of South Africa (2000: 64-65)
[2] Source: All Media Products Survey (AMPS) 2000B quoted on company websites

Newspapers not analysed in the present dissertation:

Newspaper	Place of Publication	Language/Frequency of Publication	Owner	Readership Figures (and Circulation)
Sowetan	Johannesburg	English Daily	New Africa Publications (NAP)	2,145,000 (206,000 *¹)
Sowetan Sunday World	Johannesburg	English Weekly	NAP/TML	323,000 (65,291 *²)
Daily Sun	Johannesburg	English Daily	Media24	874,000 *³ (71,742 **)
Post	Durban	English Wednesday & Friday (since 2001)	Independent	314,000 (45,305 *)
Ilanga	Durban (KwaZulu Natal & Eastern Cape)	Zulu Tuesday & Thursday	Mandla-Matla	Tues: 1,440,000 Thurs: 1,313,000 (1,612,000)
City Press	Johannesburg (nationwide)	English Weekly	Naspers/Dynamo Investments	2,381,000 (220,559)
Die Volksblad	Bloemfontein	Afrikaans Daily	Naspers	127,000 (31,928 week-days *¹)
Die Burger	Cape Town	Afrikaans Daily	Naspers	600,000 (88,000 W. Cape 24,977 E. Cape *¹)
Beeld	Johannesburg	Afrikaans Daily	Naspers	459,000 (91,201 *¹)
Rapport	Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bloemfontein (nationwide)	Afrikaans Weekly	Naspers	1,762,000 (343,665 *¹)
The Natal Witness	Pietermaritzburg	English Daily	Naspers/Natal Witness	141,000 (unknown)
Business Day	Johannesburg	English Daily	TML/Pearson Group	146,000 (44,341 *¹)

* Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) January-June 2001 quoted on company websites
*¹ Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) July-December 1999 quoted in The Government of South Africa (2000: 64-65)
*² Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) July-December 2001 quoted in Business Day (4th May 2002 b: 1)
*³ All Media Products Survey 2003A quoted in SAARF (2004: 1) (2003 was the first full year of sale for the *Daily Sun* which was launched in July 2002)
** Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) July-December 2002 quoted on company website

Literature

ABCNEWS.com, 6th August 1998, *Did the 'Truth Commission' Help or Hurt? Facing South Africa's Past*. Available online at the website of the television channel ABC at http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/dailynews/southafrica_trc980806.html

Abbott, Daniel & James Calico, 1974, *Black Man, White Woman – The Maintenance of a Myth: Rape and the Press in New Orleans*. In: Marc Riedel & Terence P. Thornberry (eds.), *Crime and Delinquency*. New York, NY: Praeger, 141-153.

Action: Stop farm attacks, 2000, *A Memorandum on Farm Attacks and the Implications there of to Commercial Agriculture and Food Production in South Africa*.

Adhikari, Mohamed, 2000, *"You Have the Right to Know". South, 1987-1994*. In: Les Switzer & Mohamed Adhikari, *South Africa's Resistance Press*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 327-377.

African National Congress (ANC), *Stereotypes Steer the News*. In: *Rhodes Journalism Review* (online edition), No. 19. Available at the website of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University at http://journ.ru.ac.za/rjr/anc_homepage.html

_____, 1961, *Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe*. A copy of the manifesto is available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/manifesto-mk.html

_____, 1985, *Take the Struggle to the White Areas*. A copy of this flyer is available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1980s/pr85600.html.

_____, 1992, ANC Concern about Necklacings by Police and CCB Arms. Press Release issued by the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/1992/pr0820.html

_____, 1996 a, *African National Congress Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/misc/trctoc.html

_____,1996 b, *The National Party, Apartheid and the Anatomy of Repression in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In: *ANC Submission to the TRC*. Available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/misc/trc04.html

_____, 1997 a, *Further Submissions and Responses by the ANC to Questions Raised by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation*. Available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/misc/trc2.html

_____, 1997 b, *The Role of Media under Apartheid: African National Congress Submission on Media to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/misc/mediasub.html

Aitchison, John, 1989, *The Civil War in Natal*. In: Glenn Moss & Ingrid Obrey, *South African Review*, Vol. 5, 456-486.

Akenson, Donald H., 1991, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel, and Ulster*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Akhalwaya, Ameen, 1988, *Through the Loopholes*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 24-26.

_____, 1990, *"Media guerrillas" Counter the Official Violence of the State by Shooting Back With Their Only Weapon – Words*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, 1990, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 58-57.

Alence, Rod, 1999, *The Democratic Transition and Crime in South Africa*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 3, No. 2. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/CRIMEINDEX/99VOL3NO2/Cemocratic.html

Altheide, David L., 1976, *Creating Reality. How TV News Distorts Reality*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

_____, 1979, *Media Logic*. London: Sage Publications.

_____,1985, *Media Power*. London: Sage Publications.

_____, 1997, *The News Media, the Problem Frame, and the Production of Fear*. In: *Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 647-668.

Amnesty International, 1997, *AI Report 1997: South Africa.* Available online at the website of Amnesty International at http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aireport/ar97/AFR53.htm

_____, 1998 a, *AI Report 1998: South Africa.* Available online at the website of Amnesty International at http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aireport/ar98/afr53.htm

_____, 1998 b, *South Africa: Combatting a State of Terror and Impunity in Richmond, KwaZulu Natal*. AI Index: AFR 53/002/1998. Available online at the website of Amnesty International at http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGAFR530021998

_____, 1999 a, *AI Report 1999: South Africa.* Available online at the website of Amnesty International at http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aireport/ar99/afr53.htm

_____, 1999 b, *Torture and Misuse of Lethal Force by Security Forces Must End*. AI Index: AFR 53/05/99. Available online at the website of Amnesty International at http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/1999/15300599.htm

Ang, Ien, 1991, *Desperately Seeking Audience*. London: Routledge.

Angus, Ian, Jon Cruz, James Der Derian, Sut Jhally, Justin Lewis & Cathy Schwichtenberg, 1994, *Reflections Upon the Encoding/Decoding Model: An Interview with Stewart Hall*. In: Jon Cruz & Justin Lewis (eds.), *Viewing, Reading, Listening: Audiences and Cultural Reception*. Oxford: Westview Press, 253-274.

Anthonissen, Christine, 2001, *On the Effectivity of Media Censorship: An Analysis of Linguistic, Paralinguistic and other Communicative Devices Used to Defy Media Restrictions*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Vienna.

The Argus, 16th June 1976 (City Late Edition) a, *2 Dead as Children Riot in Soweto*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1976 (City Late Edition (different edition than a)) b, *Soweto Pupils Riot – Six Dead*, 1 and 3.

_____, 16th June 1976 (City Late Edition (different edition than a and b)) c, *2 Police, 4 Others Die in Riot*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 (City Late Edition), *Violence Flares again in Soweto*, 1.

_____, 21st June 1976 (City Late Edition) a, *Widespread Rioting in Pretoria Areas*, 1.

_____, 21st June 1976 (City Late Edition (different edition than a)) b, *New Riots under Control – Police*, 1.

_____, 22nd June 1976 (City Late Edition), *Children Stone Buildings, Burn Vehicles*, 1.

_____, 22nd July 1976 a, *Viking Sparks Life on Mars H*ope, 3.

_____, 22nd July 1976 b, *When Israel Feted Amin*, 10.

_____, 26th July 1976 a, *Soweto Classes Open – Then Close*, 1.

_____, 26th July 1976 b, *Big Boost for Mixed Cricket*, 1.

_____, 13th September 1977 (City Late Edition), *Top Black Leader Dies in Detention*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980, (Stop Press Edition) a, *Six Tanks still Ablaze*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980, (Stop Press Edition) b, *We Fly Through Pillars of Smoke*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980, (City Late Edition) c, *Six Tanks still Ablaze*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980, (Late Final Edition) d, *A Planned Onslaught*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980, (Late Final Edition (different edition than d)) e, *Blasts, then Residents see 'Flaming Hell'*, 1.

_____, 3rd June 1980 (Stop Press Edition), *Unrest*, 3.

_____, 23rd May 1983 (City Late Edition) a, *SAAF raids Maputo*, 1.

_____, 23rd May 1983 (Late Final Edition) b, *ANC blasted in Maputo*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 (City Late Edition) a, *Shootings Probe*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 (Late Final Edition) b, *Shootings Probe*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 (Late Final Edition) c, *PW Orders Inquiry on E Cape Shootings*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 (Late Final Edition) d, *Rubber Bullets, Tear-Gas Used as Unrest Continues*, 1.

_____, 14th June 1985 (City Late Edition), *ANC Targets Hit*, 1.

_____, 20th May 1986, (Stop Press Edition), *The Day they Blotted out the Sun*, 1.

_____, 12th June 1986 (Stop Press Edition), *Solomon 'not a Violent Man'*, 5.

_____, 17th June 1988 (Stop Press Edition), *Nine Suspected ANC Insurgents Killed*, 3.

_____, 1st February 1990 (Stop Press Edition) a, *Tomorrow's March to go Ahead with New Route*, 3.

_____, 1st February 1990 (Stop Press Edition) b, *Protesters Without Train Tickets in Station Chaos*, 5.

_____, 18th June 1992 (City Late Edition), *Midnight Reef Massacre*, 1.

Armstrong, Amanda, 1987, *'Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speek No Evil': Media Restrictions and the State of Emergency*. In: *South African Review*, Vol. 4, 199-214.

Ball, Joanna, 1994, *The Ritual of the Necklace*. Available online at the website of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation at www.csvr.org.za/papers/papball.htm

Barfield, Thomas, 2003, *The Dictionary of Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Barthes, Roland, 1977 (1964), *The Rhetoric of the Image*. In: Stephen Heath (ed. and trans.), *Image-Music-Text*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 32-51.

_____, 1983 (1961), *The Photographic Message*. In: Susan Sontag (ed.), *Barthes: Selected Writings*. London: Fontana Press, 194-210.

Barton, Frank, 1979, *The Press of Africa*. London: The Macmillan Press.

Beaufre, André, 1985, *Introduction à la stratégie*. Paris: Economica.

Bell, Alan, 1991, *Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bennett, Tony, 1982, *Media, 'Reality' and Signification*. In: Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, & Janet Woollacott, (eds.), *Culture, Society and the Media*. London: Methuen, 287-308.

Berger, Guy, 1997, *Media and Racism in Mandela's Rainbow Nation*. Contribution to: *Prime Time for Tolerance: Journalism and the Challenge of Racism*. International Federation of Journalists World Conference, Bilbao, Spain, May 2 - 4 1997. Available online at the website of Rhodes University at
http://journ.ru.ac.za/staff/guy/Research/Racism%20in%20the%20media/mandela.htm

_____, 1999, *Towards an Analysis of the South African Media and Transformation, 1994-1999*. In: *Transformation*, No. 38, page numbers unknown, I used a manuscript (references numbered according to manuscript pages).

_____, 2001, *De-Racialization, Democracy and Development: Transformation of the South African Media 1994-2000*. In: Keyan G. Tomaselli, & Hopeton S. Dunn, 2001, *Media, Democracy and Renewal in South Africa*. Colorado Springs, CO: International Academic Publish, 151-180.

Berkeley, Bill, 1996, *Truth on Trial: South Africa's Past Shades its Future*. In: *APF Reporter*, Vol. 17, No. 2.

Bignell, Jonathan, 1997, *Media Semiotics: An Introduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Biz-Community, 2003, *AMPS 2003A – Newspaper Readership Nationally and Provincially*. Available online at http://www.biz-community.com/Article.aspx?c=11&l=196&ai=2473

Bollen, Sandra, Lillian Artz, Lisa Vetten & Antoinette Louw, 1999 a, *Introduction*. In: Sandra Bollen, Lillian Artz, Lisa Vetten & Antoinette Louw, *Violence against Women in Metropolitain South Africa*. ISS Monograph 41. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No41/introduction.html

_____, 1999 b, *Types of Abuse Reported*. In: Sandra Bollen, Lillian Artz, Lisa Vetten & Antoinette Louw, *Violence against Women in Metropolitain South Africa*. ISS Monograph 41. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No41/TypesAbuset.html

_____, 1999 c, *Nature of the Worst Incident of Abuse*. In: Sandra Bollen, Lillian Artz, Lisa Vetten & Antoinette Louw, *Violence against Women in Metropolitain South Africa*. ISS Monograph 41. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No41/NatureOfAbuset.html

_____, 1999 d, *Perpetrator of the Worst Incident of Abuse*. In: Sandra Bollen, Lillian Artz, Lisa Vetten & Antoinette Louw, *Violence against Women in Metropolitain South Africa*. ISS Monograph 41. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No41/perpetratort.html

_____, 1999 e, *Women's Perceptions of Safety and their Recommendations*. In: Sandra Bollen, Lillian Artz, Lisa Vetten & Antoinette Louw, *Violence against Women in Metropolitain South Africa*. ISS Monograph 41. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No41/WomensPerceptionst.html

Bollig, Michael & Frank Klees, 1994, *Einführung: Die "afrikanische Krise" – Medien, Wissenschaft und die afrikanische Perspektive*. In: Michael Bollig & Frank Klees (eds.), *Überlebensstrategien in Afrika*. Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut, 11-28.

Botha, Anneli, 2001, *The Prime Suspects? The Metamorphosis of PAGAD*. In: Henri Boshoff, Anneli Botha and Martin Schönteich, *Fear in the City, Urban Terrorism in South Africa*. ISS Monograph 63. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No63/Chap2.html

Bourdieu, Pierre, 1991, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brewer, John D., 1986, *After Soweto*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Brink, André, 1989, *The Impact of the Media on the International Situation with Specific Reference to South Africa*. In: *Genève-Afrique*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, 81-90.

Brink, Elsabé, Ghandi Malungane, Steve Labelo, Dumisani Ntshangase & Sue Kriege, 2001, *Soweto 16 June 1976*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 14th October 2002, *AIDS: A South African Horror Story*. Available online at the website of the BBC at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/correspondent/2311067.stm

Broughton, Morris, 1961, *The Press and Politics of South Africa*. Cape Town: Galvin & Sales.

Brown, Trevor, 1971, *Free Press Fair Game for South Africa's Government*. In: *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 48 (Spring 1971), 120-127.

Bruce, David, 1997, *Concern over Deaths in Custody*. Available online at the website of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artdeath.htm

_____, 2000, *The Prevention of Police Action and Custody Deaths*. Available online at the website of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papbruc3.htm

Bureau for Information, 1986, *Talking with the ANC...* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Burnett, Patrick, *The Media and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

Burns, Yvonne, 1990, *Media Law*. Durban: Butterworths.

Burton, Simon, 1994, Media and Attitudes to Political Violence in South Africa. In: David L. Paletz (ed.), *Political Communication and Action*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 247-258.

Business Day (online edition - no longer available online), 21st January 1997 a, *Raymond Louw and Clive Emdon were Nonracist Fighters for Freedom*.

_____, 21st January 1997 b, *Editors Debate Probe by Truth Body*.

_____, 19th September 1997, *A Sorry Spectacle*.

_____, 26th March 1999, *Dropping Out*.

_____, 4th May 2002 a, *Johnnic Launches New Publishing Group*.

_____, 4th May 2002 b, *Daily Newspaper Sales Figures are Lower, Says Circulation Bureau*.

Butchart, Alex, Brandon Hamber, Martin Terre Blanche & Mohamed Seedat, 1998, *Violence, Power and Mental Health Policy in Twentieth Century South Africa*. In: D. Foster, M. Freeman & Y. Pillay (eds.), *Mental Health Policy Issues in South Africa*. I used the online version available at the website of the CSVR at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papbh&ab.htm

Byrnes, Rita M., 1996, *South Africa. A Country Study*. This study conducted by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress is available at their website at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/zatoc.html

Camerer, Lala & Antoinette Louw, 1998, *Perception and Reality: Surveying Crime in Cape Town*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 2, No. 2. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/CrimeIndex/98Vol2No2/PERSEPTION.HTML

Camerer, Lala, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Lillian Artz & Wilfried Scharf, 1998 a, *Levels of Victimisation in Cape Town*. In: Lala Camerer, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Lillian Artz & Wilfried Scharf, *Crime in Cape Town*. ISS Monograph 23. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No23/Levels.html

_____, 1998 b, *Specifics of Victimisation*. In: Lala Camerer, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Lillian Artz & Wilfried Scharf, *Crime in Cape Town*. ISS Monograph 23. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No23/Specifics.html

_____, 1998 c, *Perceptions of Safety in Cape Town*. In: Lala Camerer, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Lillian Artz & Wilfried Scharf, *Crime in Cape Town*. ISS Monograph 23. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No23/Perceptions.html

Cameron, Robert, 1988, *The Crossroads. Sectarianism and the State*. In: Mark Bennett & Deborah Quinn, *Political Conflict in South Africa. Data Trends 1984-1988*. Indicator SA Issue Focus, December 1988, 57-62.

Campbell, Horace, 1987, *The Dismantling of the Apartheid War Machine*. In: *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 168-192.

Cape Argus, 6th December 2001 a, *Cop Gunned Down on Cape Flats*, 3.

_____, 6th December 2001 b, *Woman of 101 Attacked by Would-be Rapist*, 11.

_____, 6th December 2001 c, *Child Rapes Outrage Community*, 11.

_____, 16th January 2002 a, *'Innocent Men' were Necklaced*, 1.

_____, 16th January 2002 b, *Marike's Model Friend has Solid Alibi, Cop tells Court*, 2.

_____, 1st February 2002 (City Late Edition), *Police Night of Madness*, 1.

_____, 19th February 2002 (Late Final Edition), *Khayelitsha Folk Cheer as Bail is Granted Man Accused of Leading Lynch Mob*, 5.

_____, 7th March 2002 (City Late Edition), *Cool Cop's Order to Hold Fire 'Stopped Bloodbath'*, 2.

_____, 11th April 2002 (City Late Edition), *Rioting Commuters Attack Trains*, 3.

_____, 30th April 2002 (City Late Edition), *Delft Residents Burn Tyres to Protest Cuts, Evictions*, 3.

_____, 7th May 2002 (Late Final Edition) a, *Girl Escapee Kills Pursuer*, 1.

_____, 7th May 2002 (Late Final Edition) b, *Community Rage as Policeman Denied Amnesty Acquitted of Murder*, 2.

_____, 17th May 2002 (City Late Edition) a, *Gangster Madness*, 1 and 5.

_____, 17th May 2002 (City Late Edition) b, *A Quiet Night at Home Turns Black as Death*, 1 and 5.

_____, 24th June 2002 (Late Final Edition) a, *City Massacre*, 1.

_____, 24th June 2002 (Late Final Edition) b, *Please Daddy, Don't Rape me*, 5.

_____, 24th June 2002 (Late Final Edition) c, *Shop Owner Shot Dead in Spate of Armed Robberies*, 7.

_____, 12th November 2002 (City Late Edition), Cops Beef up Plot Inquiry, 6.

Cape Times, 17th June 1976, *Looting, Burning as Riots Continue*, 1.

_____, 18th June 1976, *54 Dead as Riots Spread*, 1.

_____, 19th June 1976, *Riot toll tops 100*, 1.

_____, 14th September 1977 a, *Biko Died after Hunger Strike – Kruger*, 1.

_____, 14th September 1977 b, *Shock, Grief at Death of Biko*, 2.

_____, 23rd May 1983, *Attack Latest in Tapestry of Terror*, 2.

_____, 24th May 1983, *Raid on ANC: 'Scores' Died*, 1

_____, 8th November 1984 a, *Wife Abuse No 2 Crime in M Plain*, 10.

_____, 8th November 1984 b, *Court Told of Dagga, Mandrax Before Killing of Bellville Man*, 13.

_____, 23rd March 1985 a, *Worrall: Shooting 'not Justified'*, 1.

_____, 23rd March 1985 b, *'Not a Peaceful Crowd of Mourners'*, 4.

_____, 26th March 1985, *Panga Attack Brings Unrest Death Toll to 31*, 2.

_____, 22nd July 1985, *113 Held in Security Swoop*, 1.

_____, 6th September 1985, *Battles rage in Athlone*, 1.

_____, 5th October 1985 a, *Unrest: Police Report*, 2.

_____, 5th October 1985 b, *Police 'reign of terror'*, 2.

_____, 25th October 1985 a, *Chaos in City Centre*, 1.

_____, 25th October 1985 b, *Bo-Kaap Violence: Police Shoot Pupil*, 1.

_____, 25th October 1985 c, *Police Beat, Arrest Press*, 1.

_____, 11th June 1986, *'We will Eliminate' Gunmen*, page unknown.

_____, 13th June 1986 a, *SA may 'Go it Alone'*, 1.

_____, 13th June 1986 b, *City Police Strengthened*, 2.

_____, 17th June 1986, *Police Cleared in Uitenhage Shooting*, 2.

_____, 17th June 1988, *Three Women Killed in Shootouts with 'ANC'*, 1.

_____, 2nd March 1990 a, *Street Battles and Stonings in Cathcart*, 5.

_____, 2nd March 1990 b, *Natal Attack: Man Shot*, 5.

_____, 7th September 1990, *Joburg Station Horror*, 1.

_____, 13th September 1990 a, *'The Fighting Makes us Feel Like Men'*, 5.

_____, 13th September 1990 (later edition than a) b, *Horrific Attacks Erupt on Reef*, 1.

_____, 13th September 1990 (same edition as b) c, *Speaking Zulu Cost Man's Life*, 1.

_____, 14th September 1990 a, *Taxi Violence Erupts*, 2.

_____, 14th September 1990 b, *Police deny Whites are in Townships*, 2.

_____, 15th September 1990, *'Hidden Hand'*, 1.

_____, 19th April 1994, *Photographer Killed in Rand Hostel Battle*, 1.

_____, 5th August 1996, *Night of Bloody Execution*, 1.

_____, 1st February 2002, *Poacher Choked on Blood while Rugby Pals hit him, Court Told*, 4.

_____, 29th April 2002, *Four die Violently in City over the Weekend*, 4.

Carey, James W., 1989, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.

Carver, Richard, 1994, *South Africa After the Elections*. Writenet Country paper, available online at the website of the United Nations Refugee Agency at http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), 1999, *Contested Notions of Reconciliation: The Changing Nature of Violence in Post-Apartheid Africa*. The Annual Report: 1998. Available online at the website of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/annrep98.htm

_____, 2001, *HIV and Violence against Women*.

Chandler, Daniel, 2001, *Paradigmatic Analysis*. In: *Semiotics for Beginners*. Available online at the website of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth at http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem05.html

Chibnall, Steve, 1977, *Law-and-Order News. An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press*. London: Travistock Publications.

Chomsky, Noam, 1989, *Necessary Illusions*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Chouliaraki, Lilie & Norman Fairclough, 1999, *Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Chubb, Karin & Lutz van Dijk, 1999, *Der Traum vom Regenbogen*. Reinbeck: Rowolt.

Cirino, Robert, 1973, *Bias Through Selection and Omission: Automobile Safety, Smoking*. In: Stanley Cohen & Young, Jock (eds.), *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems*, Deviance and the Mass Media. London: Constable, 40-61.

The Citizen, 12th March 1994, *The Horror Slaying of 3 AWB Men*, 1.

_____, 9th April 2002, *Detective joins Accused*, 3.

_____, 11th April 2002 a, *Train Gutted as Commuters Riot*, 1.

_____, 11th April 2002 b, *Judgement Day for Basson*, 6.

_____, 11th April 2002 c, *Hitchhiker Murderer Sentenced to 10 Years*, 7.

_____, 23rd May 2002, *Prepare for the Total Onslaught*, 18.

Claassen, George, 2000, *Breaking the Mould of Political Subservience. Vrye Weekblad and the Afrikaans Alternative Press*. In: Les Switzer & Mohamed Adhikari, *South Africa's Resistance Press*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 404-458.

Claridge, David, 1996, *State Terrorism? Applying a Definitional Model*. In: *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Autumn), 47-63.

Clayton Powell III, Adam, 1999, *Africa's Oldest Online Newspaper Boasts Largest Readership*. Arlington, VA: Freedom Forum.

Clifford, James, 1999, *The Predicament of Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, James & George E. Marcus, 1988, *Writing Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cloete, M. J. T., 1982, *Social Bases and the Prevention of Crimes of Violence*. In: J. van der Westhuizen, *Crimes of Violence in South Africa*, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 53-78.

CNN Interactive, 1996, *Police Implicate Former President in Apartheid-Era Assassinations*. Available online at the website of CNN at http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9610/21/south.africa.truth/

_____, 7th January 1998, *S. Africa to Prosecute former President Botha*. Available online at the website of CNN at http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/07/botha.trc/

_____, 1998, *Crime and No Punishment*. Available online at the website of CNN at http://www-cgi.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1998/africa/s.africa/

CNN.com, 28th January 1999, *11 Wounded in South Africa Bomb Blast*. Available online at the website of CNN at http://cnn.ch/WORLD/africa/9901/28/s.africa.explosion.02/

Cock, Jacklyn, 1989, *Introduction*. In: Jacklyn Cock & Laurie Nathan, *Society at War. The Militarisation of South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1-13.

_____,1990, *Political Violence*. In: Brian McKendrick & Wilma Hoffman, *People and Violence in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 44-72.

Coetzee, J. H., 1972, *The Bantu Homelands and Cultural Heterogeneity*. In: Nic Rhoodie, *South African Dialogue*. Pretoria: McGraw Hill, 128-150.

Coertze, P. J., 1968, *Akkulturasie*. In G. Cronje (ed.), *Kultuurbeeinvloeding tussen Blankes en Bantoe in Suid-Afrika*, Pretoria: Openbare fekulteitslesing van die Fakuleit Lettere en Wysbegeerte van die Universiteit van Pretoria.

Cohen, Anthony. P., & Nigel Rapport (eds.), 1995, *Questions of Consciousness*. London: Routledge.

Cohen, Stanley, 1973, *Protest, Unrest and Delinquency: Convergences in Labels or Behaviour?* In: *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, Vol. 1, 117-128.

Coleman, Max, 1990, *State Violence: A Study in Repression*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papcole.htm

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 1998, *Country Report: South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Committee to Protect Journalists at http://www.cpj.org/attacks98/1998/Africa/Southaf.html

_____, 2000, *Country Report: South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Committee to Protect Journalists at http://www.cpj.org/attacks00/africa00/South_Africa.html

Conrad, Joseph, 1990 (1902), *Heart of Darkness*. Toronto: General Publishing Company.

Conradie, D. P., E. D. Gerryts, E. Hall & J. C. Malan, 1987, *The Role of Mass Media Content in the South African Election*. In: D. J. van Vuuren, Lawrence Schlemmer, H. C. Marais & J. Latakgomo, *South African Election 1987*. Pinetown: Owen Burgess Publishers, 153-165.

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Chapter 2 Bill of Rights. Available online at the website of the South African government at http://www.gov.za/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm (Bill of Rights) or

http://www.gov.za/constitution/1996/96cons.htm#top (Table of Contents for the whole Constitution).

Corbin, J. R., 1977, *An Anthropological Perspective on Violence*. In: *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, Vol. 10, 107-111.

Corner, John, 1980, *Codes and Cultural Analysis*. In: *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 2, 73-86.

Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC), 2001 a, The Reported Serious Crime Situation in South Africa for the Period January – September 2001. Available online at the website of the SAPS at http://www.saps.gov.za/8%5Fcrimeinfo/200112/report.htm

_____, 2001 b, *A Comparison of the 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 January to September Increase/Decrease in Crime Ratios*. Table 1 of: *The Reported Serious Crime Situation in South Africa for the Period January – September 2001*. Available online at the website of the SAPS at http://www.saps.gov.za/8%5Fcrimeinfo/200112/table1.htm

Crush, Jonathan, 2001, *South Africa Dogged by Racism and Xenophobia*. Available online at the website of the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) at http://www.queensu.ca/samp/migrationresources/xenophobia/articles/dogged.htm

Cruywagen, Dennis, 2000, *A Story of Courage in South African Journalism*. In: *Nieman Reports* (online edition), Vol. 54, No. 3. Available at the website of Harvard University at http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/00-3NRfall/Story-of-Courage.html

Daily Dispatch, 17th June 1976 a, *More Riots in Soweto*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 b, *When a Mob runs Wild…*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 c, *We Warned of this Says Tutu*, 10.

_____, 17th June 1976 d, *Government Policy Blamed for Rioting*, 10.

_____, 18th June 1976, *50 Dead as Riots Spread*, 1.

_____, 19th June 1976, *Riots, Arson Spread*, 1.

_____, 1st October 1984, *Cars Stoned on EL-G'town Road*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 a, *17 Dead in Uitenhage*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 b, *2 ANC men Killed, Arms Cache Found*, 1.

_____, 23rd March 1985, *E Cape Judge to Probe Shooting*, 1.

_____, 25th March 1985, *Mob of Mourners Desecrate Bodies*, 1.

_____, 18th April 2002, *Rugby Murder Witness Treated with Caution*, 5.

Daily Mail & Guardian (online edition – no longer available online), 2nd December 1998, *Changing the Post-Apartheid Media*.

_____, 1st February 1999, *'Jolly good Fellow' Nkabinde quietly Burried*.

Daily News, 12th April 2002 a, *Police hit Taxi Theft Gang*, 2.

_____, 12th April 2002 b, *Two Arrested for Police Killings*, 2.

Daily Sun, 18th July 2002, *'We Refuse to Move'*, 2.

Danso, Ransford & David A. McDonald, 2000, *Writing Xenophobia: Immigration and the Press in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Cape Town: Southern African Migration Project.

Daran, Daniel, Ansuya Chetty, Jeanne Prinsloo & Mark Allison-Broomhead, 1986, *The Visual Role of 'the Rubicons' as Part of the Reform Strategy: The Beginning of the End of Apartheid*. Paper presented at the 1986 Conference of the Association of Sociology in Southern Africa, University of Natal. Available online at the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/publications/articles/rubicon.htm

Davis, Howard H., 1993, *Media Research: Whose Agenda?* In: Glasgow University Media Group, *Getting the Message. News, Truth and Power*. Edited by John Eldridge. London: Routledge, 34-49.

de Beer, Arri S., 1993, *Mass Media for the Nineties*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

de Gruchy, John W., 1997, *Grappling with a Colonial Heritage: The English-speaking Churches under Imperialism and Apartheid*. In: Richard Elphick & Rodney Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa*. Oxford: James Currey, 155-172.

de Klerk, Frederik Willem, *Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by Mr. F.W. de Klerk, Leader of the National Party*.

_____, 1997, *Second Submission of the National Party to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online at the website of the TRC at http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/submit/np2.htm

de Kock, Eugene & Jeremy Gordin, 1998, *A Long Night's Damage*. Saxonwold: Contra Press.

de Villiers, Les, 1980, *Secret Information*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

de Villiers, René, 1976, *The English-Language Press*. In: André de Villiers, *English-Speaking South Africa Today*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 343-361.

Dedial, Jürg, 1995, *Süd Afrikanische Republik: Ist der Friede erreicht?*. In: Kurt R. Spillmann (ed.): *Zeitgeschichtliche Hintergründe aktueller Konflikte*. Transcript of a lecture held within the framework of the Zurich Contributions to Security Policy ("Gelbe Hefte"), No. 37. Available online at http://www.fsk.ethz.ch/documents/beitraege/zu_37/zu37_ch7.htm

Degenaar, Johan, 1990, *The Concept of Violence*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit, *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 70-86.

Develotte, Christine & Elizabeth Rechniewski, *Discourse Analysis of Newspaper Headlines: A Methodological Framework for Research into National Representations*. Available online at http://wjfms.ncl.ac.uk/titles.htm

Diamond Fields Advertiser, 3rd July 2002 a, *Mayhem in NC as Ex Cop runs Amok*, 1.

_____, 3rd July 2002 b, *'I saw Bodies Falling and I Thought my Time had Come to Die'*, 3.

_____, 5th July 2002, *'The Gunman Looked Right into my Face'*, 8.

Dispatch Online, 19th September 1997, *Talking Past Each Other*. Available online at
http://www.dispatch.co.za/1997/09/19/page%2012.htm

_____, 27th February 1999, *Hard to Believe*. A review of F.W. de Klerk's book *The Last Trek*.
Available online at the website of the Daily Dispatch at
http://www.dispatch.co.za/1999/02/27/features/BOOK.HTM

_____, 1st December 2000, *Evening Post Rolls off Press for the Last Time*. Available online at
the website of the Daily Dispatch at
http://www.dispatch.co.za/2000/12/01/easterncape/TOWNPOST.HTM

Dooms, Pat, 2002, *Is there another Way?* In: *Homeless Talk*, August 2002, 7.

dpa, 27th January 1981, no title, dpa-Inf.MM XIII/27.1.81, no page.

du Plessis, Tim, 1998, *Newspaper Management Keeps Quiet about its Role in Apartheid*. In:
Nieman Reports (online edition), Vol. 52, No. 4 (Winter 1998). Available at the website of
Harvard University at http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/98-4NRwint98/DuPlessis.html

Duodu, Cameron, 1986, *Cape Times*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol.15, No. 1, 8-10.

du Preez, J. A., 1982, *Ideological Crimes of Violence in South Africa 1950-1979*. In: J. van
der Westhuizen, *Crimes of Violence in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa,
210-226.

du Toit, André, 1983, *The Rationale of Controlling Political Publications*. In: Theo Coggin,
Censorship. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 80-129.

_____, 1990, *Discourses on Political Violence*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit,
Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 87-
130.

Dyer, Gwynne, 1990, *It Doesn't Have to Be a Bloodbath. South Africa is a Potentially
Normal Country*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story.
Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*, Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 33-36.

Eastern Province Herald, 12th March 1994, *God help us*, 1.

The Economist, 15th July 1995, *Murder and Siege Architecture*, page unknown, 2-page
printout from the online archive.

_____, 12th October 1996, *How Wrong is it Going?* 21-27.

_____, 13th December 1997, *The End of the Miracle?* 17-22.

_____, 15th December 2001, Them, 71-72.

_____, 11th October 2003, *Small Mercies*, 50.

Ehlers, Diana, 1998, *Predicting Crime: A Statistical Glimpse of the Future?* In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 2, No. 2. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/CRIMEINDEX/98Vol2No2/PREDICTION.HTML

Electronic Mail & Guardian, *History of the Mail & Guardian*. Available online at http://www.mg.co.za/Content/l3_f.asp?o=555

_____, *The Pack of Beers that Launched a Newspaper*. Available online at http://www.mg.co.za/Content/l3_f.asp?o=556

_____, 29th November 1996 a, *Old Cabinet Papers Reveal: Killing Blacks was Policy*. No longer available online.

_____, 29th November 1996 b, *The Soldiers Behind the Train Violence*. No longer available online.

_____, 4th February 1997, *The Chickens Finally Come Home*. No longer available online.

_____, 7th March 1997, *Inkatha's Plans for a Pre-Election War*. No longer available online.

_____, 1st April 1997, *Study Warns of More "Pagad" Style Violence*. No longer available online.

_____, 28th April 1997, *Who do we Blame for Crime?* No longer available online.

_____, 23rd May 1997, *More and More Deaths in Police Custody*. No longer available online.

_____, 24th July 1997, *Richmond Massacres could Re-Open Violence*. No longer available online.

_____, 25th July 1997, *Richmond Executions: Early Leads Point to Police*. No longer available online.

_____, 6th August 1997, *Broederwits in the Press*. No longer available online.

_____, 5th September 1997, *Twenty Years on, the Biko Truth?* No longer available online.

_____, 19th September 1997, *Media's Dragons Failed to Answer*. No longer available online.

_____, 22nd September 1997, *Whose Crime Stats do You Believe?* No longer available online.

_____, 24th April 1998, *A Revolution Betrayed*. No longer available online.

_____, 18th May 1998, *Crime is the Only Business that Makes Jobs*. No longer available online.

_____, 24th July 1998, *Thirty Years on, a Prisoner's Apology to the Rand Daily Mail*. No longer available online.

_____, 20th August 1998, *Staggie Murder 'was Military Operation'*. No longer available online.

Electronic Telegraph, 20th January 1999, *Murder Rate Falls to Two an Hour*. No longer available online.

Ellis, Stephen & Tsepo Sechaba, 1992, *Comerades Against Apartheid*. London: James Currey and Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Everatt, David, 1993, *The Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid's Death Squads – Book Review*. In: *Southern African Review of Books*, Issue 23, January/February 1993.

Fairclough, Norman, 1992 a, *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

_____, 1992 b, *Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis*. In: *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 193-217.

_____, 1995, *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.

Faure, Corrie, *The Alternative Press*. Unpublished study supervised by the University of South Africa.

Ferguson, Robert, 1998, *Representing Race: Ideology, Identity and the Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferreira da Rosa Ribeiro, Luis Fernando, 1995, *Apartheid and Democracia Racial: South Africa and Brazil in Contrast*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utrecht.

Financial Mail (online edition), 13th December 1996, *Editorial Independence is the Name of the Game*. No longer available online.

_____, 12th March 1999, *Who Owes What to Taxpayers*. No longer available online.

Findahl, Olle & Britta Höijer, 1981, *Studies of News from the Perspective of Human Comprehension*. In: G. Cleveland Wilhoit & Harold de Bock (eds.), *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, Vol. 2. Beverly Hills, CA and London: Sage, 393-403.

Fine, Derrick & Desirée Hansson, 1990, *Community Responses to Police Abuses of Power: Coping with the Kitskonstabels*. In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 209-231.

Fisher, Ryland, *Pushing the Paradigm*. In: *Rhodes Journalism Review* (online edition), No. 19. Available at the website of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University at http://journ.ru.ac.za/rjr/Fisher_homepage.html

Fishman, Mark, 1984, *Crime Waves as Ideology*. In: Ray Surette (ed.): *Justice and the media: Issues and Research*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers, 159-180.

Fiske, John, 1987, *British Cultural Studies*. In: Robert Allen, *Channels of Discourse: Television and Contemporary Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 254-289.

Foster, Don, 1990, *Expert Testimony on Collective Violence*. In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 154-172.

Foucault, Michel (Colin Gordon (ed.)), 1980, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Fowler, Roger, 1991, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Fowler, Roger & Gunther Kress, 1979, *Critical Linguistics*. In: Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew, *Language and Control*. London: Routledge & Paul, 94-116.

Fowler, Roger, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress & Tony Trew, 1979 *Language and Control*. London: Routledge & Paul.

Franks, Peter E., 1987, *Perceptual Dynamics in South Africa: A Textual Analysis of the Press Coverage during the 1987 Election*. In: D.J. van Vuuren, Lawrence Schlemmer, H.C. Marais & J. Latakgomo, *South African Election 1987*. Pinetown: Owen Burgess Publishers, 167-185.

Frederikse, Julie, 1987, *South Africa's Media: The Commercial Press and the Seedlings of the Future*. In: *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 210.

Freedom Front, 2001, *Registration of Formal Complaint Regarding the Security of Afrikaners in the Republic of South Africa*.

Freedom House, 1999, *Press Freedom Worldwide*. Available online at http://freedomhouse.org/pfs99/reports.html

Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), *The Role of the Media under Apartheid*. Available online at the website of the Freedom of Expression Institute at http://fxi.org.za/archives/raytrc.txt

_____, 1996, *Opening up a Can of Worms*. Available online at the website of the Freedom of Expression Institute at http://fxi.org.za/archives/update/pagad.htm

Freedom to Write Committee, 1981, *Censorship and Apartheid in South Africa*. Brookly, NY: PEN American Center.

Friedman, Steven, 2001, *A Partial Peace: Democracy and Conflict Resolution in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies. Unpublished paper presented at the Bergen Seminar on Development organised by the Christen Michelsen Institute and the Norwegian Department of Foreign Affairs.

Frontline Interviews, unknown a, *Interview: Wolfie Kodesh*. Available online at the website of PBS at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/interviews/kodesh.html

_____, unknown b, *Interview: Dr. Neil Barnard*. Available online at the website of PBS at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/mandela/interviews/barnard.html

Früh, Werner, 1983, *Der aktive Rezipient – neu besehen. Zur Konstruktion faktischer Informationen bei der Zeitungslektüre*. In: *Publizistik*, Vol. 28, 327-342.

Gallie, W.B., 1955-56, *Essentially Contested Concepts*. In: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 56, 167-198.

Galtung, Johan, 1969, *Violence, Peace and Peace Research.* In: *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 167-191.

Galtung, Johan & Mari H. Ruge, 1965, *The Structure of Foreign News*. In: *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 2, 64-91.

Gans, Herbert J., 1979, *Deciding What's News*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Garman, Anthea, 1997 a, *Media Creation*. In: *Track Two,* Volume 6, Number 3 & 4, December 1997. Available online at http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/6_34/p36_garman.html

_____, 1997 b, *The TRC Media Hearings, September 1997*.

_____, 1998, *What did Covering the TRC do to the Media?*

Garrett, Peter & Alan Bell, 1998, *Media Discourse: A Critical Overview*. In: Alan Bell & Peter Garrett (eds.), *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1-20.

Gastrow, Peter, 1998, *Organised Crime in South Africa*. ISS Monograph 28. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No28/Contents.html

Gelber, David, 2000, *Double Vision*. In: *Index on Censorship* (online edition), Latest Censorship News, Update 11th September 2000. Available at http://www.oneworld.org/index_oc/news/southafrica201200.html

Geertz, Clifford, 1964, *Ideology as a Cultural System*. In: David Apter, *Ideology and Discontent*. Glencoe: Free Press.

_____, 1968, *Thinking as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of Anthropological Fieldwork in the New States*. In: Antioch Review, Vol. 28, 139-158.

_____, 1983, Local Knowledge. New York, NY: Basic Books.

_____, 1994, *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*. In: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 3-30.

Gerbner, George, 1985, *Mass Media Discourse: Message System Analysis as a Componen of Cultural Indicators*. In: Teun A. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse and Communication*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 13-25.

Gevisser, Mark, 1997, *Mrs. Biko's Dilemma*. In: *The Nation*, 3rd March 1993.

Giffard, C. Anthony, 1976, *South African Attitudes Toward News Media*. In: *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol.53, 653-660.

Gilchrist, Angela & Alex Butchart, 1998, *Monitoring Rape: Preliminary Findings of a Rape Surveillance Project*. In: *Crime & Conflict* (online edition), No. 11. Available at the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/indic/archives/crime/issue11/gilchris.htm

Giliomee, Hermann, 1989, *The Beginning of Afrikaner Ethnic Consciousness, 1850-1915*. In: Leroy Vail, *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. London: James Currey, 21-54.

Ginsburg, Faye, 1994, *Culture/Media. A (Mild) Polemic*. In: *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1994), 5-15.

Ginwala, Frene, 1973, *The Press in South Africa*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 27-39.

Glasgow Media Group (Beharrell, Peter, Howard Davis, John Eldridge, John Hewitt, Jean Oddie, Greg Philo, Paul Walton, & Brian Winston), 1976, *Bad News*. In: *Theory and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 339-363.

Goffman, Erving, 1974, *Frame Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Golding, Peter & Graham Murdock, 1978, *Ideology and the Mass Media and the Question of Determination*. In: Barrett, Michèle, Philip Corrigan, Annette Kuhn & Janet Wolff (eds.), *Ideology and Cultural Production*. New York, NY: St. Martin's, 198-224.

Goodenough, Ward H., 1964, *Cultural Anthropology and Language*. In: Dell Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society*. New York: Harper & Row, 36-39.

The Government of South Africa, 1999, *The Media*. In: *South Africa Yearbook 1999*. Yeoville: STE Publishers

_____, 2000, *Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) Position Paper*. Available online at the website of the government of South Africa at http://www.info.gov.za/documents/2000/mdda/

_____, 2002, *The Land and its People*. In: *South Africa Yearbook 2001/02*. Yeoville: STE Publishers.

Graber, Doris A., 1984, *Processing the News*. New York, NY: Longman.

Grace, George W., 1987, *The Linguistic Construction of Reality*. London: Croom Helm.

Grassroots, April 1985, *Grief and Anger*, 1.

_____, August 1985, *Thousands Mourn*, 2.

Green, Pippa, 1998, *Struggling for Memory Against Forgetting*. In: *Nieman Reports* (online edition), Vol. 52, No 4 (Winter 1998). Available at the website of Harvard University at http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/98-4NRwint98/Green.html

Griffin, Jennifer, 1992, *Crossfire in South Africa*. In: *Columbia Journalism Review* (online edition), November/December 1992. Available at the website of the Columbia Journalism Review at http://archives.cjr.org/year/92/6/safrica.asp

Grogan, John & Charles Riddle, 1987, *South Africa's Press in the Eighties: Darkness Descends*. In: *Gazette*, Vol. 39, 3-16.

The Guardian, 14th June 1986, *South Africa Tightens Grip on Media*, 1-2.

Guardian (Manchester), 25th January 1988, *Waving the Alternative Banners for Freedom*, page unknown.

The Guardian (online edition), 24th May 1999, *Nelson's Columnists*. No longer available online.

Hachten, William A., 1971, *Muffled Drums. The News Media in Africa*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.

_____, 1976, *Mass Media in South Africa: The View from Without*. In: André de Villiers, *English-Speaking South Africa Today*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 331-341.

_____, 1979, *Black Journalists under Apartheid*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 43-48.

_____, 1984, *The Press and Apartheid*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Hachten, William & Anthony Giffard, 1984, *Total Onslaught: The South African Press Under Attack*. Johannesburg: Macmillan.

Hagemann, Albrecht, 2001, *Kleine Geschichte Südafrikas*. München: Beck.

Hall, Stuart, 1973, *The Determination of News Photographs*. In: Stanley Cohen & Young, Jock (eds.), *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media*. London: Constable, 176-190.

_____, 1977, *Culture, the Media and the "Ideological Effect"*. In: James Curran, Michael Gurevitch & Jane Woollacott, *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold, 315-348.

_____, 1980, *Encoding/Decoding*. In: Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe & Paul Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson, 128-138.

_____, 1984, *The Rediscovery of "Ideology"*. In: Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, & Janet Woollacott, (eds.), *Culture, Society and the Media*. London: Methuen, 56-89.

Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke & Brian Roberts, 1978, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Hutchinson.

Halloran, James D., Philip Elliot & Graham Murdock, 1970, *Demonstrations and Communication: A Case Study*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Hamber, Brandon, 1997 a, *"Dr. Jackyll and Mr. Hide": Problems of Violence Prevention and Reconciliation in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papjeck.htm

_____, 1997 b, *Reflecting on the Truth: Has the Media Coverage of the TRC Changed the Way the Public Sees Itself, its History and its Responsibility?*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artrcros.htm

_____, 1999, *"Have no doubt it is fear in the land" An exploration of the continuing cycles of violence in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papfearb.htm

Hamber, Brandon & Sharon Lewis, 1998, *Crime's Worst Horror is all in the Mind.* Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artcrb&s.htm

Hammond-Tooke, W.D., 1997, *Imperfect Interpreters. South Africa's Anthropologists 1920-1990.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Hansen, Anders & Graham Murdock, 1985, *Constructing the Crowd: Populist Discourses and Press Presentation.* In: Vincent Mosco & Janet Wasko (eds.), *The Critical Communications Review, Volume 3: Popular Culture and Media Events.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 227-258.

Hansson, Desirée, 1990, *Changes to Counter-Revolutionary State Strategy in the Decade 1979 to 1989.* In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 28-62.

Harber, Anton, 1990, *Foreign Support is Vital to the Survival of the Alternative Press, Says the Co-Editor of One of South Africa's Leading Opposition Papers.* In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa,* Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 42-49.

Hargis, Billy J., Unknown, *The Communist Threat to Southern Africa.* Pretoria: Southern Africa Christian Crusade.

Harris, Bronwyn, 2002, *Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa?* In: D. Hook & G. Eagle, *Psychopathology and Social Prejudice.* Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, chapter 9. (I used a 14-page manuscript given to me by the author, so page numbers cited do no match the original.)

Harrison, David, 1981, *The White Tribe of Africa.* Berkeley, CA, and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Hartley, John, 1982, *Understanding News.* London: Methuen.

Hartmann, Paul & Husband, Charles, 1971, *The Mass Media and Racial Conflict.* In: *Race,* Vol. 7, 267-282.

_____, 1974, *Racism and the Mass Media.* London: Davis-Poynter.

Haysom, Nicholas, 1989 a, *Vigilantes: A Contemporary Form of Repression.* Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/paphaysm.htm

_____, 1989 b, *Vigilantes and the Militarisation of South Africa.* In: Jacklyn Cock & Laurie Nathan, *Society at War. The Militarisation of South Africa.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 188-199.

_____, 1990, *Vigilantism and the Policing of African Townships: Manufacturing Violent Stability.* In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 63-84.

Heard, Anthony H., 1986, *The Press in South Africa: Free to a Degree.* In: *Business and Society Review,* No. 57, Special Issue: *South Africa: Is there a Peaceful Path to Pluralism?,* 118-122.

_____, 1987, *How I was Fired*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 16, No. 10, 9-12.

_____, 1991, *The Cape of Storms*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Hellmann, Ellen, 1972, *The Crux of the Race Problem in South Africa*. In: Nic Rhoodie, *South African Dialogue*. Pretoria: McGraw Hill, 14-33.

Henderson, R. D. A., 1990 a, *Commentary No 5: De Klerk and "Law and Order" in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) at http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com5_e.html

_____, 1990 b, *Commentary No 7: Variants of Violence in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) at http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com7_e.html

_____, 1991, *Commentary No. 15: De Klerk's Relationship with the South African Intelligence Services*. Available online at the website of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) at http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com15_e.html

_____, 1994, *Commentary No. 44: South Africa: The Real Threat to Sustainable Democracy*. Available online at the website of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) at http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com44_e.html

Hennop, Ettienne, 1999, *Firearms and Violent Crime in South Africa*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 3, No. 1. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/CrimeIndex/99VOL3NO1/FirearmsAndViolentCrime.html

Hepple, Alex, 1974, *Press Under Apartheid*. London: International Defence and Aid Fund.

The Herald, 20th April 2002, *Two Rugby Players Guilty of Teenager's Brutal Murder*, 3.

Herman, Edward S., 1992, *Beyond Hypocrisy. Decoding the News in an Age of Propaganda: Including a Doublespeak Dictionary for the 1990s*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Herman, Edward S. & Noam Chomsky, 1988, *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Hirson, Baruch, 1979, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash. The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution?* London: Zed Press.

Hodge, Robert & Gunther Kress, 1988, *Social Semiotics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Hoffmann, Wilhelmina & Brian McKendrick, 1990, *Introduction*. In: Brian McKendrick & Wilhelmina Hoffmann, *People and Violence in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1-35.

Hope, Christopher, 1988, *White Boy Running*. London: Abacus.

Hopkins, Pat & Helen Grange, 2001, *The Rocky Rioter Teargas Show*. Cape Town: Zebra.

Horner, Bruce, *The Boers, and the Blood River Battle*. In: Frank W. Dowsett, *Our Protective God*. Mount Druitt Village: The Covenant Vision Ministry. Available online at http://homepage.idx.com.au/fdowsett/protect9.htm

Hudson, Judith, 1996, *Riding the Tiger: Urban Warfare on the East Rand*. In: William Gutteridge & J.E. Spence, *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Special Issue on Southern Africa, Vol. 8. No. 4. London: Frank Cass, 108-123.

Hudson, Miles & Stanier, John, 1998, *War and the Media*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Hugon, Cyrille, *In South Africa, 20 Years After Steve Biko's Death, the Truth Commission Grapples with the Meaning of Justice*. Available online at the website of Columbia University at http://www.columbia.edu./cu/sipa/PUBS/SLANT/SPRING97/hugon.html

Hugo, Giles, 1997, *Being There as the Laager Comes Tumbling Down*. This book report about *Now is the time: A personal Account of South Africa's Historic Transition from Apartheid to Democracy* by Marius Benson is available on the website *The Write Stuff* at http://www.the-write-stuff.com.au/archives/vol-1/reviews/time.html

Human Rights Watch, 1998, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1998, South Africa*. Available online at the website of Human Rights Watch at http://www.hrw.org/worldreport/Africa-11.htm

_____, 1999, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1999. South Africa*. Available online at the website of Human Rights Watch at http://www.hrw.org/worldreport99/africa/southafrica.html

_____, 2001, *Unequal Protection. The State Response to Violent Crime on South African Farms*. Available online at the website of Human Rights Watch at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/safrica2/

Independent Newspapers, *Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online at the website of the TRC at http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/submit/inc.htm

Independent Online, 2002, *Pretoria News*. Key facts and readership profile as well as letter from the editor. 2002 version no longer available online, updated version available at the website of the Pretoria News at http://www.pretorianews.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=685&SetId=315

Index on Censorship, 1975, *South Africa's Censorhip Laws*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 38-40.

_____, 1984 a, *The Minister Decides*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 13, No. 6, 15.

_____, 1984 b, *Intimidation*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 13, No. 6, 21.

Institute of Criminology University of Cape Town (UCT), 1991, *Back to the Laager. The Rise of Right Wing Violence in South Africa*. Cape Town: LEAP.

Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2004, *2003 National Victim Survey Results*. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/media/SANVCSeminar02_03_04.htm

International Journalists' Network (IJNet), 2000, *South Africa: Press Overview*.

International Press Institute (IPI), 1999, *1998 World Press Freedom Review – South Africa*. Available online at the website of the International Press Institute at http://www.freemedia.at

_____, 2000, *1999 World Press Freedom Review – South Africa*. Available online at the website of the International Press Institute at http://www.freemedia.at

Isaaks, Henry, 1990, *Government Uses the Carrot and Stick Approach to Hold Power Over Blacks*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*, Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 25-31.

Iser, Wolfgang, 1978, *The Act of Reading*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins.

Jackson, Gordon S., 1993, *Breaking the Story. The South African Press*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Jalbert, Paul L., 1983, *Some Constructs for Analysing News*. In: Howard Davis & Paul Walton, *Language, Image, Media*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 282-299.

Janney, Richard W., 1999, *The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth. Linguistic Avoidance in the O.J. Simpson Transcripts*. In: Wolfgang Falkner & H.-J. Schmid (eds.), *Words, Lexemes, Concepts – Approaches to the Lexicon. Studies in Honour of Leonhard Lipka*. Tübingen: Narr.

Jensen, Klaus B., 1991, *Humanistic Scholarship as Qualitative Science: Contributions to Mass Communication Research*. In: Klaus B. Jensen & Nicholas W. Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*. London: Routledge, 17-43.

Johnston, Alexander, 1996, *Politics and Violence in KwaZulu Natal*. In: William Gutteridge & J.E. Spence, *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Special Issue on Southern Africa, Vol. 8. No. 4. London: Frank Cass, 78-107.

Jones, Adam, 1998, *From Rightist to "Brightest"? The Strange Tale of South Africa's Citizen*. In: *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 325-345.

Joyce, Peter, 1990, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

Kane-Berman, John, 1979, *Soweto. Black Revolt, White Reaction*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

_____, 1991, *South Africa's Silent Revolution*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Kanhema, Newton, 1998, *Speechless*. In: *Index on Censorship Online*. Available online at http://www.oneworld.org/index_oc/news/southafrica80598.html

Kaplan, Kenneth, 1987, *The Hidden Farms*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 16, No. 10, 12.

Keesing, Roger M., 1979, *Linguistic Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge: Some Doubts and Speculations*. In: *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 81, No. 1, 14-36.

Kellner, Douglas, *Communications vs.Cultural Studies: Overcoming the Divide*. Available online at http://www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/kell4.htm

Kitis, E., & Milapides, M., 1997, *Read it and Believe it: How Metaphor Constructs Ideology in News Discourse. A Case Study*. In: *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 28, No. 5, 557-590.

Knysna-Plett Herald, 18th April 2002, *Armed Robberies Rock Knysna*, 5.

Korzybski, Alfred O., 1995 (1933), *Science and Sanity*. Institute of General Semantics.

Kress, Gunther, 1983, *Linguistic and Ideological Transformation in News Reporting*. In: Howard Davis & Paul Walton, *Language, Image, Media*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 120-138.

_____, 1985, *Discourses, Texts, Readers and the Pro-Nuclear Arguments*. In: Paul Chilton (ed.), *Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate: Nukespeak Today*. London and Dover, NH: Frances Printer, 71-87.

Kress, Gunther & Robert Hodge, 1979, *Language as Ideology*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Kress, Gunther & Theo van Leeuwen, 1998, *Front Pages: (The Critical) Analysis of Newspaper Layout*. In: Alan Bell & Peter Garrett (eds.), *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 186-219.

Kristeva, Julia, 1986, *Word, Dialogue and Novel*. In: Toril Moi (ed.): *The Kristeva Reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 34-61.

Lacob, Miriam, 1982, *South Africa's 'Free' Press*. In: *Columbia Journalism Review*, November/December 1982, 49-56.

Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson, 1980, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lang, Gladys E. & Kurt Lang, 1981, *Mass Communication and Public Opinion: Strategies for Research*. In: Morris Rosenberg & Ralph H. Turner (eds.), *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*. New York: Basic Books, 653-681.

Langa, Mandla, *The Writing was Always on the Wall, but Where Were the Reporters?* In: *Rhodes Journalism Review* (online edition), No. 14 (Special Edition). This contribution is available in two parts at the website of Rhodes University. Part 1 at http://journ.ru.ac.za/review/14/langa.html and Part 2 at http://journ.ru.ac.za/review/14/langa2.html

Laurence, John C., 1979, *Race, Propaganda and South Africa*. London: Victor Gollancz.

Leatt, James, Theo Knifel & Klaus Nurnberger (eds.), 1986, *Contending Ideologies in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philips.

Legett, Ted, 2002, *Improved Crime Reporting: Is South Africa's Crime Wave a Statistical Illusion?* In: *SA Crime Quarterly*, No. 1 (July 2002). Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/CrimeQ/No.1/2Leggett.html

Leggett, Ted, Antoinette Louw, Martin Schönteich & Makubetse Sekhonyane, *Safety and Security*. In: *Criminal Justice in Review: 2001/2002*. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Mono/Chap3.html

Lewin, Hugh, 1998, *The Never-Ending Story. How the TRC Changed the Nature of Story-Telling in South Africa*. In: Melissa Baumann (ed.): *Track Two,* Volume 7, Number 4, December 1998*: Media and Conflict*. Available online at http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/7_4/index74.html

Lewis, Justin, 1994, *The Meaning of Things: Audiences, Ambiguity, and Power*. In: Jon Cruz & Justin Lewis (eds.), *Viewing, Reading, Listening: Audiences and Cultural Reception*. Oxford: Westview Press, 19-32.

Lewis, Sharon, 1997, A Cry that No One Hears. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artlewis.htm

Lindkvist, Kent, 1981, *Approaches to Textual Analysis*. In: Rosengren, Karl E., *Advances in Content Analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 23-41.

Lippmann, Walter, 1991 (1922), *Public Opinion*. In: Protess, David L. & Maxwell E. McCombs (eds.), *Agenda Setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 5-15.

Lodge, Tom, 1983, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*. Harlow: Longman.

Louw, Antoinette, 1998, *The Problem With Police Statistics*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 2, No. 3. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/CrimeIndex/98Vol2No3/TheProblem.html

_____, 1999, *New Trends in Violent Crime*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 3, No. 1. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/PUBS/CRIMEINDEX/99VOL3NO1/NewTrends.html

Louw, Antoinette, Mark Shaw, Lala Camerer & Rory Robertshaw, 1998 a, *Victims of Crime in Johannesburg*. In: *Crime in Johannesburg*. ISS Monograph 18. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No18/Victims.html

_____, 1998 b, *Responses to Victimisation*. In: *Crime in Johannesburg*. ISS Monograph 18. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No18/Responses.html

Louw, Antoinette, Mark Shaw, Lala Camerer & Rory Robertshaw, 1998 c, *Crime City: An International Perspective on Johannesburg*. In: *Crime & Conflict* (online edition), No. 11. Available at the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/indic/archives/crime/issue11/louw2.htm

Louw, P. Eric, 1993 a, *Introduction*. In: P. Eric Louw (ed.): *South African Media Policy: Debates of the 1990s*. Bellville: Anthropos, 9-26.

_____, 1993 b, *The Growth of Monopoly Control of the South African Press*. In: P. Eric Louw (ed.): *South African Media Policy: Debates of the 1990s*. Bellville: Anthropos, 159-180.

_____, 1993 c, *Monopoly, Oligopoly or Imperfect Competition: A Reply to Peter Sullivan*. In: P. Eric Louw (ed.): *South African Media Policy: Debates of the 1990s*. Bellville: Anthropos, 187-190.

Louw, P. Eric & Keyan G. Tomaselli, 1989, *Militarisation, Hegemony and the South African Media, 1976-1986*. In: *Con-Text*, Vol. 2, 27-47.

Lüger, Heinz-Helmut, 1983, *Pressesprache*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Lynch, Jake, 1999, *What are Journalists for?* Conflict and Peace Forum paper.

MacKuen, Michael B. & Steven L. Coombs, 1981, *More Than News: Media Power in Public Affairs*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

MacLuhan, Marshall, 1964, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Magubane, Bernard M., 1989, *From Soweto to Uitenhage*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Magubane, Peter & Marshall Lee, 1979, *Soweto*. Cape Town: Don Nelson.

Mail & Guardian (print edition), 5th April 2002, *Limpopo Policeman Accused of Raping his Kids*, 3.

_____, 12th April 2002, *Call for Troops in KZN*, 8.

_____, 26th April 2002, *Crossroads in Uproar after Killing of DA Man*, 8.

_____, 17th May 2002, *Was it a Racist Murder?* 12.

_____, 28th June 2002, *Sinkholes just an Excuse, say Squatters*, 5.

Mail & Guardian (print edition from online archive - available only by subscription), 6th December 1995, *It is not just Criminals that Cause High Crime*.

_____, 20th December 1995, *Spying Row at SABC*.

_____, 14th June 1996 a, *Story of the Decade*.

_____, 14th June 1996 b, *'I Really Fear for my Country'*.

_____, 25th October 1996, *There's Life after the Death Squads for Pauw*.

_____, 7th March 1997 a, *Press Whitewashes the Dirt*.

_____, 7th March 1997 b, *Argus 'Mea Culpa' Row*.

_____, 18th April 1997, *Crime Wave: It's Worse than You Thought*.

_____, 18th July 1997, *Media Bosses Who Played the Apartheid Game*.

_____, 1st August 1997, *No Red Badge of Courage for Editors*.

Malan, Mark, 1999, *Police Reform in South Africa: Peacebuilding without Peacekeepers*. In: *African Security Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/8No3/PoliceReform.html

Malan, M. A., *Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online at the website of the TRC at http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/submit/malan.htm

Malan, Rian, 1990, *My Traitor's Heart*. New York, NY: The Atlantic Press.

Mandela, Nelson, 1964, *I am Prepared to Die*. Nelson Mandela's statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia trial. Available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/rivonia.html

_____, 1995, *Long Walk to Freedom*. London: Abacus.

Manganyi, N. Chabani & André du Toit, 1990, *Editorial Introduction*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit, *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1-28.

Manning, Richard, 1987, *They Cannot Kill Us All*. Boston, MA: Houghton Miffin Company.

Maré, Gerhard & Muntu Ncube, 1989, *Inkatha: Marching from Natal to Pretoria?*. In: Glenn Moss & Ingrid Obrey, *South African Review*, Vol. 5, 474-490.

Marks, Shula & Neil Andersson, 1990, *The Epidemiology and Culture of Violence*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit, *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 29-69.

Marinovich, Greg & Joao Silva, 2000, *The Bang Bang Club*. London: Arrow Books.

Martin, Karen, 1997, *Chronology of Some Pointers to the History of the Media in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) at http://fxi.org.za/archives/karen.txt

Martin, Karen & Kevin Moorhead, 1997, *Legislation which Restricted the Press During the Apartheid Years*. Available online at the website of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) at http://fxi.org.za/archives/2karen.txt

Masipa, Mike, 1998, *Concern Over Attacks on Freedom of Press*. Johannesburg: Independent Newspapers.

Massing, Michael, 1987, *Letter from South Africa*. In: *Columbia Journalism Review*, January/February 1987, 35-39.

Mathews, Anthony S., 1978, *The Darker Reaches of Government*. Cape Town: Juta.

Mathiane, Naomavenda, 1989, *South Africa: Diary of Troubled Times*. New York, NY: Freedom House.

McCarthy, Jeffrey, 1998, *Violence in South Africa*. New London, CT: Connecticut College.

McCombs, Maxwell E. & Sheldon Gilbert, 1986, *News Influence on Our Pictures of the World*. In: Jennings Bryant & Dolf Zillmann, *Perspectives on Media Effects*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1-15.

McMahon, Barrie & Robyn Quinn, 1993, *Media Matters in South Africa*. In: Brian Shoesmith, & Ian Angus (eds.), *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, Vol.

7, No. 1. Available online at
http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/7.1/McMahon.html

McRobbie, Angela, 1982, *The Politics of Feminist Research: Between Talk, Text and Action*. In: *Feminist Review*, No. 12, 46-57.

Meli, Francis, 1990, *ANC Image Distorted by Government Propaganda*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 150-154.

Merrett, Christopher, 1994, *A Culture of Censorship*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Merrett, Christopher & Christopher Saunders, 2000, *The Weekly Mail, 1985-1994*. In: Les Switzer & Mohamed Adhikari, *South Africa's Resistance Press*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 458-486.

Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary, Searchword: *Violence*. The online-edition of Webster's Dictionary is available at the website of the Encyclopaedia Britannica at http://www.britannica.com

Moores, Shaun, 1993, *Interpreting Audiences*. London: Sage Publications.

Morley, David, 1983, *Cultural Transformations: The Politics of Resistance*. In: Howard Davis & Paul Walton, *Language, Image, Media*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 104-119.

Mortimer, B., *Submission From the Former SADF*. The SADF's submission to the TRC is available at the website of the TRC at http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/submit/sadf.htm

Mpofu, Bhekizulu, 1996, *Corporate Monopoly in the South African Print Media: Implications for the Alternative Press with Particular Reference to New Nation*. M.A. dissertation, University of Natal (Durban). Available online at the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/publications/dissertations/mpofu.htm

Mufson, Steven, 1990, *Fighting Years*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Murdock, Graham, 1973, *Political Deviance: The Press Presentation of Militant Mass Demonstrations*. In: Stanley Cohen & Jock Young (eds.), *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media*. London: Constable, 156-175.

Murray, A. H., 1961, *Red Strategy and Tactics*. Auckland Park: Elata/SABC.

Mutume, Gumisai, 1998, *Development – South Africa: Crime Down, But Not Out*. Available online at http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/may98/16_09_068.html

Nagle, Patrick, 1990, *Government Effectively Puts the Lid on South Africa Discontent*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*, Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 91-94.

Naspers, 2003, *Company History*. Available online at the website of Naspers at http://www.naspers.co.za/english/history.asp

The Natal Mercury, 17th June 1976 a, *Soweto Explodes*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 b, *How a Demo Became a Riot*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 c, *Mob on the Rampage*, 2.

_____, 17th June 1976 d, *Survivors tell of Terror Ordeal*, 5.

_____, 18th June 1976, *Death Town Burns*,1.

_____, 19th June 1976, *Day of Chaos*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980 a, *New Bomb Find*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980 b, *Le Grange warns SA's Neighbours of Reprisals*, 1.

_____, 3rd June 1980, *50 Cape Buses Stoned*, 3.

_____, 25th May 1983, *41 ANC Terrorists Killed, says SADF*, 1.

_____, 14th December 1985, *Man Killed as Police Break up Boycott mob*, 16.

_____, 16th December 1985 a, *Mob of Youths Stone Cars after UDF Rally*, 2.

_____, 16th December 1985 b, *Man shot as Vigilantes and Youths clash*, 2.

_____, 24th December 1985, *Bomb Atrocity*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1986, *No Time for Despondency*, 1.

_____, 23rd April 1986, *Torture Occurs in SA but 'Claims are Exaggerated'*, 14.

_____, 17th June 1986, *Arms Find*, 2.

_____, 2nd March 1990, *Mob Attacks House, Shoots Man Dead*, 3.

_____, 19th April 1994, *Top Newsman dies during Gun Battle*, 1.

Natal on Saturday, 12th March 1994, *Shot like Dogs*, 1.

Natal Witness, 12th April 2002, *Pretoria Rail Commuters Calmer after Violence*, 3.

Nathan, Laurie, 1989, *Troops in the Townships, 1984-1987*. In: Jacklyn Cock & Laurie Nathan, *Society at War. The Militarisation of South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 67-78.

National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996). Available online at the website of the South African government at http://www.gov.za/reports/1996/crime1.htm

Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, & Zoe M. Oxley, 1997, *Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects*. In: *Political Behavior*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 221-246.

Neue Züricher Zeitung, 13th December 1986, *Schlag gegen die Pressefreiheit in Süd Afrika*, 1-2.

North, James, 1986, *Freedom Rising*. New York, NY: Pume.

Nustad, Knut G., 1999, *Questions of Legitimacy in Post-Conflict Peace Building and Arms Control*. GCSP Occasional Paper No 3: Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

O'Brien, Sue, 1993, *Eye on Soweto: A Study in News Photo Use*. In: *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 69-87.

O'Dowd, Catherine F., 1996, *An Examination of the Factors underlying Decision-Making about Selection and Presentation of Photographs of Political Conflict in South African Newspapers*. Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Oosthuizen, Lucas, 1994, *The Safety of Journalists: A South African Dilemma*. In: *Dialogus* (online edition), Vol. 1, No. 1. No longer available online.

Orywal, Erwin, Rao, Aparna & Bollig, Michael, 1996, *Krieg und Kampf. Die Gewalt in unseren Köpfen*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

Pahad, Esop, 1993, *The Media are too Important to be Left to Professionals*. In: P. Eric Louw, *South African Media Policy: Debates of the 1990s*. Bellville: Anthropos, 123-127.

Pakendorf, Harold, 1986, *The Afrikaaner Press*. In: *Business and Society Review*, No. 57, Special Issue: *South Africa: Is there a Peaceful Path to Pluralism*?, 123-124.

_____, 1987, *The Afrikaaner Press: Free to a Degree*. In: Prakash Sethi, 1987, *The South African Quagmire*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing, 263-267.

Pan, Zhongdang, & Gerald M. Kosicki, 1993, *Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse*. In: *Political Communication*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 55-75.

Patten, John, 1997, *The Argus Company and Human Rights Abuses*. Report to Independent Newspapers for their submission to the TRC.

Pauw, Jacques, 1991, *The Heart of the Whore*. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.

_____, 1993, *Violence: The Role of the Security Forces*. This paper was presented at a seminar at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, on 27th May 1992 and is available online at the website of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation at www.csvr.org.za/papers/pappauw.htm

Phelan, John M., 1987, *Apartheid Media*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co.

Pilger, John, 1998, *Has the ANC Sold Out?*. Available online at http://www.ainfos.ca/98/may/ainfos00223.html

Pimstone, Gideon, 1998, *Public Perceptions, Underreporting and Self-Fulfilling Prophecies*. In: *Nebank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 2, No. 1. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies at http://www.iss.co.za/PUBS/CRIMEINDEX/98VOL2NO1/PublicsPerceptions.html

Pogrund, Benjamin, 1976, *The South African Press*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 10-16.

_____, 1990, *How can Man Die Better… Sobukwe and Apartheid*. London: Peter Halban.

_____, 2000, *War of Words*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.

Pollack, Richard, 1981, *Up Against Apartheid: The Role and Plight of the Press in South Africa*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Posel, Deborah, 1989, *A 'Battlefield of Perceptions': State Discourses on Political Violence, 1985-1988*. In: Jacklyn Cock & Laurie Nathan, *Society at War. The Militarisation of South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 262-274.

_____, 1990, *Symbolizing Violence: State and Media Discourse in TV Coverage of Township Protest, 1985-7*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit, *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 154-171.

Potter, Elaine, 1975, *The Press as Opposition: The Political Role of South African Newspapers*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Potter, Jonathan, 1996, *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. London: Sage Publications.

Pottinger, Brian, *Comment on the Extract*. In: *Rhodes Journalism Review* (online edition), No. 15. Available at the website of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University at http://journ.ru.ac.za/review/15/potting.htm

Pretoria News, 3rd June 1980, *Huge Manhunt for Saboteurs*, 1.

_____, 21st May 1983, *Bloody Friday*, 1.

_____, 23rd May 1983, *S.A. Strikes Back*, 1.

_____, 20th July 1985 (Sunrise Edition), *Pressure Builds to put Stop to Violence*, 1.

_____, 12th June 1986 (Stop Press Edition), *Untitled map of Cape Town, no article*, 3.

_____, 13th June 1986 a, *Entire Country Target*, 5.

_____, 13th June 1986 b, *Revolutionary Forces much Stronger, says SACP*, 5.

_____, 16th June 1986 (Stop Press Edition), *22 Die, 77 Injured in Emergency*, 3.

_____, 6th September 1990, *Whites 'Seen' During Hostel Attack*, 1.

_____, 7th September 1990, *Massacre*, 1.

_____, 13th September 1990, *Killing Spree Mayhem Spreads*, 1.

_____, 18th June 1992 (City Late Edition) a, *33 Killed in Camp Rampage*, 1.

_____, 18th June 1992 (Late Final Edition) b, *34 Die in 'Impi' Raid*, 1.

_____, 23rd May 2002, *Brave Mom Saves Son*, 1.

_____, 24th May 2002, *Savage Farm Killer Jailed for Life*, page unknown.

Prinsloo, Megan, 2002, *Manner of Non-Natural Death*. In: Richard Matzopoulos, *A Profile of Fatal Injuries in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme 2002. Available online at http://www.sahealthinfo.org/violence/2001chapter3.pdf

Quasthoff, Uta M., 1989, *Social Prejudice as a Resource of Power: Towards the Functional Ambivalence of Stereotypes*. In: Ruth Wodak, *Language, Power and Ideology.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 181-196.

Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred R., 1987 (1940), *Preface*. In: Meyer Fortes & Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, xi-xxiii.

Radio Freedom, 1984 a, *South Africa is in a State of War*. Recording on CD: *Radio Freedom: Voice of the African National Congress*. 18th June 1996, Rounder Records Corporation, CD 4019, Track 4.

_____, 1984 b, *Revolutionary Violence*. Recording on CD: *Radio Freedom: Voice of the African National Congress*. 18th June 1996, Rounder Records Corporation, CD 4019, Track 6.

_____, 1985, *Our Task is to Make Government Impossible*. Recording on CD: *Radio Freedom: Voice of the African National Congress*. 18th June 1996, Rounder Records Corporation, CD 4019, Track 18.

Rand Daily Mail, 16th June 1976, *Wood Splintering 'led to Death'*, 5.

_____, 17th June 1976 a, *Flaming Night*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 b, *Police Fired – Then I saw Four Children Fall*, 2.

_____, 17th June 1976 c, *First Shots were Fired in White City*, 2.

_____, 17th June 1976 d, *Doctor: Many Wounded had been Shot*, 2.

_____, 17th June 1976 e, *Women Dragged off by Student Mob*, 3.

_____, 17th June 1976 f, *Pupils Loot Vans at Orlando Roadblocks*, 6.

_____, 17th June 1976 g, *Newsmen Roughed up as Students Grab Cameras*, 6.

_____, 17th June 1976 h, *Riot in Soweto – Warning Signs were there*, 15.

_____, 18th June 1976 a, *Armed Thugs Demand Money*, 2.

_____, 18th June 1976 b, *Street Fights Erupt in Jo'burg March*, 39.

_____, 19th June 1976 a, *Police Guard White Suburbs*, 1.

_____, 19th June 1976 b, *Looting and Death in Alexandra*, 3.

_____, 19th June 1976 c, *Pillage as Beer and Blood Flow*, 1.

_____, 19th June 1976 d, *Mobs on Rampage in East Rand Townships*, 2.

_____, 16th June 1977, *'Police fired to save their lives'*, 3.

_____, 17th June 1977 a, *Shootings: 9 Wounded*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1977 b, *Police Shoot Two in E Cape Flare-Up*, 1.

_____, 12th September 1977, *Assassins gun down Policeman*, 1.

_____ 14th September 1977 a, *World Outcry Over Biko Death*, 1.

_____ 14th September 1977 b, *Steve Biko*, 1.

_____ 14th September 1977 c, *My Friend Steve Biko*, 9.

_____, 24th May 1983, *'Keep Out of it or Our Planes will Hit Back'*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 a, *17 Dead in East Cape Bloodbath*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 b, *Police Kill two in ANC Shoot-out*, 2.

_____, 25th March 1985, *10 die in Eastern Cape Weekend Unrest*, 1.

Rantete, Johannes M., 1985, *The Third Day of September*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 37-41.

_____, 1998, T*he African National Congress and the Negotiated Settlement in South Africa*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik Publishers.

Rauch, Janine, 1993, *The Police and the Violence in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papp&vjr.htm

Rauch, Janine & David Storey, 1998, *The Policing of Public Gatherings and Demonstrations in South Africa 1960-1994*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papjr&ds.htm

Reah, Danuta, 1998, *The Language of Newspapers*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Reeves, Ambrose,1960, *The Shooting at Sharpeville. The Agony of South Africa*. London: Victor Gollancz.

_____, 1966, *The Sharpeville Massacre – A Watershed in South African History*. This paper originally published by the United Nations Unit on Apartheid is available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/misc/shareve.html

Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Attacks, 31st July 2003. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/farmattack/

Retief, Johan, 2002, *Media Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rhoodie, Eschel, 1969, *The Paper Curtain*. Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers.

Rhoodie, Nic J. & M.P. Cooper, 1987, Whites' *Perceptions of the Fundamental Issues Surrounding the Election of 6 May 1987*. In: D.J. van Vuuren, Lawrence Schlemmer, H.C. Marais & J. Latakgomo, *South African Election 1987*. Pinetown: Owen Burgess Publishers, 187-238.

Riches, David, 1986, *The Phenomenon of Violence*. In: David Riches (ed.), *The Anthropology of Violence*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1-27.

Ricoeur, Paul, 1981, *The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text*. In: John B. Thompson (ed.), *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 197-221.

Riggins, Stephen H., 1997, *The Rhetoric of Othering*. In: Stephen H. Riggins (ed.), *The Language and Politics of Exclusion: Others in Discourse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1-30.

Robertshaw, Rory, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Mduduzi Mashiyane & Sid Brettell, 2001 a, *The Extent of Crime*. In: Rory Robertshaw, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Mduduzi Mashiyane & Sid Brettell, *Reducing Crime in Durban*. ISS Monograph 58. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No58/Chap5.html

_____, 2001 b, *Crime Profiles*. In: Rory Robertshaw, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Mduduzi Mashiyane & Sid Brettell, *Reducing Crime in Durban*. ISS Monograph 58. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No58/Chap7.html

_____, 2001 c, *Perceptions of Safety*. In: Rory Robertshaw, Antoinette Louw, Mark Shaw, Mduduzi Mashiyane & Sid Brettell, *Reducing Crime in Durban*. ISS Monograph 58. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at
http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No58/Chap11.html

Robertson, Mary, 1998, *An Overview of Rape in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)
http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artrapem.htm

Rule, Stephen, 2000, *Electoral Territoriality in Southern Africa*. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Sanders, James, 2000, *South Africa and the International Media, 1972-1979. A Struggle for Representation*. London: Frank Cass.

Sapir, Edward, 1962 (1929), *The Status of Linguistics as a Science*. In: David G. Mandelbaum (ed.) *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*. Berkeley, CA & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Sayer, Andrew, 1984, *Method in Social Science*. Melbourne: Hutchinson & Co.

Schärf, Wilfried, 1990, *The Resurgence of Urban Street Gangs and Community Responses in Cape Town During the Late Eighties*. In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 232-261.

Schärf, Wilfried & Baba Ngcokoto, 1990, *Images of Punishment in the People's Courts of Cape Town 1985-87: From Pre-figurative Justice to Populist Violence*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit, *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 341-371.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, *Children without Childhoods*. Available online http://www.newint.org/issue265/children.htm

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy & Philippe Bourgois, 2004, *Introduction: Making Sense of Violence*. In: Nancy Scheper-Hughes & Philippe Bourgois (eds.), *Violence in War and Peace*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1-31.

Schlesinger, Philip, 1991, *Media, State and Nation. Political Violence and Collective Identities*. London: Sage Publications.

Schönteich, Martin, 1999, *A Battle Lost? Violent Crime Trends in 1999*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 4, No. 3. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/CRIMEINDEX/00VOL4NO3/Battle.html

_____, 2000, *Guarding the Guardians: New Regulations for the Private Security Industry*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 4, No. 3. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/CRIMEINDEX/00VOL4NO3/Gaurding.html

Schönteich, Martin & Antoinette Louw, 1999, *Crime Trends in SA 1985-1998*. Available online at the website of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papms&al.htm

_____, 2001,*Crime in South Africa: A Country and Cities Profile*. ISS Occasional Paper No. 49. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/PAPERS/49/PAPER49.HTML

Schudson, Michael, 1991, *The Sociology of News Revisited*. In: James Curran & Michael Gurevitch, *Mass Media and Society*. London: Edward Arnold, 141-159.

Schulz, Winfried, 1976, *Die Konstruktion von Realität in den Nachrichtenmedien*. München: Verlag Karl Alber.

Schurink, Evanthene M., 1998, *Crimes Committed against Women and Children: High Levels Need a Forward Approach*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 2, No. 4. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/PUBS/CRIMEINDEX/98VOL2NO4/CrimeAgainstWoman.html

Scollon, Ronald, 1998, *Mediated Discourse as Social Interaction: A Study of News Discourse*. London: Longman.

Searle, John R., 1995, *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Free Press.

Sechaba, December 1986, *25 Years of Armed Struggle*, 10-18.

Seekings, Jeremy, 2000, *The Media of the United Democratic Front*. In: Les Switzer & Mohamed Adhikari, *South Africa's Resistance Press*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 223-259.

Segal, Lauren, 1991, *The Human Face of Violence: Hostel Dwellers Speak*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/paphost.htm

Sepstrup, Preben, 1981, *Methodological Developments in Content Analysis*. In: Karl E. Rosengren, *Advances in Content Analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 133-158.

Servaes, Jan & Rico Lie, 1996, *Toward a More Interpretive Communication Research 'Framework': Television as a Cultural System. An Interpretation of Clifford Geertz*. In: *Communicatio*, Vol. 22, No. 1. Available online at the website of the University of South Africa at http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=7117

Sharp, John S., 1980, *The Roots and Development of Volkekunde in South Africa*. In: *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 16-36.

Shaw, Gerald, 1999, *The Cape Times*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

Shaw, Mark, 1996 a, *Introduction*. In: Mark Shaw & Lala Camerer, *Policing the Transformation*. ISS Monograph 3. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No3/Contents.html

_____, 1996 b, *Crime, Political Transition and Changing Forms of Policing Control*. In: Mark Shaw & Lala Camerer, *Policing the Transformation*. ISS Monograph 3. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No3/Contents.html

_____, 1996 c, *South Africa: Crime in Transition*. In: William Gutteridge & J.E. Spence, *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Special Issue on Southern Africa, Vol. 8. No. 4. London: Frank Cass, 156-175.

_____, 1997, *Crime in Transition*. In: Mark Shaw, Lala Camerer, Duxita Mistry, Sarah Oppler & Lukas Muntingh, *Policing the Transformation*. ISS Monograph 12. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No12/Contents.html

____, 2002, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Shaw, Mark & Antoinette Louw, 1998 a, *Crime and Policing: Perceptions and Fears*. In: *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 2, No. 1. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/PUBS/CRIMEINDEX/98VOL2NO1/CrimeAndPolicing.html

_____, 1998 b, *Fear of Crime*. In: Mark Shaw & Antoinette Louw, *Environmental Design for Safer Communities*. ISS Monograph 24. Available online at the website of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No24/Fear.html

Sherizen, Sanford, 1978, *Social Creation of Crime News: All the News Fitted to Print*. In: Chrles Winnick (ed.) *Deviance and Mass Media*. Beverly Hills, Ca: Sage, 203-224.

Shi-Xu, 2003, *Cultural Studies of Discourse (CSD)*. As yet unpublished, School of Communication, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland.

Shotter, John, 1993, *Conversational Realities: Constructing Life Through Language*. London: Sage Publications.

Sibeko, David M., 1976, T*he Sharpeville Massacre. Its Historic Significance in the Struggle Against Apartheid*. Available online on the website of the ANC at: http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/misc/sharplle.html

Silke, Daniel, 1997, *What Shaped South Africa?*

Simpson, Graeme, 1993, *Explaining Endemic Violence in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papendem.htm

_____, 1996, *The Fight Against Crime Can no Longer Afford to Ignore Victims' Rights*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artcrimg.htm

_____, 1997, *A "Culture of Impunity"*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artimpun.htm

Simpson, Graeme & Janine Rauch, 1993, *Political Violence: 1991*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papolv91.htm

Simpson, Graeme, Mary Robertson & Brandon Hamber, 1997, *Rape a Symptom of Transitional Turmoil*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artrape1.htm

Simpson, Graeme & Lloyd Vogelman, 1989 a, *Peaceful Marches and Police Action: Some Explanations*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artmobs2.htm

_____, 1989 b, *The Myths of Mobs and Marches*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artmobs1.htm

Simpson, Graeme & Paul van Zyl, 1995, *South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. In: *Temps Modernes*, No. 585, 394-407.

Simpson, Graeme, Steve Mokwena & Lauren Segal, 1991, *Political Violence: 1990*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papolv90.htm

Skjerdal, Terje, 1997, *Mapping the Gap: South African Journalists in Disagreement over the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Media Hearings*. Unpublished paper available online at the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/publications/articles/trc.htm

Snyder, Mark, 1981, *On the Self-Perpetuating Nature of Social Stereotypes*. In: David L. Hamilton, *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behaviour*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 183-212.

Sornig, Karl, 1989, *Some Remarks on Linguistic Strategies of Persuasion*. In: Ruth Wodak, *Language, Power and Ideology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 97-113.

South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), 2004, *Readership of Newspapers in 1,000's*. Available online at the website of the SAARF at http://www.saarf.co.za/topnews.htm

South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 1977, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1976*.

_____, 1978, *South Africa in Travail. The disturbance of 1976/77*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

_____, 1979, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1978*.

_____, 1988, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1987*.

_____, 2001, *Nothing new in Child Rape*. News Release available online at the website of the South African Institute of Race Relations at http://www.sairr.org.za/wsc/pstory.htx?storyID=242

South African History Online, *Steve Biko – Introduction*. Available online at http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/specialprojects/black-consciousness/biko/intro.htm

South African Police Service (SAPS), unknown a, *Domestic Violence: The New Approach*. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/legis/domestic.htm

_____, unknown b, Introduction to Community Policing. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/6_commpol/6_mcp2.htm

_____, 1997, *CIMC Quarterly Crime Report 4/97*. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/8%5Fcrimeinfo/497/natprov.htm. I used the following pages:
- a) Assault – common
- b) Burglary (and attempts) – Business premises
- c) Burglary (and attempts) – Residential premises
- d) Rape
- e) Indecent assault
- f) Explosive act
- g) Public violence
- h) Murder
- i) Robbery with aggravated circumstances
- j) Common robbery
- k) Attempted murder
- l) Cruelty and ill-treatment of children (excluding sexual offences, assault and murder)

_____, 2001 a, *Murder in the RSA for the Period January to September 1994 to 2001*. In: *Specific Crime in the RSA: January to September 1994-2001*. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/crime/murder.htm

_____, 2001 b, *Explosives Act in the RSA for the Period January to September 1994 to 2001*. In: *Specific Crime in the RSA: January to September 1994-2001*. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/8_crimeinfo/200112/crime/explosive.htm

_____, 2003 a, *Murder in the RSA for the Period January to December 1994 to 2002*. In: *Crime Statistics as Released on 2003-09-22*. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/8_crimeinfo/200309/murder.htm

_____, 2003 b, *Crime in the RSA for the Period January to December 1994 to 2002*. In: *Crime Statistics as Released on 2003-09-22*. Available online at the website of the South African Police Service at http://www.saps.gov.za/8_crimeinfo/200309/index.htm. I used the following pages:
   a) Murder
   b) Robbery with aggravated circumstances
   c) Other robbery
   d) Public Violence
   e) Rape
   f) Assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm
   g) Common assault
   h) Burglary at non-residential premises
   i) Burglary at residential premises
   j) Theft of motor vehicle or motorcycle
   k) Theft out of or from motor vehicle
   l) Carjacking

Sowetan, 19th April 2002, *They're Guilty in my Eyes*, 1.

Sparks, Allister, 1990 a, *The Mind of South Africa*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

_____, 1990 b, *Booknotes Transcript: The Mind of South Africa*. Transcript of an interview with Allister Sparks aired on C-SPAN on 20th May 1990. Available online at http://www.booknotes.org/Transcript/?ProgramID=1004

_____, 1999, *The Status of the Dream*. In: *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 1999), 66-92.

Sperling, Gerald B. & McKenzie, James E., 1990, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.

Spitulnik, Debra, 1993, *Anthropology and Mass Media*. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 22, 293-315.

The Star, 16th June 1976 (Stop Press Edition) a, *Man Dies after Cafe Shooting*, 3.

_____, 16th June 1976 (City Late Edition) b, *Children Riot*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1976 (City Late Edition) c, *Six Die in Riot*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1976 (Late Final Edition) d, *Six Die in Rioting*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1976 (Late Final Edition) e, *Pupils' Taunts 'Set off Police Shooting'*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1976 (Late Final Edition) f, *Children set Cars Ablaze*, 1.

_____, 16th June 1976 (Late Final Edition) g, *Late Flash*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 (Stop Press Edition (1)) a, *'Bloodbath' – Police Action Condemned*, 3.

_____, 17th June 1976 (Stop Press Edition (2)) b, *Burning, Looting*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 (City Late Edition) c, *Mobs Take Over*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976, (City Late Edition) d, *Wits March into City 'out of Control'*, 1.

_____, 17th June 1976 (City Late Edition) e, *Drunken Tsotsis on Prowl*, 1.

_____, 18th June 1976 (City Late Edition) a, *Roadblock set up on Louis Botha*, 1.

_____, 18th June 1976 (City Late Edition) b, *Zulus on Rampage*, 1.

_____, 19th June 1976 (Stop Press Edition) a, *Taut, Uneasy Calm*, 1.

_____, 19th June 1976 (Stop Press Edition) b, *This Rioter has Seconds to Live*, 3.

_____, 19th June 1976 (City Late Edition) c, *Black Backlash*, 1.

_____, 21st June 1976, *Fresh Riots Erupt*, 1.

_____, 14th September 1977 (Stop Press Edition) a, *Kruger Rejects World Outcry*, 1.

_____, 14th September 1977 (City Late Edition) b, *Kruger – Biko Death Exploited*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980 (Stop Press Edition) a, *Sasol Inferno*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980 (Stop Press Edition) b, *Pyjama Crowd Watched the Flames*, 1.

_____, 2nd June 1980 (Late Final Edition) c, *Firemen in Battle to Hold Sasol Flames*, 1.

_____, 3rd June 1980 (Stop Press Edition), *Sasol Flames die as Police hunt Bombers*, 1.

_____, 22nd March 1985 (Stop Press Edition), *Police did not Warn Crowd, Witnesses*, 1.

_____, 23rd March 1985 (Late Final Edition), *Uitenhage Residents Stand by Claim of Police Brutality*, 1.

_____, 20th May 1985, *Funeral Mob Batters and Burns 'Spy' at Reef Burial*, 4.

_____, 14th June 1985 (Stop Press Edition), *SADF Units Blast ANC in Gaboronne*, 1.

_____, 21st July 1985 (Stop Press Edition), *Townships in Chaos as their Black Councils Collapse*, 2.

_____, 23rd December 1985 (City Late Edition), *Urban Terror Increases Dramatically in SA*, 3.

_____, 24th December 1985 (Stop Press Edition), *Police Open Fire at Funeral Procession*, 3.

_____, 26th December 1985 (Stop Press Edition), *53 Die in Faction Fight*, 1.

_____, 26th January 1986 a, *ANC Flees Lesotho*, 1.

_____, 26th January 1986 b, *Youth Hacked to Death at Mayisa Funeral*, 1.

_____, 7th September 1989 (City Late Edition), *At Least 4 Killed, 100 Hurt in Cape Violence*, 1.

_____, 6th September 1990 (City Late Edition), *Whites seen Amid Township Killers*, 1.

_____, 7th September 1990 (City Late Edition), *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1.

_____, 19th April 1994 a, *Photographer Slain in Action*, 1.

_____, 19th April 1994 b, *March 'Bid to Kill Mandela'*, 1.

_____, 19th April 1994 c, *Murderer Gets Life Four Times*, 2.

_____, 19th April 1994 d, *An Eye for Violent Drama – and Beauty*, 6.

_____, 19th April 1994 e, *Child Found Mother's Body, Says Witness*, 12.

_____, 19th April 1994 f, *5 Policemen Charged with 4 Murders*, 12.

_____, 19th April 1994 g, *Aim of Roadblock was to Assault 'Kaffirs', Court Told*, 12.

_____, 19th April 1994 h, *I Would never Harm my Child*, 12.

_____, 19th April 1994 i, *Man Killed in Mob Attack*, 12.

_____, 19th April 1994 j, *Pensioners Hurt in Pay Point Stampede*, 12.

_____, 19th April 1994 (different edition than a-j) k, *Oosterbroek among Slain*, 1.

_____, 5th August 1996, *Police Look on as a Crowd of Muslim Vigilantes Shoot and Burn Gangster*, 1.

_____, 6th August 1996, *Lovers in Court over "Sex Trap" Murder Charge*, 2.

_____, 1st February 2002, *'He Suffocated in his own Blood'*, 1.

_____, 23rd April 2002, *'Callous' Cop-Killers get Life and 32 Years*, 2.

_____, 17th May 2002, *'You Deserve the Death Sentence'*, 1.

_____, 21st May 2002, *Court of Horrors*, 1.

_____, 24th May 2002, *Killed for Protecting his Family*, 1.

_____, 12th July 2002, *Lindela's Shame*, 1.

_____, 16th July 2002, *Gauteng may go it Alone in Trying to Resolve Strike*, 1.

_____, 18th July 2002 a, *Learning to Lie the SAPS Way*, 2.

_____, 18th July 2002 b, *Uniformed Officers 'Caught Drinking'*, 2.

_____, 18th July 2002 c, *Cop Held for Tourist Robbery*, 2.

_____, 18th July 2002 d, *Dog Unit Head out for Using 'K'-Word*, 2.

Steinberg, Johnny, 2001, *Crime Wave*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Stewart, Gavin M., 1987, *Perfecting the Free Flow of Information*. In: *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 29-38.

Steytler, Nico, 1990, *Policing Political Opponents: Death Squads and Cop Culture*. In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 106-134.

Stiff, Peter, 2001, *Warfare by other Means*. Alberton: Galago.

Stocking, S. Holly & Nancy LaMarca, 1990, *How Journalists Describe Their Stories: Hypotheses and Assumptions in Newsmaking*. In: *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 2, 295-301.

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 22nd December 1986, *Südafrika verschärft die Pressezensur erneut*, page unknown.

Sunday Star, 24th March 1985 (Late Final Edition), *'No one will Stop me'*, 20.

_____, 21st July 1985, *Emergency*, 1.

Sunday Times, 16th June 1985, *Guns of Gaboronne*, 1.

_____, 21st July 1985, *Emergency!* 1.

_____, 29th June 1986, *My 'Necklace' Hell*, page unknown.

_____, 29th March 1987 a, *Two Die in Unrest*, 2.

_____, 29th March 1987 b, *Anti-ANC Card Riddle*, 21.

_____, 13th March 1994 a, *Sheer Bloody Murder*, 1.

_____, 13th March 1994 b, *The Bullets that no one Expected*, 3.

_____, 9th December 2001 a, *The Man Charged with Marike's Murder*, 1.

_____, 9th December 2001 b, *Babies in the front line of a new war*, 1.

_____, 10th November 2002, *Wanted*, 1.

Sunday Times (online edition), 4th July 1999, *Rape: A National Sport too Boring to Mention.* Available from the online archive of the Sunday Times at http://www.suntimes.co.za/1999/07/04/insight/in05.htm

_____, 2nd July 2000, *Making Sense of the Senseless.* Available from the online archive of the Sunday Times at http://www.suntimes.co.za/2000/07/02/insight/in03.htm

_____, 18th October 2000, *Promise by Parties to Behave well is a Public Relations Exercise in Futility.* Available from the online archive of the Sunday Times at http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/2000/10/15/insight/in10.htm

Sunday Tribune, 8th September 1985 a, *Arms Race!* 5.

_____, 8th September 1985 b, *My Stint on Township Patrol with the SADF*, 6.

_____, 8th September 1985 c, *Target Kraaifontein as Youths Stone and Bomb White Homes in Cape Suburbs*, 19.

Swilling, Mark & Mark Phillips, 1989, *State Power in the Late 1980s: From 'Total Strategy' to 'Counter-Revolutionary Warfare'.* In: Jacklyn Cock & Laurie Nathan, *Society at War. The Militarisation of South Africa.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 134-148.

Talking about "Tribe". Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis. Available online at the website of the Africa Policy Information Center (Washington D.C.) at http://www.africapolicy.org/bp/ethzul.htm

Task Group on Communications (Comtask), 1996, *Communications 2000. A Vision for Government Communications in South Africa.* Available online at the South African government website at http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/commissions/comtask.html

Teer Tomaselli, Ruth E., 1992, *The Politics of Discourse and the Discourse of Politics. Images of Violence and Reform on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Television News Bulletins – July 1985-November 1986.* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Natal (Durban).

Teer Tomaselli, Ruth E. & Keyan G. Tomaselli, 2001, *Transformation, Nation-Building and the South African Media, 1993-1999.* In: Keyan G. Tomaselli, & Hopeton S. Dunn, 2001, *Media, Democracy and Renewal in South Africa.* Colorado Springs, CO: International Academic Publish, 123-150.

Theissen, Gunnar, 1992, *Die Sicherheitskräfte, de Klerk und der geheime Krieg.* Hamburg: Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW).

_____, 1997 a, *White Post-Apartheid Myths: "We have Always been Against Apartheid".* In: *Between Acknowledgement and Ignorance: How White South Africans have Dealt with the Apartheid Past.* Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papgt3.htm

_____, 1997 b, *Perceptions of the New South Africa.* In: *Between Acknowledgement and Ignorance: How White South Africans have Dealt with the Apartheid Past.* Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papgt5.htm

_____, 1997 c, *The TRC and Perceptions of the Past*. In: *Between Acknowledgement and Ignorance: How White South Africans have Dealt with the Apartheid Past*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papgt6.htm

_____, 1998, *A State of Denial: White South Africans' Attitudes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online on the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/indic/archives/indicator/autumn98/Theifin.htm

Thornton, Robert J., 1990, *The Shooting at Uitenhage, South Africa, 1985: The Context and Interpretation of Violence*. In: N. Chabani Manganyi & André du Toit, *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 131-153.

_____, 1994, *South Africa: Countries, Boundaries, Enemies and Friends*. In: *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 10, No. 6, 7-15.

_____, 2002, *The Peculiar Temporality of Violence*. In: *KronoScope*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 41-69. Also available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papthorn.htm

Time Magazine, 4th May 1998, *More than Words*. Available online at the website of Time Magazine at http://www.time.com/time/magazine/1998/int/980504/africa.more_than_words.a16.html

Times Media Limited (TML), *Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Available online at http://rhino.tml.co.za/trc/page1.1.html

Tomaselli, Keyan G., 1994, *Intimidation of the South African Media: A Response to Arnold de Beer's "Censorship of Terror"*. In: *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 135-143.

_____, 1996, *Appropriating Images*. Højbjerg: Intervention Press.

_____, 1998, *Making Sense of Film: How to Read Films about Southern Africa*. Available online at the website of the University of Natal (Durban) at http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/amp/articles/readfilm.htm

Tomaselli, Keyan G., P. Eric Louw & Ruth E. Tomaselli, 1986, *Communication, Language and the Crisis of Hegemony in South Africa*. In: *Studies in Communication*, Vol. 4, 3-16.

Tomaselli, Keyan & P. Eric Louw, 1991, *The Alternative Press in South Africa*. Bellville: Anthropos.

Tomaselli, Keyan G., Ruth Tomaselli & Johan Muller, 1987, *The Press in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Anthropos.

Tomaselli, Ruth E., 1991 a, *South Africa's "Hidden Hand"*. In: *CovertAction*, No.36 (Spring 1991), 22-26.

_____, 1991 b, *Inkathagate: Covert Funding – Overt Violence*. In: *CovertAction*, No. 38 (Fall 1991), 39-43.

Tomaselli, Ruth E., Keyan G. Tomaselli & Johan Muller, 1989, *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa*. Belville: Anthropos.

Trew, Tony, 1979 a, *Theory and Ideology at Work*. In: Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew, *Language and Control*. London: Routledge & Paul, 94-116.

____, 1979 b, *'What the Papers Say': Linguistic Variation and Ideological Difference*. In: Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress & Tony Trew, *Language and Control*, London: Routledge, 117-156.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), 27th November 1996, *Submission, Questions and Answers Chris Bateman*. (Transcript)

_____, 22nd July 1996, *Submission, Questions and Answers Peter Magubane*. (Transcript)

_____, 24th January 1997, *Panel Discussion Held at UCT*. (Transcript)

_____, 22nd July 1997, *Submission, Questions and Answers Benjamin Pogrund*. (Transcript)

_____, 15th-17th September 1997, *Media Hearings*. (Transcript)

_____, 1997, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

Tshwete, Steve, 31st May 2001, *Media Statement by the Minister for Safety and Security Mr S V Tshwete*. Available online at the website of the SAPS at http://www.saps.gov.za/8%5Fcrimeinfo/bulletin/crime2001.htm

Tshweu, Olifile, 1994, *Media Reporting of Political Violence*. In: *Media Mask*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (November/December), 2-4.

Tuchman, Gaye, 1978, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Tucker, Robert C. (ed.), 1972, *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York, NY: Norton.

Tutu, Desmond, 1982, *Crying in the Wilderness*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

_____, 1997, *What Next?* Address by Archbishop Tutu at the Pretoria Afrikaanse Sakekamer on 26th February 1997. Available at the website of the African National Congress (ANC) at http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/1998/news0227

_____, 1999, *No Future without Forgiveness*. London: Rider.

Tyson, Harvey, 1990, *To Run a Decent Newspaper, You've Got to Break the Law, says Senior Editor*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*, Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 68-74.

The United Nations World Campaign Against Apartheid. Available online at the website of the ANC at http://www.anc.org.za/un/unint2.html

US Department of State, 1997, *South Africa Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996*. Available online at the website of the US government at
http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1996_hrp_report/southafr.html

_____, 1998, *South Africa Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*. Available online at the website of the US government at
http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1997_hrp_report/southafr.html

_____, 1999, *South Africa Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998*. Available online at the website of the US government at
http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998_hrp_report/southafr.html

_____, 2003, *South Africa Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998*. Available online at the website of the US government at
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18227.htm

van den Berghe, Pierre L., 1965, *South Africa, A Study in Conflict*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

van den Bulck, Jan, 1999, *Mediation: Toward a Media Theory of the Social Construction of Reality*. In: *Communicatio*, Vol. 25, No. 1&2. I used the online edition available at the website of the University of South Africa at
http://www.unisa.ac.za/dept/press/comca/251/vdbulckj.htm

van der Spuy, Elrena, 1990, *Political Discourse and the History of the SAP*. In: Desirée Hansson & Dirk van Zyl Smit, *Towards Justice? Crime and State Control in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 85-105.

van der Westhuizen, J., 1982, *The General Nature and Incidence of Crimes of Violence*. In: J. van Westhuizen, *Crimes of Violence in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 9-52.

van Dijk, Teun A., 1985, *Introduction: Discourse Analysis in (Mass) Communication Research*. In: Teun A. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse and Communication*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1-9.

_____, 1988 a, *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

_____, 1988 b, *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

_____, 1989 a, *Critical News Analysis*. In: *Critical Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 103-126.

_____, 1989 b, *Mediating Racism. The Role of the Media in the Reproduction of Racism*. In: Ruth Wodak, *Language, Power and Ideology.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 199-226.

_____, 1991, The Interdisciplinary Study of News as Discourse. In: Klaus B. Jensen & Nicholas W. Jankowski, 1991, A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research. London: Routledge, 108-120.

_____, 1994, Power and the News Media. In David L. Paletz (ed.), Political Communication and Action. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 9-36.

_____, 1995, *Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis*. In: Christina Schaffner & Anita L. Wenden (eds.), *Language and Peace*. Darmouth: Aldershot, 17-33.

_____, 1998 a, *Ideology*. London: Sage Publications.

_____, 1998 b, *Opinions and Ideologies in the Press*. In: Alan Bell & Peter Garrett (eds.), *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 21-61.

van Heerden, T. J., 1982, *Ideological Violence*. In: J. van der Westhuizen, *Crimes of Violence in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 194-209.

van Heerden, Willem, 1972, *Crucial Facets of South Africa's Race Problem*. In: Nic Rhoodie, *South African Dialogue*. Pretoria: McGraw Hill 34-46.

van Niekerk, Phillip, 1990, *South Africa's Press Stands on the Edge of a New Frontier, Says Former Rand Daily Mail Staff Member*. In: Gerald B. Sperling & James E. McKenzie, *Getting the Real Story. Censorship and Propaganda in South Africa*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 39-41.

van Niekerk, Phillip & Barbara Ludman, 1999, *A-Z of South African Politics 1999*. London: Penguin.

van Rooyen, J.C.W., 1987, *Censorship in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta.

_____, 1994, *Press and Broadcasting Freedom in a New South Africa*. In: *Communicatio*, Vol. 20, No. 2. Available online at the website of the University of South Africa at http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=7155

van Staden, Christo, *Why I Did Not Sign the Nasionale Pers Declaration*. In: *Rhodes Journalism Review*, No. 15. Available online at the website of Rhodes University at http://journ.ru.ac.za/review/15/no.htm

Virmani, K. K., 1991, *Nelson Mandela and Apartheid in South Africa*. Delhi: Kalinga Publications.

Vrye Weekblad, 17th November 1989, Ek was in de hart van die hoer, page unknow.

Vogelman, Lloyd, 1990 a, *South Africa our Violent Land*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artvoge2.htm

_____, 1990 b, *Violent Crime: Rape*. In: Brian McKendrick & Wilhelmina Hoffmann, *People and Violence in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 96-135.

Vogelman, Lloyd & Sharon Lewis, 1993, *Gang Rape and the Culture of Violence in South Africa*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/paplv&sl.htm

Vogelman, Lloyd & Graeme Simpson, 1990, *Apartheid's Violent Legacy*. Available online at the website of the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) at http://www.csvr.org.za/articles/artapart.htm

Waldmeir, Patti, 1997, *Anatomy of a Miracle*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

Walker Read, Allen, 1998, *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Deluxe Encyclopaedic Edition*. Chicago: Trident Press International.

Walter, Eugene V., 1969, *Terror and Resistance*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Weedon, Chris, Andrew Tolson & Frank Mort, 1980, *Theories of Language and Subjectivity*. In: Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe & Paul Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson, 195-215.

Weekend Argus, 21st May 1983 (Noon Edition) a, *A Dossier of Terror in SA*, 3.

_____, 21st May 1983 (Noon Edition) b, *Red Threat Stepped up*, 3.

_____, 21st May 1983 (Noon Edition) c, *Communists behind Attack*, 3.

_____, 15th September 1990, *Slaughter in Soweto*, 6.

_____, 12th March 1994, *Death in the Dust*, 3.

Weekend Star, 13th March 1994, *Wild Cheers as Defenders Return*, p. 3.

Weekly Mail, 20th June 1986, *Our Lawyers Tell us we Can Say Almost Nothing About the Emergency*, 1.

_____, 8th August 1986, *Boycott Town under Siege*, 1.

_____, 12th December 1986, *The Emergency made Simple*, 1.

_____, 8th June 1990, *Taxi Wars Come easy when you Earn R150 a Week*, 9.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee, 1956 (1940), *Science and Linguistics*. In: John B. Carroll, *Language, Thought, and Reality. Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. London/New York, NY: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 207-219.

Wilder, David A., 1981, *Perceiving Persons as a Group: Categorization and Intergroup Relations*. In: David L. Hamilton, *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behaviour*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 213-257.

Williams, Glyn, *History of the Daily Dispatch continued…*. Available online at the website of the Daily Dispatch at http://www.dispatch.co.za/history2.html

Wodak, Ruth, 1996, *Disorders of Discourse*. London: Longman.

_____, 2002, *Aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis*. In: *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik* (ZfAL), Vol. 36, 5-31.

Work in Progress, 1st December 1991, *de Klerk's Double Agenda*, 9-13.

Woods, Donald, 1980, *Asking for Trouble*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Wren-Lewis, Justin, 1983, *The Encoding/Decoding Model: Criticisms and Redevelopments for Research on Decoding*. In: *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 5, 179-197.

Die Zeit, 3rd April 1987, *Alle Tage neue Spielregeln*, page unknown.