

Now that the War is Over
Ex-combatants Transition and the Question of Violence:
A literature review

by

Sasha Gear



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[Sasha Gear](#) is a Researcher in the [Criminal Justice Programme](#) at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

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Introduction

Ex-combatants are often considered to pose a threat to peace and security in countries emerging from extensive violent conflict. Concerns relating to this perception together with fluctuating media attention given to the involvement of individual ex-combatants in violent crime brought about the inclusion of 'ex-combatants' as social category for consideration in the Violence and Transition Project. Despite the haste with which 'ex-combatants' tend to be linked with violence, there is little research in South Africa that sets out to specifically explore either the current situations of the armed actors of our recent history, or their relation to continuing violence. Through a survey of available and related literature this report has attempted to investigate these issues in more depth.

The investigation is structured under the following chapter themes:

South Africa's Conflict – Who are the Combatants?

The violent conflict of South Africa's past gave rise to a large and diverse collection of armed protagonists. [This chapter](#) briefly outlines the context in which they took up arms, highlighting some of the key aspects of conflict and the ways in which it has been portrayed. This is followed by a discussion raising the complexities involved in defining precisely who constitutes the 'combatants' of the conflict, and subsequently, its 'ex-combatants'. The heterogeneity of South Africa's militarized actors is then illustrated, and background is provided into some of the armed structures through which they participated in the conflict.

Demobilisation

'Demobilisation' refers to the significant reduction of people employed by military forces and is a key process through which combatants become 'ex-combatants'. It is in relation to demobilisation programmes, that ex-combatants as a social category have received most research attention. [This chapter](#) sets out the steps typically involved in the demobilisation of soldiers and explores the related challenge of their 'reintegration' into civilian life. The unfolding of South Africa's formal processes of integrating eight armed forces into a new national defence force, and the demobilisation of thousands of soldiers from this force are outlined.

Militarised Youth: Integration and (Lack) of Demobilisation Initiatives

A minority of the (predominantly young) people who participated in violent conflict through locally based self-defence structures were included in the SANDF integration and demobilisation processes, but most were not. Indeed one of the greatest demobilisation challenges facing South Africa is that of 'militarized youth'. [This chapter](#) considers some of the few initiatives that have taken place in attempt to address this challenge. In outlining different approaches, key issues relating to the reintegration of militarized young people are raised. The appropriateness, or not, of their potential integration into local policing structures is also explored.

Demobilisation, Conflict and Violence

Drawing mainly on international literature, this chapter brings together existing analyses of ex-combatants potential for ongoing involvement in violence as well as accounts of the circumstances and manifestations in contexts where this has been reported. The influence on these dynamics of the continued operation of social and economic systems that are

generated through the experience of conflict are given particular attention.

War-generated Identities as a Potential Source of Future Conflict and Violence

Studies that focus on the 'making of soldiers' suggest that issues of identity require further investigation, especially in relation to questions of ex-combatant reintegration and participation in future violence. Building on the previous theme, the socialisation of combatants within military structures, the gendered identities developed in these environments and the discourses that support these processes are examined as contributing factors to the potential involvement of ex-combatants in violence.

War Trauma as a Potential Source of Future Violence

Overlapping with the issue of war-generated identities, is war-trauma as a factor in future violence. Increasing evidence suggests that many of South Africa's ex-combatants continue to suffer as a result of their militarized histories and involvement in violent conflict. [This chapter](#) outlines some of the trauma-related challenges faced by such ex-combatants as well as reported violent manifestations of unaddressed trauma.

Chapter One: South Africa's Conflict – Who are the Combatants?

The Conflict

That South Africa was in a state of war during the 1980s is no longer contested (Cock, 1991; Ellis, 1998). This was not, however, always the case. Publicly, the apartheid state oscillated in its definitions of the conflict. From the late 1970s the state argued that it was facing a 'total onslaught', masquerading as an anti-apartheid struggle but that was, in reality, masterminded by international communists. For the liberation movement, the conflict arose from a just struggle against a racist and illegitimate minority government. In the context of the 2nd Cold War and the fact that the liberation movement had indeed turned to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the People's Republic of China for help, the state's depiction of a communist threat provided no more than a veneer of legitimacy to the repressive actions undertaken by the apartheid regime (Ellis, 1998; Steytler, 1990).

In addition, the state criminalised the conflict, describing it as the product of the African National Congress's (ANC's) "terrorist" activities. "Unrest does not make a war. There is a definite difference between terror and war" (Brigadier Stadler in *The Star* cited in [Cock, 1989](#), p. 16). In 1985 an intelligence document approved by the State Security Council (SSC) found that "there is a consensus over the view that the unrest has developed into a revolutionary struggle". The Council nevertheless agreed that it was not recommended for government to use this language in public (Ellis, 1998, pp. 264, 273). The choice to define the conflict as unrest or terrorism as opposed to "war" meant that liberation movement fighters were denied the prisoner-of-war status granted by the Geneva Protocols of 1977 to those engaged in war against colonial powers (Cock in Cock "Nathan, 1989).

Consequently, many captured combatants who could have received prisoner-of-war status and its concomitant protections were tried as ordinary criminals, and/or executed.

South Africans were divided, primarily along racial lines, over the nature of the conflict. White South Africans were generally compliant and seemingly accepted the explanations provided by the state, returning the National Party to power with ever-enlarging

parliamentary majorities. Black South Africans, on the other hand, were increasingly the targets of the repressive state machinery and only a handful believed the anti-communist rhetoric and explanations from Pretoria. Interviews conducted between 1986 and 1990 revealed that all black informants considered themselves to be involved in a war, and that most white informants (many of whom were part of the state's security apparatus) did not (Cock, 1991). The failure of white informants to recognise the conflict as war is not surprising, not least because the conflict was largely hidden from them, physically as well as discursively through censorship and propaganda.

Conversely, urban blacks resided in cordoned-off "zones of terror" (Walzer in Cock, 1991, p. 12). It is reasonable to assume that such polarised views existed even more acutely between members of the opposing armed formations.

But the situation was not static, and when it suited the apartheid security forces to describe the conflict as a war, they did so (and this was certainly the case during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission¹). As Cock puts it, during the 1980s, "clearly one of the sites of struggle in South Africa ... was the definition of the struggle itself" (Cock, 1991, p. 7).

In this study Cock's definition of war as, "intense, widespread conflict that involves organised, collective, socially-sanctioned violence" has been adopted (Cock, 1991, p. 7).

War is understood here as a continuum ranging from "low intensity conflict, through conventional war to nuclear, or high intensity war" (Cock, 1989, CSV). Conflict in Southern Africa (and often where South African security forces were engaged) has involved both low-intensity conflict, and full-scale conventional fighting. In the late 1980s Cock described the conflict within South Africa as a 'low-level civil war' (Cock, 1989). Importantly however, the term 'low-intensity conflict' also specifically refers to a counter-insurgency strategy adopted to defeat liberation forces without engaging in a full-blown conventional war.

Despite their differences, both the apartheid state and the ANC defined the conflict in terms of its 'totalness', its all-encompassing nature – something that affected the entire population. The state had embarked upon its "Total Strategy", a counter-insurgency strategy that ultimately resulted in unprecedented military influence in all spheres of national, regional and local government decision making. In 1985 the ANC called for a "People's War", a strategy to bring about "ungovernability" and "people's power". Both state and liberation-movement strategies brought about the increasing militarisation of South African society throughout the 1980s (see Cock, 1989). Neither the state nor the liberation movements considered violence the sole element of this war. Rather, the fight for and against democratic governance reached beyond military matters and was fought on a number of terrains (Ellis, 1998).

The battlefields of this 'total' war were not restricted to South Africa. "Total Strategy" intruded into neighbouring countries where the South African Defence Force (SADF) was involved in undeclared and devastating wars of destabilisation (Hanlon, 1986; Cock, 1991). Indeed, the TRC "believes that the number of people killed inside the borders of the country in the course of the liberation struggle was considerably lower than those who died outside" (TRC Report Vol. 2, Ch. 4 & 11). These wars were also carried out in an attempt to

maintain and bolster the power of the apartheid state in the country and in the region.

By 1980, Zimbabwean independence and the collapse of Portuguese colonialism had created a serious security threat for the South African government. Neighbouring states were increasingly vocal in their opposition to apartheid and supportive of its opponents, particularly the ANC, whose ranks had swollen with the influx of youth from the post-1976 uprisings. South Africa's response took various forms. In addition to economic destabilisation by direct sabotage and control over supply routes, South Africa carried out military operations in most frontline states, sponsored proxy armies in Angola and Mozambique, and provided military backing to rebel groups in Lesotho and Zimbabwe. While some of these attacks targeted the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) specifically, destabilisation was widespread and indiscriminate, costing the region over \$30 billion. The strategy was designed to secure the obedience of hostile neighbours, which in turn was meant to cut off support for the ANC.² Throughout the 1980s a combination of carrot and stick brought about an uneasy compliance,³ forcing the ANC further away from its operational focus. By 1990, the closest ANC military training base to South Africa was in Uganda.

At the risk of oversimplification, the singular "war", as used here, encompasses those conflicts conducted in neighbouring countries that, to differing degrees, were also wars in their own right. Although Pretoria's external security strategy focused on regional destabilisation, where possible it sought to exacerbate existing tensions and disagreements. A similar strategy was used inside South Africa's borders. Relations between the ANC and Inkatha had steadily deteriorated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The state saw an opportunity to exploit these divisions and did so effectively throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Its relationship with Inkatha, however, was not a simple patron-client arrangement, but much more complex and contentious.

The intricacies and dynamics of the different causes, provocations, and manifestations of violent conflict, as well as the motivations of the diverse range of protagonists who participated in collective violence, cannot always be described within the parameters of the bi-polar conflict between the forces for and against apartheid. South Africa's conflicts also manifested in violence between those claiming to fight for the same ends – namely, a democratic dispensation. Issues of cause and responsibility remain contested. Inkatha, for example, rejected armed struggle yet engaged in a prolonged violent conflict with ANC and United Democratic Front (UDF) supporters. It consistently depicted its role in the violence as "defensive" and claimed that the ANC sought to destroy Inkatha and that this was in line with the ANC's own history of intolerance.⁴ Conversely, the ANC accused Inkatha and its leader, Chief Buthelezi, of being a stooge of the apartheid government, and consequently an integral component of Pretoria's counter-revolutionary arsenal.⁵ The conflict between UDF and Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) supporters during the mid-to-late 1980s is also illustrative of tension among the liberation movements, with allegations of intolerance and collaboration with the apartheid state levelled at each other's supporters.

The dynamics of conflict also differed from locality to locality, often informed more by local situations than by any grand design. In both examples above however, the state is either known or believed to have played a 'guiding role' in exacerbating and manipulating the conflict. As such, it could be argued that the bi-polar conflict was, in essence,

superimposed on other sites of discord and divergence. Certainly, central to the counter-insurgency strategies implemented by the state from the mid 1980s was the galvanising of local, seemingly unrelated, community-dividing conflict. Part of the power too, of the pro-ANC UDF was "providing a national focus to various local conflicts" (Ellis, 1998, p. 272). At the same time, the over-arching conflict and, importantly, the context of this conflict, spawned a diverse range of other 'smaller' conflicts, which then developed their own unique momentums.

The problem of defining the war and its constituent parts becomes increasingly complex in relation to the unprecedented levels of violence witnessed during the negotiation period of the early 1990s. Officially, the main protagonists - the ANC and South African government - were negotiating the country's future. At the local level, manifestations of conflict "at times became subsumed in the national narrative of negotiation, and at other times became disconnected from it" (Ellis, 1998, p. 297). Violence during this period appeared to become an integral component of negotiation and the strategies around negotiations that evolved among a number of key players. While the ANC officially suspended its armed struggle, ANC-aligned Self Defence Units (SDUs) and some MK members actively engaged the security forces and Inkatha supporters on the ground. This was also the most active period of the Pan African Congress's (PAC) armed wing. In addition, various right-wing organisations engaged in a concerted effort to prevent a political agreement. The situation was complicated further by rapidly shifting political allegiances, which made chains of command and accountability difficult to disaggregate and identify.

The violence of the negotiations period, Ellis (1998, p. 286) maintains, "is best understood as an intensification of the existing campaign of low-intensity warfare. Here, Ellis is referring to what became known as a "Third Force". He shows the extent to which the apartheid state's counter-insurgency strategy continued to be applied during this period, linking the 1980s with the 1990s. Initially this was formally sanctioned by government officials in the highest echelons of the security establishment. But increasingly this became less formal and coordinated and resembled more the turning of a blind eye on the part of the state.⁶ In this context, covert units were relatively free to use their own initiative which they did, both to further the counter insurgency strategy which had been at the centre of the state's approach to the war, and for their own personal gain. It was only at the end of 1992 that meaningful steps were taken by De Klerk to halt this violent activity at which point the Third Force effectively became "privatised" (Ellis, 1998, p. 293).

The extent to which covert state and/or security force involvement is responsible for the bloodshed of the early 1990s remains unclear. Former political and security chiefs have denied such a strategy was in place, and have claimed that if there was evidence of covert action or collusion (in either the 1980s or 1990s) this was the work of a maverick element. The unprecedented levels of violence and the seeming inability or lack of will to put a stop to it, however, suggested that other issues were at play. Lethal covert operations had been intensified at the same time that secret negotiations had been evolving with the ANC in exile during the late 1980s. Was this dual-track strategy now abandoned during the post-1990 negotiations? If this was so, the policy shift had certainly not percolated down to operatives on the ground. As Ellis explains:

Seasoned covert operatives had seen enough twists and turns not to be surprised

by anything which came their way They had understood that ministers are sometimes obliged to say what they do not mean, and to will what they cannot say . . . having been trained to fight the ANC and SACP enemy, [they] assumed that they would continue to do this unless explicitly told by their commanders to do otherwise in terms which brooked no misunderstanding or evasion. Politics was not their business, and middle-level operatives appear to have believed that, if the rhetoric of the government had changed under De Klerk, this was simply in keeping with the current phase of the struggle (Ellis, 1998, p. 281, 284).

Understanding the rapidly deteriorating situation in the early 1990s demands an appreciation of both national and local-level developments and dynamics. That the conflict became more fractured and intense is clear. The primary protagonists, at least in terms of casualties, became supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and ANC.⁷ The reasons for the conflict, and the extent to which any of the armed formations had control or influence over these developments are less apparent. As Steinberg argued in relation to the violence that gripped the East Rand (Gauteng)⁸ in the early 1990s, "To see the violence as a simple *tabula rasa* on which national party political agendas [IFP/ANC] are inscribed, is to miss the specificities of what it means to fight a political war in South Africa at the local level" (Steinberg, 1994, p. 2).⁹

Both Ellis's analysis of the Third Force (1998), which illustrates the gradual erosion of co-ordination and control of the South African Police's and SADF's covert units, and Steinberg's of the violence in the East Rand, point to a reduction in the containment capabilities of organisations over their armed protagonists. During this period especially, notions of an all-powerful and co-ordinated state and a homogeneous and disciplined liberation movement were, more than ever before, thrown into question. Paradoxically, this was largely as a result of the 'totalness' of the strategies both had employed (the state in its implementation of counter-insurgency "Total Strategy", and the ANC/UDF in its broad-based mobilisation for "People's War"). The state appeared unable even to contain the violence, something it had successfully achieved during the 1980s. While allegations of covert complicity raged, concerns of capacity and competency also arose. During the 1980s the liberation movement had papered over the divisions and differences between variously placed actors to mobilise them in, "the most compelling and urgent politics of the day [which] was the construction of black unity in the struggle to end apartheid" (Steinberg, 1994, p. 10).¹⁰ Conflict between UDF affiliates and Inkatha worsened during this period. While the conflict had previously mainly taken place in KwaZulu and Natal, during the early 1990s, in the context of 'free political activity' it intensified in KwaZulu and spilled onto the Witwatersrand. In addition, the liberation movement's own constituency began to disaggregate, sometimes manifesting in highly fractured conflict within "ANC communities" themselves (Steinberg, 1994, p. 10).

The violent conflict of South Africa's recent past gave rise to a large and diverse collection of armed actors. This section has attempted to broadly outline the conflict so as to prepare the way for a more detailed look at some of the key categories of soldier and their particular roles in it. The views and experiences of combatants who were caught up at different times and in different situations throughout the conflict period under review are, to a significant extent, informed by the nature of these conflicts and how they developed over time.

What are Combatants?

Defining who one considers as 'combatants' (and subsequently, when the war is over, 'ex-combatants') is not always straightforward. This is typical of conflict involving widespread civil strife. Not only is the notion of 'combat' itself problematic, but definitions of its protagonists, the 'combatants', are also contested.

Traditionally 'combat' refers to the activity of armed military engagement with an enemy. But combat is not a homogeneous experience. Arguably, 'combatants' also include those who are not on the 'frontline', but who, for example, are located at base camps and study intelligence reports used to deploy troops for the purpose of engagement. In addition, advances in military technologies have, in some situations, put a physical distance between protagonists. This can also be the case for reasons other than military technologies. Many of those who belonged to the formal military structures, most notably MK, for example, were never actually involved in armed action with the enemy (although the experience of enemy violence was often the motivation for joining.)

One of [Cock's \(1992\)](#) interviewees points to a broader definition of 'combat' in addition to the traditional understanding: "There is both a broad and a narrow aspect of combat. First of all it involves building all forces that will be involved in implementing armed action. Then there is the narrow aspect involving military action, shoot outs, attacks and so on." (MK soldier in Cock, 1992, p. 12). This wider definition suggests that those with experience of combat training, or involved in logistics and other support, should also be considered as combatants.

Our interest here includes the preparation for 'contact' or 'combat' i.e. military training. There are a number of specific motivations for this. Experiences of violence, for example, are not restricted to those at the hands of the enemy, but are also frequently central to the process of constructing the 'soldier identities'. It is also often military training that distinguishes soldiers from civilians. Furthermore, much of the interest in 'ex-combatants' as a social category derives from the fact that they possess military skills and have, for significant periods of time, led a 'military life' whether or not this included combat experiences.

'Combat' is a highly gendered notion. It is constructed as a distinctly male affair, in which masculinity is solidified and reified. It depends on a division between the 'protector' (men) and the 'protected' (women), and the soldier's masculinity is defined in relation to his ability to perform in a combat situation. As a result, women are kept well away from the 'combat' terrain. The gendered construction of combat is particularly true of conventional armed formations. In the SADF, for example, where women were increasingly employed, "there [was] a rigid sexual division of labour both in training and deployment" ([Cock, 1992](#)) and women were never deployed in (narrowly defined) combat situations. Liberation forces have tended, however, to adopt a more progressive approach to the inclusion of women in their ranks, and to a limited extent within the command structure. Despite some radical differences with the SADF though, MK also excluded women from combat roles (Cock, 1992, p. 6).

Noteworthy too is that the term 'ex-combatants', in some contexts, is associated specifically with liberation fighters, and does not serve as a blanket term for all the former soldiers who

participated in a conflict. In Mozambique, for instance, the term 'ex-combatants' refers to veterans of the liberation war and excludes former RENAMO soldiers (Kingma, 2000).

The all-encompassing nature of South Africa's conflict has implications for defining precisely who constituted its combatants. This study does not undertake a comprehensive exploration of all the armed formations that have participated in the multifarious conflicts of South Africa's recent history, but also attempts to avoid defining combatants as only those who were mobilised in the formal formations of the SADF and MK and APLA. Ex-combatants in South Africa also include groupings that were involved in quasi-military structures, such as self-defence and self-protection units, or right-wing paramilitary formations.

Moreover, as is frequently the case in civil wars, both the state and the liberation movement sought to mobilise the entire population in furthering their war interests. The ANC's strategy of "People's War" highlights the problem of a clear differentiation between 'combatants' and 'non-combatants' that "rests on a precise demarcation of the battlefield" (Cock, 1989), p. 2). Similarly, the vast military network developed by the state and its inclusion of various civilian structures meant that white "civil" society also became highly militarised and security-orientated. For the PAC's armed wing, APLA, this rendered white 'civilians' legitimate military targets. In its submission to the TRC, APLA argued that, "military trained and armed civilians defy the definition of civilians".¹¹

For the purposes of this study, 'combatants' are defined in relation to their proximity to acts of, and possibilities for, collective physical violence. The focus is not, for example, on the securocrats who worked within the state's security system although they were central to the conception and furthering of the state's war activities. The scientists whose military contribution was to develop deadly potions to be used against the enemy in warfare, and the military psychologists, some of whom attempted to lead resistant or traumatised national service men on the 'right' road back to war, are similarly not those under consideration, despite their significant contributions to the war aims of the state.

Turning to the liberation movements, combatants functioned within both guerrilla formations and street militias. Neither operated as discrete structures, and both relied heavily on civilian communities for support and cover. This further blurs the lines between civil and military functions and responsibilities, and expands the pool of men and women who may consider themselves to have been 'combatants'. The tasks of some who worked with militia and defence-unit structures for example included intelligence gathering, courier work, safe-house provision, and the smuggling, storage and maintenance of weapons. In addition, some of those who received military training from MK members inside the country, and described themselves as MK members before the TRC, are believed not to have appeared on the official Certified Personnel Register.¹²

Neither the state's nor the liberation movement's combatants were restricted to members of their formal military structures, the SADF, MK and APLA. Furthermore, a wide range of other armed actors who may, to differing degrees, have been broadly affiliated with either the state or the liberation movement were situated in the collective violence of South Africa's recent history. The outline presented below does not pretend to exhaust the list of the country's militarised actors. Notable omissions include, for example, the Askaris,

various right-wing paramilitaries and the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA - AZAPO's armed wing). This section aims instead to illustrate the heterogeneous nature of, and provide some background to, the militarised formations considered in this study.

State Combatants and their Allies

South African Police

The South African Police (SAP) were integrally involved in counter-insurgency efforts both within and outside the South African borders. After a period of unprecedented influence during the 1960s and 1970s, under the auspices of the "Total Strategy" the SAP was given primary responsibility for internal operations against the liberation movement and its allies. As such, policing efforts were focused much more on suppressing resistance than on solving crimes (Cawthra, 1986, p. 134), a fact reflected in the extent to which counter-insurgency training was "built into the making of a South African policeman" (Servamus, 1981, cited in Steytler, 1990, p. 116).

Between 1984 and 1986, township streets across the country became a key site of conflict. Armed with counter-insurgency training provided by the military, the police were, in effect, the initial and primary combatants on these internal battlefields. The SAP's Riot Squads and the attached Reaction Units (usually only 12 – 18 men strong), for example, were specially trained by the SADF's Special Task Force (an elite anti-terrorist unit established in 1975) and were main players in the suppression of demonstrations and strikes. Other activities of these units included the manning of roadblocks and assault-type operations (Cawthra, 1986). The SAP's ability to contain burgeoning resistance, however, became increasingly stretched, and in 1985 the SADF were deployed to assist the police in suppressing mounting opposition. From this point on, the SADF were more and more deployed for internal security. Consequently, during the apartheid era, the actions of the police and those of the SADF became indistinguishable to many township residents, "as they fused together in a pattern of indiscriminate violence" (Cock in Cock & Nathan, 1989).¹³

It was the SAP that, in Rhodesia in 1967, alongside the Rhodesian Security Forces, squashed the MK/ZIPRA campaign to establish an infiltration route to South Africa. They remained a presence in Rhodesia until 1975 (TRC Report, Vol. 2; Ellis, 1998). It was also the SAP, and not the SADF, that was first deployed in Namibia with the primary responsibility for counter-insurgency initiatives. The war activities of the SAP in neighbouring countries prior to the 1980s had serious consequences for the modus operandi of South African counter-insurgency strategy. It was largely their interaction and (military) training with Rhodesia's security forces that informed some of the particularly brutal elements of this strategy, as well as the emergence of some of the war's most notorious personalities and units:

Among the South Africans who served in Rhodesia was Eugene de Kock¹⁴ It is notable that, whereas a policeman is in theory employed to uphold the law of the land with the minimum use of force, De Kock was partly trained [in Rhodesia] by a military unit specialised in long-range reconnaissance, sabotage and fighting behind enemy lines Like De Kock, many of the policemen who were to emerge at the heart of the underground war against subversion in South Africa served in Rhodesia (Ellis, 1998, p. 268).

The practice of "turning" guerrillas to serve both an intelligence and offensive capacity can be traced to the Rhodesian experience: "Battle-hardened, psychologically and socially divorced from their communities of origin and compromised by their treachery, askaris were well-suited to the grisliest acts of war" (Ellis, 1998, p. 269). In addition, within South Africa these strategies were employed as a response to the lack of support for the SAP amongst the local population (Ellis, 1998). They made use of informers, repression and from the mid 1980s, surrogate and proxy forces.

The Special Branch (later named the Security Police), referred to by one of its former members, Dirk Coetzee, as the "murder squad" (Steytler, 1990, p. 112), was at the forefront of the SAP's political activities (Cawthra, 1986). Operating separately from the uniformed and detective branches of the SAP and with a parallel command structure but personnel placed at various SAP headquarters, it infiltrated and attempted to destroy anti-apartheid organisations (Resister, 1990; Cawthra, 1986). On occasion, members were deployed to both police and military bases in Namibia and, in the late 1980s, worked alongside the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), a special unit of the SADF (Resister, 1990).

The security "C Section" of the Security Police was responsible for counter-insurgency and C10 - or Vlakplaas, as it is more commonly known - was home to the majority of South African "askaris". Here, "turned" ANC and PAC activists were organised into groups, each under the control of a white policeman (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 30). The Vlakplaas unit became a "general-purpose death squad which would be handed instructions to kill specific individuals who had been identified by the Security Branch in various parts of the country, as well as act on the initiative of its commander, who had an effective power of life and death" (Ellis, 1998, p. 269).¹⁵

Another specialist SAP counter-insurgency unit was Koevoet ("Crowbar"), which was renamed the South West African Counter-Insurgency Unit in 1985. General Hans Dreyer, the founding head of the unit, had, like De Kock (who was also a founder member) served with the Rhodesian Special Forces. Established in 1979 and disbanded in 1989, it operated in Namibia and the border areas of Angola. Its command structure included SAP personnel and former members of the Rhodesian Selous Scouts. Rank-and-file membership however, was constituted mainly of black South West African policemen and, later, former fighters of UNITA and FNLA, as well as "turned" SWAPO members (Cawthra, 1986, p. 124). Regarded as one of the most notorious, yet effective, counter-insurgency units, approximately 80% of "kills" in the operational area were attributed to Koevoet (Cawthra, 1986). Members were encouraged in their work by monetary reward for killings (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 75). Known for its extreme and brutal methods and reluctance to take prisoners, in its first year of operation it lost 23 of its members and killed 511 "insurgents" (TRC Report Vol. 2, p. 77).

Two other groupings within the ranks of the police and deserving of specific attention were the Municipal Police and Special Constables. Municipal police (also known as "greenflies", "greenbeans" or "ama Tshaka") were attached to the Black Local Authorities and their numbers have been estimated as reaching 14 000 in the late 1980s (TRC Report Vol. 2, p. 183). Municipal police were deployed to protect council facilities and staff, which increasingly became targeted by anti-apartheid activists.

Special constables (known as "kitskonstabels", "blue lines" or "bloupakke") were largely drawn from the ranks of uneducated and unemployed African men, including some with criminal records. They were recruited from both urban and rural areas, and given "perfunctory" training by the SAP (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 183). In the Western Cape, most special constables were recruited from the pro-government "witdoeke" camps (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 184). The numbers of special constables¹⁶ deployed has been estimated as at 8 000 by the end of the 1980s (TRC, Vol. 2). Even within security circles, the introduction of special constables was controversial.¹⁷ They soon developed a reputation for being "out of hand": "High levels of excessive and inappropriate use of violence, often arising out of drunken behaviour, ill-discipline and personal vendettas, were reported. They retained the use of shotguns even off duty" (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 184) and members were accused of involvement in murder, beatings, torture, robbery, assault, theft and rape. In some circumstances they were also very directly involved in political violence. In KwaZulu and Natal, for example, special constables were inserted into the IFP/ANC conflict to augment the IFP's position (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 186). During the post-1990 period unsubstantiated allegations were made that former and serving special constables were recruited into hit squads in the Western Cape and involved in "balaclava killings" at the behest of town councillors (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 186). Elsewhere, they were retrenched or drawn into the ranks of the formal policing structures.

The SADF

The South African Defence Force (SADF) was broadly structured around two main bodies, the "full-time" force and the "part-time" reserve force. The "full-time" force included "the Permanent Force" (PF) (full-time members of the military) and conscripted National Service men,¹⁸ while the "part-time" force consisted of the Citizen Force (CF) and the Commandos¹⁹ (Phillips, 1989). The relationship and interaction between the part-time and full-time forces:

can best be understood in terms of the typical Defence Force career of a white male. All white men must register for military service at 16 They are then liable for service in the full-time force. Those who do not make a career in the permanent force are required ... to render two years of national service in one of the five arms of the Defence Force. After this they are placed in the part time citizen force for twelve years, during which time they must serve up to 720 days in annual 30-, 60- or 90-day 'camps'. Then they are placed in the active citizen force reserve for five years and may be required to serve 12 days a year in a local commando until the age of 55. Finally, they are placed on the national reserve until they are 65 (Phillips, 1989, p. 17).

When the conscription system was finally abolished in 1994, approximately 428 774 white men had, since 1960, reported for military service (TRC Report, Vol. 4, p. 224). This accounts for a huge number of the adult white male population, many of whom could therefore appropriately be defined as 'ex-combatants'.

South African army units were divided into a Conventional Force and a Territorial Force. The latter and largest element was focused on internal counter-insurgency warfare or "area defence"²⁰ (Cawthra, 1986; Phillips, 1989). Through the use, primarily, of the citizen force and the commandos (the most common of these being rural commandos who were

organised locally to monitor their areas), a far-reaching security network, known as the Area Defence System, was established to fight this particular arm of the war. This complemented the lead role played by the military in the National Security Management System.

In addition, SADF troops became increasingly involved with internal security. In 1985, over 35 000 soldiers were deployed in townships across the country as part of the state's strategy to suppress internal resistance. At the sharp end of counter-insurgency operations, SADF Special Force members were also engaged in several assassinations.²¹ The extent of their involvement in such operations, however, remains unclear.

With regard to external operations, the SADF's elite reaction force initially consisted of the Parachute Battalions or "parabats". Parabats were rigorously selected and very highly trained (Cawthra, 1986). However, in 1974, the Reconnaissance ("Recce") commandos were established, falling under their own Special Forces command (Cawthra, 1986). Although the parabats remained intact and active, SADF's Recce Units became the force's new elite. Specialising in "unconventional" warfare (often involving false flag operations) and shrouded in secrecy, the Recces were at the forefront of most attacks on neighbouring states, and involved in the deployment and training of proxy forces (Phillips, 1989; Stiff, 1999).

SADF's Directorate of Special Tasks (DST), which fell under the Chief of Staff Intelligence (CSI), was central to the running of proxy forces in neighbouring states and an integral component of SADF's covert structures (Ellis, 1998). CSI, which worked closely with Special Forces, became "the richest and most influential of all covert units, with an awesome offensive ability and experience in destabilisation, as well as an intelligence-gathering network at home and abroad" (Ellis, 1998, p. 287). Many ex-Rhodesian security force members were recruited into its ranks.

Another unit at the heart of covert operations, and also falling under CSI in Military Intelligence was the Directorate of Covert Collection (DCC). During a raid on the DCC offices by the Goldstone Commission in late 1992, investigators stumbled across incriminating evidence about SADF involvement in covert operations and dirty tricks. SADF's General Pierre Steyn drew up a report for former State President De Klerk in which detailed allegations were listed including:

- that SADF's Recce regiments, with the help of Spoornet's intelligence agency were involved in train massacres that wreaked havoc on the Witwatersrand in the early 1990s;
- that SADF's 7th Medical Division supplied poison to assassins from army hit squads and was involved in a chemical bomb attack on FRELIMO troops in Mozambique in the late 1980s; and
- that RENAMO and Inkatha operatives were armed and trained by DCC operatives up until the early 1990s

According to the media, General Steyn regarded many of the clandestine operations in his

report to have been "corroborated" or "probably true".²² De Klerk immediately suspended and forcibly retired a number of military officers, several of whom vehemently denied any wrongdoing. De Klerk's prompt action was nevertheless seen as a decisive turning point in the evolution of state dirty tricks (Ellis, 1998). Subsequent investigations cleared a number of the 23 officers who had been dismissed. It is not clear how thorough those investigations were, although aspects were evidently used in subsequent investigations and the prosecution of Brigadier Wouter Basson, the former head of SADF's chemical and biological warfare programme. Former military leaders have continued to deny involvement in such activities, claiming that investigations had cleared them of any wrongdoing, and depicting the allegations as insubstantial and the mischievous work of the National Intelligence Service (NIS).²³

These were not the first claims of SADF involvement in underhand covert operations. In 1991, Judge Louis Harms was appointed to investigate allegations of security force hit squads, following revelations by former SAP Vlakplaas commander, Dirk Coetzee. Although Harms controversially dismissed the allegations against the police, he found that there was *prima facie* evidence of SADF dirty tricks, and pointed to a unit within the military known as the Civil Co-operation Bureau or CCB (Independent Board of Inquiry, 1991).

Established in 1986 to provide additional counter-insurgency capacity to the Special Forces, the CCB was, in the words of its former "Managing Director", Joe Verster, intended to be, "a covert force to counter the covert operations of the ANC" (TRC Report, Vol. 2, pp. 135-136). CCB activities included assassinations, cross-border raids, the setting up of front and regular companies, disinformation campaigns, sanctions busting and intelligence collection (TRC Report, Vol. 2, pp. 141-143). While the CCB is thought to have been responsible for relatively few deaths within South Africa's borders (Ellis, 1998), there is not much clarity on exactly what it was responsible for. Moreover, despite being part of Special Forces, it was structured and operated as if it did not officially exist (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 136).²⁴ Its operatives were drawn from the ranks of the SADF and the SAP (including the notorious Brixton Murder and Robbery Squad) and also, according to former operative Christo Nel, included a network of "international criminals ... people who were usable for the type of work that was planned". There were 'aware' members (numbering approximately 100) and 'unaware' members (approximately 150). The latter did not know that they were in fact part of the CCB (TRC Vol. 2, pp. 139-140). The long-term aim of the CCB was to:

create a global subterranean network of companies that would be both legitimate businesses as well as fronts for operational intelligence. The companies would be headed by businessmen who were well integrated into their communities but remained skilled covert operatives able both to run successful firms and to collect intelligence and act on it where instructed (TRC Vol. 2, p. 137).

This aim was never realised and the CCB was disbanded following the damaging findings of the Harms Commission. At this point, many of its operatives are believed to have moved into other covert units (Ellis, 1998).

Although the SADF relied primarily on the white population for its personnel requirements,

with the exception of a small Indian and Black component drawn into the commando system (Phillips, 1989),²⁵ a number of special SADF units, which were almost exclusively black, were established.²⁶ These units were based in the neighbouring states and their personnel were comprised mainly of former members of other non-South African armed formations.

32 Battalion, which came to number 9 000 (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 22), was made up primarily of black Portuguese-speaking mercenary troops who had previously served in the defeated Angolan FNLA, and was frequently deployed with or on behalf of UNITA in Angola (Phillips, 1989). In other incidents, members used "false flag" operations posing as Angolan troops (Grundy, 1983). Designed specifically for "cross-border" operations, they did not wear SADF uniforms or use SADF equipment, and were allegedly also paid cash in reward for their killings (Phillips, 1989; TRC, Vol. 2; Grundy, 1983). 32 Battalion members were relocated to South Africa following Namibia's independence, and were used in certain internal operations during the pre-1994 era. The unit was disbanded in 2000.

31 Battalion (which later became 201 Battalion) was another specialist unit established by the SADF using indigenous Namibians. According to testimony at the TRC,²⁷ large numbers of the few remaining !Kung "Bushmen" and Ju/Wasi (Namibia's San people) were forcibly recruited. "Either join the army or we'll bomb your villages", they were told (TRC, Vol. 2, pp. 22-23). The San were recruited or abducted into the SADF, at first mainly as trackers, but later were trained in combat and deployed as units (Grundy, 1983).²⁸ 31 Battalion operated out of Camp Omega, a "total institution", which by 1981 housed 850 soldiers, 900 women and 1 500 children (Weaver, 1989). Commentators in the mid-1980s expressed grave concern as to what would happen to these soldiers and their families following independence: "The !Kung not only will have no occupation other than that of soldier, but potentially face the wrath of a nation they have fought against and helped subjugate" (Weaver, 1989).

Proxy Forces

South Africa's wars in neighbouring countries resulted in the emergence of many non-South African combatants who served in full, or in part, the interests of the SADF and the apartheid state. The SADF's special indigenous units, among which were 31 and 32 Battalions, as well as the SAP's Koevoet, were an integral component of apartheid's formal security apparatus. In addition, South Africa relied in differing degrees on proxy forces such as UNITA in Angola, RENAMO in Mozambique, the Lesotho Liberation Army, and Super-Zapu (in Zimbabwe) to bolster its regional destabilisation policies.

South Africa therefore sponsored several insurgencies in neighbouring countries and, by so doing, avoided direct military intervention while at the same time creating the necessary conditions for weakening hostile neighbours and their ability to support South Africa's own liberation movements. The seemingly contradictory phenomenon of foreign combatants doing South Africa's bidding was commonplace and an integral component of Pretoria's divide-and-rule policies. Before independence in Namibia, for example, the South West Africa Territory Force was formed in 1980 from the SADF's SWA regional command. The introduction of conscription for all Namibians provided the required personnel. In effect, the Namibians themselves increasingly fought South Africa's war with SWAPO, in what has been described as the "Namibianisation of the conflict" (Phillips, 1989, p. 26).

Outside of the country, the shapes of the conflict and the combatants involved were not always clearly distinguished from those inside. Some Mozambicans who had come into South Africa illegally in search of work, for instance, were forcibly recruited into RENAMO by the SADF (Davies, 1989). RENAMO combatants were also reportedly used for certain operations inside South Africa. According to the investigative newspaper, 'Weekly Mail', "MNR bandits in camps in South Africa were sent into action against members of the Northern Transvaal Youth Congress in Venda in 1986 (cited in Davies, 1989). While such incidents seem to have been very limited during the 1980s, it is interesting to note the deployment of former members of foreign South African units within South Africa in the early and mid 1990s. Former members of 32 Battalion, for example, approached the TRC in connection with their role in train violence during this period (Ellis, 1998, p. 285). Ultimately, no detail of their involvement was disclosed in this matter, which in turn underscores how limited disclosures have been. Little is publicly known about the role of the military in covert operations.²⁹

Surrogate Forces

From the mid 1980s onwards, and in response to growing levels of resistance and insurgency, the state's proxy forces in the front-line states were complemented internally by surrogate forces in the form of 'vigilantes'³⁰ and other groups (Davies, 1989). In 1985 right-wing vigilante groups across the country, often linked to illegitimate local black authorities, began targeting members and supporters of UDF affiliates, prompting fierce resistance, particularly from youth groups. The security forces turned a blind-eye to the vigilantes' excesses and on occasion were directly implicated in attacks and playing a supporting role (Haysom, 1986). The use of surrogate forces reflected a tangible shift from a primary dependency on the SADF and SAP to suppress internal black resistance, to a policy of divide and rule, in which the security forces would play both a 'hands off' and co-ordinating role. As such, the strategy based on supporting conservative political and social forces, was designed to create new tensions, exacerbate existing ones and exploit the fault lines within black South Africa.

In April 1986 the State Security Council (SSC) emphasised that the task of countering the revolutionaries should be expanded to include the work of "anti-revolutionary groups such as Inkatha ... or the ZCC [Zion Christian Church] as well as the ethnic factor in South African society" (Ellis, 1998, p. 274). Members of criminal networks were also incorporated into vigilante groups (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 312). Auxiliary forces functioned in the communities from which they were recruited in line with the strategy of countering the revolution from within (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 182). In both the use of proxy forces in neighbouring countries and vigilantes in South Africa, the role played by the state was hidden. These forces functioned to disrupt and fracture democratic organisations and spread intense and widespread fear through increasingly arbitrary attacks (Cock, 1991).

For the state, this strategy had several advantages: "The deployment of force is cheap in terms of both direct SADF casualties and resources; and the level of violence and brutality can be raised at a lower diplomatic and ideological cost than would be the case if the state's regular security forces were directly involved" (Davies, 1989, p. 103). In addition, the use of surrogate forces fostered perceptions of "black-on-black" violence, and maintained a distance between those who were physically involved in the fighting and those who ultimately benefited.

The role of the state and its security forces ranged from endorsement and support to management and even formation of the vigilante groupings. There was no blue print. In Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, for example, vigilantes were utilised to exacerbate tensions that existed between the local UDF and AZAPO structures. Similarly, security force interventions (and their failure to avert violence) fed into "Witdoeke" actions against UDF supporters in the Western Cape (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 308). In these cases, the security forces tapped into existing struggles and agendas. Elsewhere, groupings such as the Anti-Comrades and The Eagles (both in the Orange Free State) were allegedly the direct creation of the security forces (TRC Report, Vol. 2, pp. 310-311). Others seemingly operated more on a part-time basis. The Three Million Gang, a gangster outfit based in Brandfort,

was called by Sergeant or the SB [Special Branch] whenever there was need to reinforce the prevailing structures of gangsters in Brandfort. Co-ordination meetings were held at [the] police station, where leaders of the gangsters met with members of the SB to receive attacking strategies from the SB, weapons, money and material sponsors like beers and tobacco (Testimony to TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 311).³¹

Bantustan / Homeland Forces

Bantustan security forces served as an important link to apartheid South Africa's security system: "Military agreements are entered into with these States when they attain their independence. This led to the creation of a joint management body to coordinate co-operation. The SADF recognises the supportive capabilities of the Independent States and encourages their participation in an overall Southern African military treaty against a common enemy" (1982 Defence White Paper in Phillips, 1989; Cooper, 1989).

This brief outline of the bantustan security forces concentrates on their military components but their police forces were also integral to homeland security. Indeed, they played a role similar to that of their South African counterparts, with a primary focus on counter insurgency rather than combating crime. In addition, they played a pivotal role in protecting the interests of ruling homeland elites. Consequently, and as in South Africa, they lacked legitimacy and were disliked by the communities they 'served' (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 412).

While the "independent" bantustans – Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei - had their 'own' forces, regional battalions of the SADF were established in the non-independent bantustans. These military forces (non-independent and "independent") were integrated into South Africa's area defence plan³² (in the case of the "independent" bantustans however, this was not publicly acknowledged) and were used by South Africa both for counter-insurgency operations, and to maintain internal "law and order" in quelling domestic unrest (Cooper, 1989, p. 178). They were also used in the Namibian conflict.

Apart from formal military agreements between South Africa and the "independent" bantustans, SADF's relationship with bantustan forces was entrenched through its provision of counter-insurgency training to bantustan soldiers (Cooper, 1989). In addition, white SADF officers were seconded to Bantustan forces where they held positions of authority, and the homeland military were also dependent on South Africa for the supply of finances, bases, military equipment and intelligence. This dependence enabled the South African

government to prevent any of the homelands pursuing a truly independent defence policy (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 413).

Despite South Africa's intentions, the link between the SADF and bantustan forces was often weak, with the bantustan armies themselves, at times, a key source of instability. They were, "sometimes being used by (ruling bantustan) elites to further their own aims, and at other times, acting independently against them" (Cooper, 1989, p. 174).³³ This was certainly the case in the military coups in the Transkei and Bophuthatswana, which some analysts understood as illustrative of the military's desire to have "a share in the spoils" (Cooper, 1989, p. 185). Mills & Wood (1992) have suggested otherwise in the case of the Bophuthatswana coup, where internal resentment within the Bophuthatswana Defence Force (BDF) likely arose out of corruption and the favouring of South Africans for senior posts in the force. In this instance, the SADF intervened to put down the coup, thereby keeping their ally and incumbent homeland leader, Lucas Mangope, in power, and preventing Bophuthatswana from becoming a springboard for ANC attacks on South Africa's industrial heartland in the PWV. This attempted coup, however, involved only certain sections of the BDF. Consequently, Mills & Wood shared the position that, "it is difficult to view the BDF as an independent unit ... [it] is best seen as part of the SADF" (Mills & Wood, 1992, p. 5).

The situation varied from homeland to homeland. The Transkei Defence Force (TDF) was to experience a profound reorientation when a military officer, Bantu Holomisa, took power in the late 1980s. Holomisa, who considered the ANC an ally and joined forces with it during the pre-1994 negotiation process, allowed Transkeian territory to be used by liberation armies for training and safe havens. Such was the break with the South African military that, in 1993, the SADF and the SAP prepared detailed plans to topple Holomisa in a coup. In neighbouring Ciskei, the military also took over nominal control of government. Here, the "head of state", Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, continued to work closely with the South African military and intelligence agents. In September 1992, Ciskei Defence Force (CDF) members opened fire on ANC marchers near Bisho, killing 19.

Inkatha and the Inkatha Freedom Party

Inkatha and its successor the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) have consistently claimed that they were opposed to apartheid, but that they sought a democratic dispensation by means of negotiation and not armed struggle. After several years of collaboration with the ANC, Inkatha's relationship soured dramatically following an historic meeting in London in 1979. Inkatha's leader, Chief Buthelezi alleged that the ANC leader, Oliver Tambo, had lost control of "militant" elements within the ANC and was even publicly criticising Inkatha: "He had sided with those in his ranks who saw Inkatha as a threat and who wanted no evidence that black democratic opposition and black non-violent tactics and strategies were powerful forces for bringing about change" ('The London Meeting', IFP Website).³⁴

The relationship between Inkatha and the ANC continued to deteriorate in the early 1980s, with increasing violent conflict between supporters in KwaZulu and Natal. Much of this violence revolved around local battles for resources, control and patronage of Inkatha officials (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 340). Inkatha and Buthelezi continued to portray themselves as opposed to violence, but consistently evoked their "right" to defend themselves. Indeed,

such was the all-encompassing notion of "self-defence", that attacking one's opponents was also construed as "defensive."

The complex reasons for what became referred to as "civil war", and what motivated the protagonists' and combatants' participation in the conflict, fall beyond the scope of this study. Instead, a very brief description of some of the key categories of combatants follows.

Inkatha's combatants have been described in a number of ways. In early years those involved in the fighting were referred to as "men" and sometimes merely "residents" organised in "impis". Alternatively they have been depicted as "Zulu warriors" or Inkatha supporters armed with sticks and assegais. From 1986, members of the Inkatha Youth Brigade were also increasingly associated with the violence (Jeffrey, 1997, pp. 47-55). Inkatha's victims and enemies referred to them as "amabutho"³⁵ or "inkatha vigilantes" led by "warlords": "These Inkatha leaders are generally known as warlords because they command armies of men and extract allegiance and obedience on roughly feudal lines: in return for military loyalty the warlords provide their men with money, food, drink, and some political assistance, such as the granting of licences and favourable allocation of land" as one commentator³⁶ defined "war lords" (in Jeffrey, 1997).

Despite Inkatha's opposition to Pretoria, Inkatha's relationship with the apartheid state and its security agencies suggests that the organisation and its leader were prepared to 'dance with the devil' if it believed it was in its interests to do so. According to former Inkatha member and Buthelezi confidante, Walter Felgate, Buthelezi held meetings with the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) operatives on a regular monthly basis from the early 1970s.³⁷

As the security situation in KwaZulu deteriorated in the early 1980s, Buthelezi accused the ANC and UDF of trying to destroy him and Inkatha. Indeed, Inkatha officials and bantustan leaders were defined as collaborators and as such were prime targets of the ANC's call for ungovernability (Jeffrey, 1997).³⁸ In an address to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly in 1984, Buthelezi called for the development of a homeland paramilitary capacity that would tackle opponents. "I believe that we must prepare ourselves not only to defend property and life, but to go beyond that and prepare ourselves to hit back with devastating force at those who destroy and kill" (Buthelezi cited in Varney, 1997, p. 8).

During 1986, 200 Inkatha supporters received six months' military training from the SADF's Special Forces in the Caprivi Strip, as part of "Operation Marion". Upon their return, the "Caprivi Trainees" were deployed around KwaZulu-Natal, some joining the homeland police force (The KwaZulu Police – KZP), some guarding the homes of chiefs and Inkatha officials, and others training youths in their local areas (TRC Report, Vol. 3, p. 220). In early 1994, a task-team report commissioned by the Transitional Executive Council³⁹ found that various hit-squad activities were traceable to Caprivi Trainees. Contrary to official claims, it found that that the training received from the SADF, "had little to do with the stated purpose of VIP protection, but had in fact equipped the trainees with a deadly repertoire of skills in offensive military techniques and guerrilla warfare". Testimony provided at the TRC by some former trainees has confirmed these findings (TRC, Vol. 3, p. 223; Varney, 1997, p. 23). Inkatha and former SADF commanders however, continue to deny that the trainees received training or instruction for offensive operations. Nevertheless, "Operation Marion" should be seen within the broader ambit of

the state's counter-insurgency efforts and Inkatha as a critical ally in the fight against the ANC and its fellow travellers.

Inkatha's dominance in the KwaZulu homeland ensured that the KZP played a partisan role in the unfolding conflict during the 1980s and early 1990s. Collusion and collaboration resulted in some members of the KZP providing transport, weapons and training to other combatants, as well as participating directly in the conflict against ANC/UDF supporters (TRC, Vol. 3, p. 251). Collaboration with the SAP and its security police component was illustrated by the appointment of one of the security police's top counter-insurgency experts, Brigadier Jac Buchner, as Commissioner of the KZP.

Conflict between Inkatha and UDF affiliates continued throughout the 1980s and, following the unbanning of the ANC and other parties, spread to the townships of the PWV. Under the banner of the IFP, many Zulu-speaking migrants became embroiled in a conflict that resulted in unprecedented levels of violence.

In some of the townships around Johannesburg's sprawling conurbation the IFP's combatants, organised into Self Protection Units (SPUs), operated largely from the hostels and were primarily engaged in fighting ANC-aligned Self Defence Units (SDUs). There is, however, relatively little information on the Self Protection Structures and their relationship with the IFP, as research has focussed on SDU structures.⁴⁰ Furthermore, commentators noted the 'invisibility' of those structures linked to Inkatha, and the concomitant limitations to depth of understanding:

In the East Rand, SPUs are present in hostels. It is difficult, however, to assess their role because they are not visible. They do not even patrol the parameters of the hostels but appear to stay inside the hostels. This increases the perception that they operate as "hit squads" (Gillespie & Radipole, 1994, p. 16)

Noteworthy too, is that while commentators tend to refer to the 1990-1994 violence between Inkatha supporters and other township residents as a conflict between the SPUs and SDUs, it was not until 1993 that Buthelezi called for the establishment of Self Protection Units (SPUs) to defend "Zulu areas" from attack (Jeffrey, 1997, p. 390). Before this call, SPU trainees had already gained considerable fighting experience in the preceding years of conflict.

Following Buthelezi's call for the establishment of SPUs, Zulus living in IFP-controlled areas (both in KwaZulu-Natal and on the Reef) were asked to contribute R5.00 towards the forming and arming of the protection units. Between October 1993 and April 1994, shortly before the first democratic elections, approximately 5 000 recruits were provided with SPU training mainly at the Mlaba camp in KwaZulu-Natal. (Other camps where training took place were Emandleni-Matleng and Dinizulu.) Training was carried out under the command of Phillip Powell, a former security policeman, and involved members of the KZP, the Caprivi Trainees and Vlakplaas operatives, including Eugene de Kock (TRCt, Vol. 3, p. 319). The latter also organised for Powell to be supplied with large quantities of weapons. In addition, some SPU training in the early 1990s was facilitated by right-wing organisations such as the Afrikaanse Weerstandsbeweging (AWB). This took place mostly on white farms and KwaZulu-Natal nature reserves such as Umfolozi (TRC, Vol. 3; IBI,

1993). In the context of the IFP's opposition to participation in the negotiations, military training of this nature was understandably construed as somewhat sinister. 'Official' training was also necessary, however, if the IFP were to argue for the incorporation of their combatants into the post-apartheid security structures.

Liberation Movement Forces

Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK)

When it was launched on 16 December 1961, MK had fewer than 250 members. Armed actions at the time took the form of sabotage of state infrastructure. New recruits were generally sent abroad for training but were not able to infiltrate back into the country as had been intended. Following the arrest of MK's High Command in Rivonia and the squashing of attempts to regroup inside the country, MK had little choice but to operate from outside SA, and its headquarters were subsequently established in Tanzania.⁴¹ It was to be more than a decade before MK activity was again registered inside South African territory. MK's activities and the development of its structures during this period were largely shaped by its exile circumstances, primarily its geographical isolation and related capacity problems.⁴²

Numerous efforts to develop an underground presence in South Africa were hindered by a limited support structure for the infiltration of cadres. This resulted in the capture, interrogation and abuse of infiltrating cadres, many of whom survived back in South Africa for only very short periods. This situation improved significantly following the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, but stemming potential points of infiltration remained a key priority in Pretoria's counter-insurgency strategy. Faced with an ever-present threat of attack in the forward areas, death-squad activities, abductions and arrests, effective infiltration continued to be a problem for the ANC (Barrell, 1990).

The process of building the internal underground was therefore slow, and even after internal structures were established, particularly from the mid 1980s, they suffered from their isolation from other ANC and MK structures. The gap between the military and political operations of the ANC generally, with the "right hand not knowing what the left hand was doing", had for long dogged the armed struggle (Motumi, 1994, p. 5) In these circumstances, inadequate planning for the reception, support and guidance of infiltrating cadres contributed to the alarming number of arrests, injuries and deaths at the hand of the state security forces (Barrell, 1990; Motumi, 1994). In many instances cadres were simply left to fend for themselves.

Command structures and operational planning were influenced by these circumstances, resulting in the devolution of decision making to individual commanders and operatives on the ground. This is emphasised, for example, in the ANC's second submission to the TRC in considerations of civilian casualties as a result of MK operations:

When unexpected difficulties arose, cadres had to decide on their feet: and sometimes they made wrong decisions In contrast with a conventional military force, in which virtually all planning takes place at HQ level by experienced officers, in guerrilla warfare most of the initiative is with the unit, and detailed planning takes place at the lowest level. Each cadre has to be

trusted to make decisions with regard to choice of target within ANC policy, whilst keeping a close eye on developments and feelings among the people in his/her community – a responsibility which no soldier in a conventional force ever has to face There were long and insecure lines of communication, command and control. There was no "hotline" to higher structures to ask for guidance ... (ANC 2nd submission, TRC Report, p. 15)

The ANC was unable to track accurately what happened to its operatives and, as a result, what operations it was responsible for. This was evidenced in their submission to the TRC, where it provided two lists of military operations: those it was sure it was responsible for, and those it may have been responsible for. While the ANC maintains that some of the operations on the latter list were "false-flags", others may well have been *bona fide* MK members, "interpreting ANC policy in a certain way" (TRC, Vol. 2, p. 339).

Some cadres did manage to link up with local anti-apartheid structures and "hand-grenades began to replace stones and petrol bombs in the hands of the comrades" (Barrell, 1990, p. 60).⁴³ Further efforts to improve co-ordination and communication were made. In 1986, Operation Vula was launched as an attempt to increase the internal presence in a more co-ordinated manner (including the infiltration of senior political and military leadership into the country), in line with the strategy of "People's War" (Motumi, 1995; ANC 2nd submission to TRC).

While initially MK activity focused on the sabotage of economic infrastructure and state installations, SAP and SADF personnel were increasingly targeted during the 1970s (Motumi 1994, ANC 2nd submission to TRC). The strategy of "armed propaganda" was largely symbolic, and aimed at raising consciousness within the country and making MK's presence felt during this period. Throughout the 1980s however, attacks became more aggressive, significantly increasing in number, and focused on destroying enemy personnel (Motumi, 1995; Barrell, 1990; ANC 2nd submission to TRC).⁴⁴

In the tradition of Communist insurgencies in China and Vietnam, the ANC and MK extolled the strategy of "People's War", which relied on the involvement of the broader population in the fight against apartheid (Motumi, 1995). MK cadres were to link up with local street committees and train and organise "comrades" into combat units. Where possible, they did so, but as Barrell (1990) points out, comrades had often already formed their own combat units armed with stones, petrol bombs and innovative tactics.

Following the Kabwe Conference in 1985, where the strategy of "People's War" was reappraised, there was a perceptible shift in the nature of MK's armed activities. The ANC relaxed its "single-minded preoccupation with avoiding civilian casualties in the course of armed actions against legitimate targets" (ANC 2nd submission to TRC, p. 16). From late 1985 a landmine campaign targeting white farmers in selected border areas was launched. According to the ANC, the farmers' participation in the state's security networks rendered them "legitimate targets", but because black farm workers too often also became victims, along with women and children, the ANC put a halt to the campaign in 1987 (Barrell, 1990; ANC 2nd submission to TRC).

Despite the harsh implementation of the state of emergency declared mid-1986, MK's armed operations intensified, at the same time that elements of the ANC's leadership began to secretly negotiate with Pretoria. Incidences of armed operations rose steadily from 1986, peaking in 1988 (during which time one in three attacks were directed at the security forces) and continuing in 1989 (Barrell, 1990).

In August 1990 the ANC announced the suspension of its armed struggle. MK activities nevertheless continued. These included the recruitment and training of new cadres in preparation for a new South African defence force. Other selected returned MK operatives, together with underground operatives, were also involved in organising, training and arming Self Defence Units.

The ANC (and MK Military HQ) felt that the negotiations could be jeopardised should MK become formally involved in attempts to defend people from these attacks [which exploded on the Reef in July 1990], but approved the involvement of MK members based in communities under threat in SDU structures Various clandestine units for the training and organisation of the various SDUs were set up, and some cadres were tasked to provide weaponry where possible. We do not have records of MK's role in SDUs since they were not HQ-controlled structures" (The ANC's 2nd submission to the TRC REPORT, 1997, pp. 35-36).

For MK soldiers, experiences of conflict and violence were not restricted to operational activities. Life in the military camps was particularly difficult and dangerous, especially in Angola. Inadequate supplies of water, food, and medical assistance were compounded by the realities of a country in the midst of civil war. Tropical diseases were rife and camps and cadres were under constant threat from the SADF-supported UNITA (ANC 2nd submission to TRC). Indeed, a number of MK cadres were killed in action, fighting with Angolan government troops against UNITA.

Cadres were often also deeply frustrated as "many recruits wanted desperately to just go home and fight" (ANC 2nd submission to TRC, 1997, p. 22). Combined with considerable leadership problems,⁴⁵ and increasing paranoia about enemy infiltration, these conditions contributed directly to two camp mutinies in the mid-1980s that claimed a number of lives.⁴⁶ The ANC's treatment of imprisoned cadres has been the subject of much criticism, prompting the establishment of several internal commissions of inquiry. One of them, the Stuart Commission, noted that:

since 1979 nearly all petty offences had been dealt with in a destructive manner 'as distinct from the earlier revolutionary constructive punishment' which sought essentially to rehabilitate offenders rather than crush them. The report ... notes that the 'tragic fact is that it was at its worst in the training camps' (in ANC 2nd submission to TRC, p. 24).

Recruitment

Exactly how many people were involved with MK has never been accurately established.

Many people claim MK status although there may be no official record confirming this. Given the nature of the conflict, and given the fact that many MK cells were established internally with no channel of communication to external structures, this lack of clarity is not surprising. In 1990, it was estimated that MK members numbered 12 000 (Barrell, 1990). At this time, women constituted approximately 20% of MK cadres (Cock, 1992). The Certified Personnel Register compiled for the purpose of SANDF integration included 28 000 names from the ANC (Frankel, 2000, p. 58). The discrepancy could be explained by the fact that Barrell's figures were based only on those who had received training in exile before 1990, and did not take into account recruitments in the early 1990s, or internal recruitment.

MK was a volunteer army and members had only "to be against apartheid and have enough courage to take up arms" to qualify for entry (Motumi, 1995, p. 89). Ill health and age were the sole grounds for exclusion, alongside checks conducted by ANC intelligence to guard against infiltration (Motumi, 1995; ANC 2nd submission to TRC). Although MK received a steady trickle of recruits throughout its history, recruitment ebbed and flowed in accordance with political events in South Africa. Early recruits who were not arrested and were able to leave South Africa included members of the Luthuli Detachment who fought with the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) in Rhodesia during the Wankie campaign of 1967. In their attempt to gain an access route into South Africa, both ZIPRA and MK suffered significant casualties in conflict with Rhodesian and South African security forces (Barrell, 1990). Recruitment in the late 1960s and early 1970s remained relatively low. The period following the 1976 uprisings however, saw an exodus of young people from South Africa, many of whom left with the singular objective of joining MK. In the wake of popular uprisings in the mid-1980s, a more politically astute youth, "baptised in the struggles of the mass democratic organisations" (Motumi, 1995, p. 87) left to join MK. While the majority of cadres reportedly joined at this time (Motumi, 1995) the early 1990s also saw significant numbers of new recruits who left for training in Tanzania and Uganda and elsewhere.

Training

In addition to the training received in guerrilla warfare, cadres were given classes in literacy and political education (which focused on the history of the ANC and South Africa, international politics and aspects of Marxist-Leninism) (Motumi, 1995, p. 90). From 1986 onwards, training procedures began, to a greater degree, to reflect the requisite preparations for a future national defence force. Some recruits were sent to the USSR to be trained in conventional warfare. MK cadres were unaware of the secret negotiations between their leadership and representatives of Pretoria and may have wondered what purpose there was in learning conventional warfare methods when the situation clearly demanded increased capacity in terms of insurgency needs.

At the same time, cadres who had managed to enter South Africa conducted crash courses for volunteers inside the country. This resulted in some fundamental qualitative distinctions between those who had been trained in exile and those recruited internally. Issues around authority and control plagued some of these groupings: "Some of these recruits had sketchy political understanding of the nature of the struggle in comparison with those cadres who had gone through the intensive political and military training offered in camps in exile.

Some supporters drifted in and out of structures, were never thoroughly under the discipline of the ANC and MK, yet commanders on the ground sometimes found their contributions indispensable" (ANC 2nd submission to TRC, 1997, p. 66). Training continued until the beginning of the 1990s but also following the unbanning of the ANC, when, predominantly new recruits were sent for training in conventional warfare (Motumi, 1995, p. 91). Apparently this excluded women (Cock, 1992). Some recruits, who were to subsequently swell the ranks of the SDUs, received crash courses in the Transkei homeland.

Overall, combat roles and experiences varied considerably amongst the differently placed people who fought for the ANC. Cock categorises MK into four broad groupings, "(T)hose who left the country, were trained externally for long periods of time and remained in the camps; those who trained internally for shorter periods, which may have included one or two weeks training in Swaziland or Botswana; those who assisted and provided support for MK in the form of safe houses, courier work and reconnaissance; and those who did non-military tasks such as building underground structures" (Cock, cited in Motumi & MacKenzie, 1998).

The last two categories of combatants highlight the extent to which the notion of a clear separation between 'non-combatants' or 'civilians', and 'combatants' is often blurred in revolutionary situations (Cock, 1991, p. 4). But, even if one excludes the less action-orientated categories and focuses on those who trained for, or were directly involved in, violent conflict it was clearly not trained MK guerrillas alone who were engaged against the apartheid forces, but also local township residents – and, overwhelmingly young people.

These youth perceived themselves as frontline soldiers in the struggle for social and political change, and therefore, as defenders of their communities. In fighting against the system with their stones and home-made weapons, they became the army for liberation. (Dissel, 1997).

Militarised youth: "Comrades" and Self Defence Units

During the 1980s, the urban terrain became a key site of struggle. The state's violent suppression of protests by township residents, who rejected the imposition of illegitimate black local authorities, led protest actions to become increasingly violent and confrontational (Marks & McKenzie, 1995). One of the two "main agencies of 'resistance violence' in the 1980s were the "comrades" who were largely unemployed township youth" (Cock, 1991, p. 13).

At the 1985 Kabwe Conference the ANC had responded to intensifying state repression by calling for renewed efforts to render South Africa ungovernable. Under the banner of a "People's War", the ANC now sought to further energise efforts to mobilise the masses. In an interview broadcast in 1986, Oliver Tambo called on the people to "multiply the formation of people's defence militias everywhere, so as to meet more effectively the assault by the enemy's armed forces and the treacherous vigilantes and impis ... which they employ. Our people's army, strengthened by the emerging popular militia, must intensify and spread its armed actions across the country" (ANC 1st submission to the TRC).⁴⁷

With a limited military infrastructure, the ANC encouraged township communities to take

the initiative. These calls (together with peoples' own experiences of state violence and repression) led township residents to confront the state with their own forms of violence ([Marks & McKenzie, 1995](#)). Identifying themselves as "comrades", youth were at the frontlines of the People's War against the state. "Legitimate" targets included all individuals and institutions believed to be undermining the goals of the liberation struggle, and viewed as allied to "the state". In addition to the security forces, councillors, alleged informers and other perceived collaborators were also targeted by comrades.

Problems of violence in many townships were compounded by the absence of legitimate policing, which provided space for criminal elements to operate with increasing impunity. Township combatants stepped in to fill this gap, taking on policing and adjudicating roles against common criminals, for example, those accused of theft or rape. (They also intervened in other issues such as domestic disputes). On the one hand, there was an acute lack of policing *for* township residents. On the other, criminals were perceived of politically - as threatening the unity of the liberation movement.

There were varying degrees of communication and support between these youths and the formal structures of MK. From the mid-1980s onwards, a growing number of MK operatives succeeded in infiltrating South Africa and set about developing, arming and training local combat units across the country. Some "comrades" were closely associated with MK cells. Many others however, were not, and while these youth combatants were powerfully influenced by the UDF, ANC and its armed wing, they nevertheless constituted a powerful and distinct phenomenon. Often without any formal training, the "comrades" identified their own enemies and employed their own methodologies, wielding increasing and, at times, terrifying power.

Forms of violence included "necklace murders" and stoning to death, in contrast to the concentration on sabotage of military and collaborationist targets by MK (Motumi, 1995, p. 88). The UDF strongly disapproved of the "necklace" method employed by the local activists, but "had very little direct control over the development of this phenomenon" (UDF Submission to TRC, p. 11). Their interventions were often ineffective. The ANC also publicly disapproved, although statements from some senior leadership figures, including Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Alfred Nzo, reflected a degree of support for these measures, or at least an understanding of why some resorted to them. The TRC found that the leadership structures "were unable to control the youth militia – the amabutho and those running the 'people's courts' at all times, and sometimes came under threat when they tried to do so." (TRC Report, Vol. 2, Ch. 4, p. 97). The ANC however stated that it, "will always refuse to condemn those who believed they were part of the struggle for liberation ... and were making their contribution by ridding communities of informers" (ANC 2nd submission to TRC, p. 11).

Self Defence Units

The term "Self Defence Unit" (SDU) was created in, and is associated with, the conflicts of early 1990s, primarily in and around black urban residential areas. Problems of definition arise here, as community-based defence structures, in which the "comrades" played a leading role, were also an important feature of the township terrain of the 1980s. [Schärf \(1997\)](#) describes the "first phase" of SDUs as occurring in the late 1980s "when the youth were both part of the struggle organisations and defended their communities. Their

structures were not necessarily called SDUs, but were part of street committees or youth organisations. Many youths also took part in people's courts" ([Schärf, 1997](#)).

In the 1990s the nature of these structures shifted, as did the nature of the conflict and the context in which violence manifested. These circumstances were particularly acute in the townships and informal settlements of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. In response to the massive upsurge in conflict, depicted both as ethnic and political, between Xhosa and Zulu, ANC and IFP, it was clear that the violence was largely random and indiscriminate, and designed to sow widespread fear and terror. This situation was exacerbated by the security forces, which, at best were seen as ignoring the plight of township residents, and at worst, as deliberately stoking the violence and directly participating in it.

In the absence of legitimate policing communities sought to defend themselves. Towards the end of 1990, in response to intense grassroots pressure and demands for protection, the ANC called for local communities to establish SDUs, and deployed certain MK and intelligence components to facilitate the process. Again, it was primarily the youth (many of whom had fought on the battlegrounds of the township streets in the 1980s) who responded to the call.⁴⁸

SDUs were theoretically envisaged as a disciplined paramilitary force, supervised by MK, guided by political leadership and accountable to the local community ([Rakgoadi, 1995](#)). In practice however, SDUs seldom functioned in this way, although the situation varied significantly from area to area.⁴⁹ Especially in the very early period, it is clear that numerous SDUs did provide very valuable protection to members of their communities.⁵⁰ In many areas, however, the situation deteriorated. The ANC struggled to control SDU structures, and in many areas was unable to openly facilitate MK management of the structures. Both the UDF and ANC emphasised community-based control and accountability,⁵¹ but in reality this did not often materialise: "The units should have been controlled by the communities in which they operated, but many communities were entirely destabilised by low-intensity violence, and organised structures at grassroots levels were almost non-existent."⁵² Constraints on leadership and processes of accountability were exacerbated by violent power struggles within and between SDUs, as well as involvement in criminal activities. In some communities, SDUs were allegedly often responsible for terrorising rather than protecting their communities (Thulare, 1997, p. 10). These aberrations, which at times appeared systemic, were attributed both to police infiltration of their structures and, more generally, to a misdirection of anger from SDUs towards elements within their own communities ([Rakgoadi, 1995](#)). This was further compounded by a lack of political control and direction. In some areas SDUs emerged that had little or no connection to the ANC or MK, despite claims to the contrary. Even in ANC-aligned units, members did not necessarily belong to or even support the ANC (Gillespie & Raditapole, 1994, p. 15).

According to the ANC, "before long there were two kinds of SDUs in existence: genuine community defence groups, and violent gangs presenting themselves as ANC-aligned SDUs" (ANC 1st Submission to TRC). These represented two extremes of a continuum along which most SDUs fell. Revelations before the amnesty committee of the TRC illustrated the range of political and criminal matters in which the SDUs became embroiled. In some instances it was impossible to disentangle the criminal from the political: "The fact

that several (SDU members) were granted amnesty for what would otherwise have been criminal acts demonstrates that the TRC also viewed their actions in the light of politically motivated crimes." ([Schärf, 1997](#))

The central unifying factor that emerges from existing studies about SDUs is the way in which members of these structures perceived themselves as "defenders of the community" although the nature and experiences of 'defence structures' which sprung up during the early 1990s varied dramatically, and were informed by particular local conditions. Members were often involved in violence as victims or perpetrators, or as both. Some areas, especially those fending off attacks from IFP- aligned hostel residents, bore the brunt of the violence. SDUs in these areas carried specific responsibilities and suffered numerous casualties. Many SDU formations actively engaged their (real or perceived) enemies. In a few instances, hostels were attacked with mortars and hand-held rocket launchers. Some SDUs also became embroiled in the ethnic dimension of the conflict. In sections of Katlehong and Sharpeville, for example, Zulu speakers were targeted by SDU members. Elsewhere, Zulu speakers held command positions in the SDUs.

The situation was not uniform, making generalisations often impossible. Many SDUs did what they were set up to do, namely to protect their communities against aggressors, whether they be security forces, hostel residents or common criminals. The activities of other SDUs, however, were informed less by these issues and more by contestation over resources and power. A further complicating factor is that there were significant numbers of armed youths who participated in what they believed to be the defence of their communities, although they were not organised into identifiable defence structures ([Marks & McKenzie, 1995](#); Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998).

*Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA)*⁵³

As with MK, members of APLA were volunteers in a political army. Most were trained and based in exile, mainly in Tanzania. Unlike MK, APLA was active in South Africa only from the late 1980s, and intensified its operations during the 1990s, at the same time MK had officially suspended its armed struggle. Available literature suggests that by the 1990s a significant part of APLA's command structures was moved to within South Africa, predominantly to the Transkei. Operations also involved internally based cadres, drawn mainly from the ranks of the Pan Africanist Student Organisation (PASO), who had undergone a rudimentary one-week weapons-handling training course conducted by APLA in either the Transkei or Botswana. By the beginning of 1993, APLA claimed it had 10 000 soldiers, including those trained internally. The list of members submitted to the SANDF in 1994, however, consisted of 6 000 names (Lodge, 1995, pp. 108-110).

APLA has been described as a relatively disciplined force,⁵⁴ with police commenting frequently on the sophistication of its operations. Unlike MK, APLA did not differentiate between 'hard' (military) and 'soft' (civilian) targets, but regarded all white South Africans as the enemy and as part of the apartheid state's security establishment.⁵⁵ While members of the state's security forces were the main targets of APLA's earlier operations, civilians were increasingly targeted. Its preferred weapons, in contrast to MK who mainly utilised (the more impersonal) limpet mines when attacking civilians, were grenades and automatic weapons, which required "direct engagement with their targets" (Lodge, 1995, p. 113).

By the end of the 1980s APLA's reported presence in South Africa's conflicts began to be felt with attacks attributed to APLA being reported from 1986. This was a sharp departure from the first half of the 1980s when no APLA attacks were reported (Lodge, 1995, p. 107). In its submission to the TRC, the PAC stated that its performance was hindered during the early 1980s because of its "unstable" existence as a result of internal conflicts between both members of leadership, and between leadership and cadres.⁵⁶ Control (or attempts to reassert it) sometimes resulted in harsh "disciplinary" measures, particularly against cadres in the military camps and included extra-judicial executions and floggings (TRC Report, Vol. 2, Ch. 4, pp. 210-225). There is little clarity however on the extent and nature of these problems.⁵⁷

The first confirmed APLA actions were attributed to the "Scorpion Gang" from Alexandra Township in Johannesburg, who, between December 1986 and February 1987, shot dead two policemen, two soldiers and a café owner (TRC Vol. 2, Ch. 4, p. 205). Indeed, operations during this period appear to have mainly targeted policemen and soldiers. Most attacks took place in the townships around Johannesburg, but later spread to smaller towns in the Western Transvaal. In the Western Cape during 1987, APLA also formed a loose alliance with QIBLA, an Islamic fundamentalist grouping (Lodge, 1995, p. 108).

A "robbery unit" (later also referred to as a "repossession unit") was established in the late 1980s to fund the armed wing. APLA cadres acknowledged that armed robberies had increasingly become part of the *modus operandi*, and that it had become necessary to establish a formal unit with these responsibilities. This was justified as "repossession" of the land and its resources, which had been usurped from the people through the force of arms (APLA submission to TRC). APLA units were also encouraged to obtain weapons and other requirements through robbery if necessary. One APLA commander explained to the TRC some of the motivations behind this strategy:

[The family sheltering the APLA cadre] thought we were being paid like the SADF soldiers and we had to be explaining things. When they learnt we were not going to resolve their economic problems they then started to advise us on the targets, which were butcheries, grocery shop, and so on. In the mid and late 80s we lost more comrades in armed robberies than in actual armed confrontation with the enemy forces. Under the circumstances we just had to establish a unit that was going to specialise on robberies – even though we know we were not getting all the loot but at least we managed to operate effectively. The rest of the cadres would engage in fighting because it had become clear we could no longer expect those who were making money, mainly for themselves and partly for the struggle, to want to die in operation that did not involve "repossession" ... (Vol. 2, Ch. 4, p. 208).

Unsurprisingly, theory was not always translated into practice, and the lines between the political and criminal were frequently blurred. At the same time, a number of PAC/APLA members were killed or arrested during "repossession" efforts. This was, according to APLA's High Command, a central reason for participating in the TRC: "Our major goal is to highlight the plight of hundreds of APLA/PAC members who are still languishing in prison while their pleas for release fall on deaf ears" (APLA submission to TRC). Of the 133 known applications for amnesty from affiliates of the PAC and APLA, 100 were

granted.⁵⁸ It is however suspected that hundreds of other APLA cadres remain behind bars.

It was in the early 1990s that APLA was most active. After much political wrangling, and relatively late in the day, the PAC joined the formal negotiation process, while simultaneously refusing to suspend its armed struggle. APLA took advantage of the more 'liberal' conditions and the fact that access into South Africa had become far easier. The situation also enabled APLA to conduct training locally, especially in the Transkei (Lodge, 1995, p. 110). APLA attacks stood out from other manifestations of political violence at the time, as most of its victims were White. A series of assaults on white teachers working in the townships conducted by the Pan-Africanist Student Organisation (PASO) also took place. In 1992 APLA operations "more than quadrupled" (Lodge, 1995, p. 112). The following year, APLA publicly launched an intensification of armed actions under the banner of "The Year of the Great Storm". It was during this year that APLA committed some of its most infamous attacks (e.g. the Heidelberg Tavern massacre, and the St James' Church massacre). Most of these were concentrated, although not exclusively, in the Eastern and Western Cape, and generally in rural areas. Farmers and civilians were targeted, as were recreational and religious facilities frequented by white South Africans. In January 1994 APLA announced the suspension of its armed struggle.

Chapter Two: Demobilisation

Defining Demobilisation and Reintegration

Broadly defined, 'demobilisation' refers to the significant reduction of people employed by the regular military (including civilian personnel), and/or by opposition or paramilitary forces. Consequently, demobilisation is a key process whereby combatants become ex-combatants. Demobilisation generally follows a cessation of conflict with the signing of a peace accord, or the defeat of one of the fighting parties. Alternatively, it may take place for a variety of other reasons such as disarmament agreements, financial shortages, or shifts in military strategies (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998). Although demobilisation is often a key facet of demilitarisation and disarmament strategies, it can occur in contexts where the military is being strengthened, through the introduction of more high-tech strategies, for example (Motumi & Kingma lecture, 1999). Over the last decade all demobilisation processes in Africa have followed the end of a conflict (Kingma, 1996).

Although the term is used to describe mass retrenchments from the military (as effected by the SADF in the early 1990s), it has come to be more commonly associated with specific programmes created to effect and facilitate (with varying levels of attention and success) the transposition of military personnel into civil society. Mass retrenchments might then be defined as processes of 'informal demobilisation' whereby large numbers of combatants become ex-combatants without a demobilisation programme in place to address this transition (Cock, 1993, p. 1).

Demobilisation programmes usually involve the physical discharge of the soldier from the military with some short-term social reintegration assistance. This typically involves the congregation of soldiers at assembly points, disarmament and administration. Short-term social reintegration in the form of 'demobilisation packages' may include financial or educational assistance, health care, psychological counselling and/or assistance in securing accommodation or employment (Cilliers, 1996, p. 95; Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 183).

The extent to which demobilisation programmes include support for social reintegration varies from country to country. Reintegration, however, poses a number of critical challenges, and fundamentally informs the success of any demobilisation process (Williams, 1998, p. 221). Ex-combatants who have spent much of their lives in a military environment, must in many cases, find alternative employment, a place to live, adapt to a civilian mind-set, and be accepted by the communities into which they are integrating (Kingma & Motumi lecture, 1999). As such, this is a complex process, which involves social, material and psychological aspects (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 183). Aptly defined by the Uganda Veterans' Assistance Board, reintegration can be understood as the, "sum total of processes by means of which the veteran is helped to become an acclimatised member of the community. It also refers to the actual state of feeling part of and being accepted by the members of the community belonging to the resettlement area" (Mondo, 1996, p 92). As a result, civil society has a fundamental role to play in all facets of the reintegration process. Often the social and cultural dimensions of reintegration are left entirely to local communities while formal programmes tend to focus on economic issues (Coelho & Vines, 1995 cited in Taju, 1998).

Why are Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes Important?

"For every country that embarks on a demobilisation and reintegration process, the foremost aim is to avoid or minimise the security threat posed by ex-combatants" (Mokalobe, 1999, p. 23). With few skills beyond those in the 'instruments of war', it is feared that unemployed ex-combatants could become disaffected and turn to crime or political insurrection; threaten national reconciliation efforts and/or, indirectly, economic reconstruction (World Bank, 1996). Consequently, there is general agreement that demobilisation and reintegration are critical processes necessary to avert possible threats to security and stability, and are motivated as such in a context of limited resources and competing societal needs.

Over the last 20 years, ex-combatants have frequently been cited as one of the main threats to post-war stability in African countries that have undergone demobilisation processes following the cessation of conflicts. The term 'post-war stability' is somewhat misleading however, as societies in transition are typically beset by a variety of problems, frequently involving violence. Southern Africa is no exception. "The widespread proliferation of violent crime, banditry, illicit trading in arms and drugs, and the privatisation of security functions, particularly in the form of mercenaries and vigilante groups, have accelerated since the outbreak of formal peace within the region" (Willet, 1998, p. 410). The extent to which these countries can be regarded as post-conflict is therefore questionable. Equally, the extent to which ex-combatants are involved in, and responsible for, these problems is unclear and contested. While anecdotal evidence clearly suggests some level of involvement, no statistical data or detailed overview of the situation is available.

Demobilisation processes in the region face considerable challenges, both in terms of the contextual environment and the specific needs of the ex-combatants themselves. Research conducted in countries such as Mozambique, Uganda, Angola, Chad and Zimbabwe has found that ex-combatants often have limited education, lack basic marketable job skills and, sometimes, the social skills necessary for economic and social reintegration (World Bank, 1996, p. 18).

The effects of inadequate demobilisation processes can take years to materialise. In 1998, eight years after demobilisation in Namibia, ex-combatants from both the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) and People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) launched protest marches and sit-in strikes, demanding jobs and pensions (Kingma, 2000). Recent events in Zimbabwe have demonstrated the potency of disaffected ex-combatant elements.⁵⁹ Indeed, "the ways ex-combatants were treated in their desire to return to civilian life has been one of the most controversial issues in post-independence Zimbabwe" (Oloa cited in Cock, 1993, p. 13). Both cases illustrate that even when demobilisation programmes are implemented, the threat is not automatically averted. South Africa's own history provides a telling example of why governments may consider it important to appease ex-combatants. Disillusioned veterans of the First World War "contributed significantly to the defeat of Smuts's South African Party in 1924" (Gibbs cited in Cock, 1993). In this instance, demobilisation involved little more than the disbanding of troops.

"The state has to take responsibility for its soldiers after a war" argued Cock (1993), in favour of a demobilisation programme for former MK soldiers in South Africa. Indeed, the overall responsibility of the state is keenly felt by academics and organisations participating in or writing about demobilisation and reintegration programmes. "The ultimate objective of all demobilisation and reintegration efforts should be to improve the welfare of people" (Nubler, 1997, p. 1). In South Africa it was argued that MK soldiers should be granted demobilisation support on the basis of the hardships they endured during the conflict and on returning to the country; their particularly vulnerable status in civil society, and as a gesture of reconciliation (Cock, 1993). The extent to which this humanitarian aspect forms a primary motivation for governments, however, is unclear. 'Efforts' targeting demobilised combatants in Namibia, for example, have been described merely as "containment strategies" to minimise unrest (Preston, 1997, p. 463).⁶⁰

Because war is such a patriotic affair, those who have fought in it require recognition at a national level when it is over. A central component to the humanitarian way of thinking about demobilisation and reintegration in post conflict situations is a "debt of gratitude" for the sacrifices that fighters have made. In South Africa, both those fighting against, and for, the apartheid government claimed moral justifications for their involvement. Liberation movements extolled the virtues of those who fought against oppressive political and economic systems. White South Africa, on the other hand, was inculcated with propaganda of their own historical mission. Indeed, getting soldiers to fight wars usually involves persuading them that doing so is in the best interests of the nation.

Most ex-conscripts report that they, their peers and their community saw service in the SADF as a natural part of growing up and "becoming a man" The national education system consistently presented military training as a given part of the rites of passage of white men and the moral duty of anyone concerned with defending order and morality (Christianity) against the forces of evil and chaos (Soviet - inspired Communism) (De Ridder in TRC Vol 4, p. 224).

These soldiers are likely to feel betrayed, albeit for different reasons to their liberation fighter counterparts, if their contribution to what many of them fully believed was in the

best interests of their country (or alternatively, were conscripted into against their will) goes unrecognised.

Obstacles and Challenges to Reintegration

The success of demobilisation and reintegration programmes depends on adequately addressing the problems that ex-combatants encounter in the often stressful process of moving from military to civilian life. With little experience outside of the military and limited skills suitable to civilian work, they are handicapped when competing in (often already saturated) labour markets (Cock, 1993; Motumi & McKenzie, 1998). Furthermore, they frequently suffer from psycho-social problems as a result of their exposure to, and participation in, violent conflict (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998).

Although there are a number of thematic concerns that affect all reintegration processes (such as the need to establish alternative income-generating opportunities and to deal with war trauma) different contexts, needs, and opportunities necessitate different approaches. In Uganda, for example, access to land was central in framing the reintegration experiences of former guerrillas. The landless, along with the disabled, were reported to be exceptional in their negative experience of the demobilisation process (Collier, 1996). In South Africa, ex-combatants have had a variety of experiences. The needs of former SDU members (whose operations may have been based entirely in the local community) or former MK and APLA cadres (who were in exile) are likely to vary considerably with one another, as well as with, for example, former SADF Permanent Force members who received retrenchment packages.

Cock's 1993 survey investigating the situations of 180 MK cadres returning to South Africa as "unarmed civilians" illustrates the multifaceted challenges that face combatants as they attempt to reintegrate, economically and socially, into civilian life. The bulk of respondents were unemployed and experienced difficulties securing accommodation. Many were reliant on their families for support, which contributed to considerable levels of tension and frustration. These problems were compounded by the disorientation and alienation they experienced on arriving home. Many of them were suffering from emotional or health complaints and displaying symptoms of trauma. The ANC had suspended the armed struggle, but despite an ongoing negotiation process, to all intents and purposes South Africa remained in a state of civil war. Cadres often felt helpless in the face of ongoing violence that terrorised the communities they had returned to. Many of the problems identified coincide with the reported experiences of former combatants in other countries. These and other problems are discussed below in more detail.

Although Cock's study (1993) was conducted prior to the implementation of the formal demobilisation process, more recent research suggests that many ex-combatants continue to experience a number of these difficulties (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998; Mokalobe, 1999; Mashike, 1999⁶¹).

Unemployment, poverty and dashed expectations

Instead of coming home with pride they came home to destitution and joined the unemployed masses of our society (Mashike, 1999, p. 4).

Hostile economic circumstances typically await ex-combatants returning from war. Physical infrastructure and the environment have often been damaged or destroyed during the conflict. This can have severe implications, especially for the agricultural sector on which many developing countries rely to feed their populations.

Angola, once self-sufficient in food production, now relies on food aid to feed its urban population while agricultural exports have all but collapsed (Berdal, 1996, p. 46).

The situation is exacerbated by limited economic options, and governments faced with substantial debt, must make difficult decisions (on issues such as privatisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes) in return for economic assistance (Kingma, 2000). These processes invariably result in job losses in contexts where job creation remains the priority concern. In addition, protracted conflict and instability has usually encouraged skills' flight (Berdal, 1996). The economics of societies in transition seriously curtail the reintegration possibilities available to ex-combatants.

Compared with other countries in the region, South Africa is markedly better off with a relatively strong economy that provides policy options not necessarily available to others. The low-intensity nature of the internal conflict did not result in the devastation of infrastructure and natural resources. Nor must South Africa deal with the legacy of landmines, which continue to frustrate reconstruction in other countries, such as Mozambique. Despite these advantages, the economic implications of apartheid's history pose enormous challenges to reconstruction, reconciliation and development. And issues around the reintegration of ex-combatants in South Africa are complicated precisely because of the more sophisticated economy. Here, subsistence farming, often considered a key reintegration strategy in less developed countries, does not provide a viable means of production for ex-combatants (Cilliers, 1996, p. 11). This places a heavier reliance on employment within the formal urban sector. To a certain extent this was expected, as evidenced by the working class rhetoric of the liberation movement. A U-turn in economic policy by the ANC and adherence to conservative macro-economic policies, however, have been criticised for facilitating the loss of over half a million jobs in the formal sector alone since 1994. Economic opportunities for former combatants and others have been squeezed even further.

Although employment in the formal economy remains a possibility for some, the stereotyping of ex-combatants can, and does, militate against securing this employment. In Mozambique for example, "employers, including the government and its local departments, tend to look at ex-combatants as potentially violent people who would be likely to disrupt the workplace" (Vines, 1998, p. 6). A similar stigmatisation of ex-combatants by the private sector took place following demobilisation in Zimbabwe (Musemwa 1996).

Most of the 180 MK exiles participating in the 1993 survey (Cock's, referred to above) were unemployed, living in poverty, and dependent on their families for basic support. Although similar circumstances are faced by numerous South Africans, ex-combatants tend to be a particularly vulnerable group by virtue of their disrupted education, their limited experience in civil society (and often in their home countries), and their lack of marketable skills (Cock, 1993).

Expectations regularly run high following the termination of conflict, as the cessation of hostilities and broad-based agreements are translated as a panacea for political and economic challenges. As negotiation unfolded in South Africa, some commentators warned that the struggle was not over. "The very first obstacle to establishing democracy may well be the assumption that it will be easy to attain, and that the hard part of the exercise will be the abolition of apartheid. In other words, the struggle for democracy will scarcely have begun when the actual liberation struggle is over" (Southall, 1992, p. 30).

Generally, the material situations of former combatants from the statutory forces seems to be better than their counterparts. But this is not always the case, with some groups, particularly those drawn from foreign components, struggling to cope in the new dispensation.⁶²

The poverty to which many ex-combatants returned confounded their expectations of what peace would hold for them. A 1998 study (Skinner) of returned exiles in the Western Cape found that, "most (had) expected to come into a situation where they could at least obtain housing and employment". MK cadres expected a hero's welcome and special treatment in recognition of the sacrifices they had made (Skinner, 1998; Cock, 1993). But when, for many, their homecoming was characterised by poverty and unemployment, resentments surfaced. These remain and are often directed at those who are perceived as not having contributed to the struggle, yet are beneficiaries of transition in the "new" South Africa.

I am very bitter ... what makes it worse is to see people who have never gone to exile, some of whom never even cared about the ANC or were interested in the revolution but today they are holding jobs in the organisation and are driving smart cars. At the same time those of us who have fought for the liberation have to start from scratch (in Cock, 1993, p. 4).

Disillusionment and resentment both towards those who are perceived as not having made any sacrifices, and/or towards former leaders (who have often become present leaders) are not uncommon among former combatants,⁶³ especially in the context of liberation politics (as in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa). In Zimbabwe, for example, a central motivation for the organisation of ex-combatants into the Zimbabwe War Veterans' Association (ZWVA) was their sense that, "most of them were not benefiting from the struggle that they fought – and many of their friends died in ... many disappointed demobilised ex-fighters see how their leaders are running the country into economic and political crisis – [but] are meanwhile living the good-life" (Kingma, 2000).⁶⁴

Family tensions and pressures

For MK returnees, material needs often contributed to family tensions and psychological pressures. Families of exiles had often experienced financial and emotional crises, as well as physical harassment, detention, or worse as a result of their relationships with exiles. Returning family members could place additional pressures on already overstretched domestic resources and many returnees reported feelings of being a burden on relatives, or having had this conveyed by family members. In addition drops in living standards sometimes accompanied the return of the soldier / exile. As one of Mokalobe's interviewees explained,

I was staying with family but because of problems I decided to build myself a shack. This is not a problem for me, but my family finds it hard to accept. My children just cannot adjust to these conditions (MK cadre in Mokalobe, 1999, p. 22).

It is not only the expectations of the returnees that have not been fulfilled, but also often those of their families. As Cock (1993) points out, "Returning Hero Syndrome", generates its own stresses and is intertwined with expectations that the family's financial standing will improve:

Society see us as heroes and just expect too much from us. When they see some of our comrades driving in beautiful cars, they expect the same from us. This is a real frustration to me. To escape this pressure of heroism I spend most of my time drinking (MK cadre in Mokalobe 1998, p 22).

For some returnees, however, there was no family to come back to (Mashike, 1999). Research conducted in 1998 found that many returning exiles (including, but not restricted to, MK members) in the Western Cape battled to locate and reconnect with their families, generating additional trauma (Skinner, 1998).

Alienation and disorientation

A number of MK participants in Cock's survey (1993) felt that the extent and nature of their experience as soldiers in exile was not understood or appreciated by those at home - a finding echoed in other research. It is also the case though, that soldiers are often loath to share their military experiences with "civvies".

Military veterans are subject to all sorts of spiritual problems. Often they feel an unreasoning hostility towards "civvies" who have carried on with life while they have been suffering; or they have problems in verbalising their experiences because their loved ones cannot fully understand what they are talking about; or they feel that nobody cares about what happened to them. A very common feeling is one of total anti-climax (Military Research Group, 1993, p. 8).

Skinner notes this tendency, specifically in relation to MK cadres.

Returned exiles, particularly ex-combatants belonging to Umkhonto we Sizwe, are reluctant to expose themselves emotionally and seek to preserve a façade of invulnerability. Problems of trust are evident in this trend Life in the camps eroded trust especially of those who have not had similar experiences. A strong theme that emerges in the interviews and questionnaires is the respondents' need to contain within themselves information that might damage them in some way if it were leaked. Those who went through similar experiences might be the only ones trusted with such information (Skinner, 1998, p. 78).

These tendencies to not disclose details of past experiences have implications for any research that attempts to deal with the military experiences of ex-combatants. This is likely to be exacerbated in situations where combatants have been engaged in covert and illegal

activities.⁶⁵

Dependency and unfamiliarity with the nuts and bolts of life in "civvies street" are common features of those who have for many years lived a military life.⁶⁶ The situation is intensified for those returning from exile. For soldiers of the liberation movements, feelings of alienation were often compounded by the disorientation experienced on their return and their general unfamiliarity with civilian life. Many basic needs in exile were met by the ANC, and consequently, returnees were not accustomed to organising their own lives. They struggled with day-to-day chores such as opening a bank account, finding a number in a telephone book or dealing with money and a cash economy. Similar experiences of alienation and disorientation were faced by Angolan FAPLA guerrillas who had been housed in non-monetarised camps, and Namibian PLAN guerrillas who were totally dependent on SWAPO abroad (World Bank, 1996, p. 19). By no means should this imply that life in the military camps were appealing. As the ANC's own reports on conditions and abuses in its camps revealed, this was certainly not the case.⁶⁷

War trauma and adjustment problems

The stresses of reintegration into civilian life are often complicated by trauma induced by ex-combatants' experiences of war and the hardships experienced during their time in the military. A mother, whose son became an alcoholic following border duty as a SADF conscript, wrote to Arch Bishop Tutu:

One morning a "bum" will be found dead – a child of God whose only mistake was to fight for his country ... I hate the government for turning my son into a zombie. Somewhere, someone should start a place for such boys, because when he marches his troops through the night there must be many others doing similar things (TRC, Vol. 4, p. 239).

Emotional, health or social problems are commonplace. 72% percent of Cock's 1993 respondents indicated that they were suffering from depression. Drinking problems also arose often and one or more symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were frequently reported. Although the survey respondents did not use this term, Cock supposed that many are suffering from the disorder. Alarmingly, she found that only 11% had received any assistance for these problems. Apart from one mention of the MK Military Veterans' Association, respondents referred to doctors and clinics as possible sources of help, but visits were often not made for lack of resources, a belief in a soldier's self-sufficiency, or fear of stigmatisation stemming from rumours that exiles had AIDS. Importantly, almost one in five respondents (17%) refused to discuss their personal problems (Cock, 1993, p. 5). Interviews conducted with former MK combatants in the late 1990s also placed considerable emphasis on the need for rehabilitation programmes to address both the difficulties of adjusting to 'normal life' and trauma as a result of war experiences (Mashike, 1999).

Potential manifestations of these emotional problems include self-destructive impulses and/or violent impulses directed at others:

I am an emotional wreck. I have twice come close to committing suicide. I

stopped because of my children but I am useless – to them and to myself (in Cock, 1993, p. 5).

All my time is free. I think and think and think. I just feel like shooting everybody. I am not even allowed to do gardening at home. It could help my frustration. That is why I drink too much. One day they will wake up and find me dead (in Cock, 1993, p. 7).

Relationships often suffer and ex-combatants can become ostracised and alienated further from family, friends and others in the community. As a brother of one former MK cadre explained,

Every time when he is upset he threatens to shoot us. The situation is worse when he is drunk. He threatens to shoot all those he suspects of hating him in the community. People complain almost every weekend about him to my mother. They resent him. (in Mokalobe, 1999, p. 21)

Relationships with communities

It's the story of every war, soldiers are forgotten, that's what happens after war, society carries on and people get left behind. It's a problem which cuts across armies (in Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 181).

The successful reintegration of ex-combatants requires the support of the communities they return to. This, in turn, is dependent on an ex-combatant's ability to form and maintain trusting relationships with other people in those communities. The ability and/or desire to do this may well be influenced by the nature of the conflict. Soldiers of former liberation armies are likely to be more acceptable than those who fought against liberation, or at the behest of foreign powers. In Mozambique, for example, many RENAMO soldiers have apparently been unable to return to their home areas because of their complicity in atrocities inflicted on their own families and communities (Kingma, 2000, p. 9). In addition, combatants may return to communities that did not support their cause. The challenges to reintegration in these circumstances require further investigation. In South Africa where particular ex-combatants, most notably those who fought for the apartheid security forces (i.e. askaris, black South African members of the SADF and SAP) are regarded as 'sell-outs' and 'traitors' by community elements, attempts to reintegrate are likely to be complicated in this way. Resentment could also conceivably manifest against some SDU or SPU operatives whose actions deviated considerably from their ostensibly defensive responsibilities.

But even when ex-combatants are not labelled as 'enemies' or 'perpetrators', their relationships with those around them may be fraught. Research in Uganda resonates with Cock's findings in South Africa, and shows that the community's reception of veterans in Uganda was largely ambivalent, and at times negative. This was attributed to: "veterans' poor financial status and lack of property which prolonged their dependency on extended family and neighbours; [their] poor health status ... which was described as a mental burden on the community; inadequate information about veterans who were thought to have been given a lot of money; reported negative experiences of civilians vis-a-vis soldiers ... and/or isolated incidences of indiscipline of veterans" (Mondo, 1996, p. 100).

Tensions between combat-generated identities (of ex-combatants) and civilian identities (of 'the community') may also arise. Women ex-combatants, for example, frequently face particular difficulties when returning to civilian life. Having embraced combatant roles that challenge those traditionally ascribed to women, they are expected to comply with 'traditional' gender norms upon their return (NGO Networking Service, 1996). Their involvement in a conventionally male domain can also lead them to be confronted with moral suspicion. In Zimbabwe, for instance, female cadres were accommodated in the same facilities as males, prompting allegations of immorality. Some South African civilian interviewees have articulated similar sentiments; "I can't imagine being involved with a female ex-combatant. I really doubt their moral standing. I even fear a situation where she might shoot me when we have a row" (Mokolabe, 1999, p. 22).

However, beyond broad concerns regarding threatened gender roles and the stereotyping of women ex-combatants, there has been little investigation of the gendered nature of reintegration experiences. Experiences differ and are dependent on a range of factors, not least the type of military formation to which the ex-combatants belonged. The roles allocated to women in MK, for example, departed significantly from those in the SADF. Historically, liberation armies have tended to treat women cadres on a more equal footing to their conventional counterparts (Cock, 1991).

It is evident that communities have a pivotal role to play in the reintegration of former combatants into society. As such, they require both education and support to facilitate this, as well as awareness of the difficulties with which the process is so frequently fraught.

Reintegration issues

Available literature does not provide a common understanding of 'reintegration'. Indeed, there is some confusion and contestation as to what is meant by the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society (Taju, 1998; Kingma, 2000). The notion of 'reintegration' suggests a return to a prior condition, and some have argued, erroneously presupposes that those about to be reintegrated were once integrated (Taju, 1998 after Coelho, 1997). The long-term transition of combatants to civilian life, may in fact be more accurately described as 'integration', especially if the combatant has spent most of his or her adult life in the military milieu. Moreover, ex-combatants do not necessarily return to the areas and communities from whence they came (Baptista Lundin *et al.* cited in Kingma, 2000; Taju, 1998). Nor are they the only members of war-torn societies who have to make a new beginning. Sometimes, for example, family members of combatants have also left their home country to go into exile (World Bank, 1996, p. 18).

The communities that former combatants return to may be damaged and unstable and, as a result, unfamiliar. In Mozambique many communities were dramatically affected by the war, which resulted in considerable internal displacement, which in turn, affected how reintegration processes at a local level developed: "Massive movements of the population have adversely affected the ability of many communities to participate in the social integration of former combatants. The receiving communities are also engaged in the task of social rebuilding after the trauma of conflict, and new power relations have emerged as a result of the conflict" (Taju, 1998, p. 11).

Identifying a basis against which to measure 'reintegration' is difficult (Dolan and Schafer

1997 cited in Taju, 1998, p. 14). Dominant views of reintegration maintain that it is achieved when "fundamental traces distinguishing ex-combatants from other members of their communities cease to exist" (Coelho cited in Taju, 1998, p. 16). As Taju points out, this may mean that demobilised soldiers have achieved reintegration when they are assimilated into the poverty and growing inequality that characterises society in the post-war period, as is the case in Mozambique. 'Reintegration' from this perspective, therefore, does not prioritise the resolution of ex-combatants' problems, but focuses on their position within their receiving community (Taju, 1998).

When viewed within narrow parameters, this approach does not address issues of sustainability relating to reintegration. But, taking into account the marginalised nature of most receiving communities, it has also been argued that, "the lasting success in meeting the challenge of reintegrating arms and soldiers into society after an internal armed conflict depends largely on the extent to which short-term concerns about security and political stability are not only addressed, but also effectively reconciled with long-term strategies for economic reconstruction and development" (Berdal, 1996, p. 6). These processes must "be part of a wider, long-term attempt to create the necessary political and psychological environment, as well as the necessary mechanisms and institutions, to address unresolved tensions without resorting to violence, thus helping to overcome the scars and complex legacies of war" (Berdal, 1996, p. 6).

This argument is linked to a central debate in the demobilisation literature: should ex-combatants be targeted as a special interest group or be accessed through development strategies aimed at the broader community? It is too early to assess, on the basis of the various reintegration programmes that have been studied, which of the approaches is generally most effective (World Bank, 1996, p. 18). This remains, therefore, an important area for further research. The lessons provided so far nevertheless suggest that the provision of support for the initial disarmament and demobilisation process (at least in the short to medium term) is critical: "If a process is derailed at this stage, measures aimed at long-term reintegration will be of little relevance" (Berdal, 1996, p. 7).

Issues of security and threats to derail peace processes are powerful motivating factors. In the longer term, however, "a consensus appears to be developing that special efforts for ex-combatants are necessary during the demobilisation itself, but that support in the reintegration phase should be increasingly community-based and part of general post-conflict rehabilitation efforts" (Kingma, 1996, p. 13). Mainstream programmes that offer assistance with skills development and training, for example, should include, but not be restricted to, ex-combatants. A specific focus on former combatants may inadvertently contribute to further marginalisation and isolation (Nubler, 1997, p. 24), which in turn can exacerbate fault-lines between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in poorer societies. Consequently, "overall programme orientation should be towards meeting the needs of both ex-combatants and the communities to which they return, and must also encourage full reintegration by ensuring that ex-combatants are no longer a special group among the community, (so that they receive neither more nor fewer privileges than their neighbours). Nevertheless, it is important that programme design should recognise where and how they and their experience differs." (NGO Networking Service, 1996, p. 79). The challenge lies in striking an appropriate balance between the two.

Some have questioned the assumption that former combatants should automatically be

'reintegrated' with civilian communities and that an alternative approach could be considered (NGO Networking Service, 1996). One way of avoiding the burden of reintegration may be to keep former soldiers together, essentially in a community of their own. One example of this possibility is being implemented in Ethiopia where former TPLF fighters are being supported by Government to build their own civilian community.⁶⁸ Many onlookers remain sceptical and anxious about the presence of a large number of ex-fighters in close proximity to each other, but there are also arguments that, because of the high levels of organisation and discipline in this particular case, the communities will succeed. The outcomes remain to be seen and should provide important lessons on the potential of this unorthodox approach (NGO Networking Service, 1996, p. 87). In South Africa, there are several ex-combatant communities that have remained relatively intact, following the cessation of hostilities. These are generally former combatants from Angola and Namibia who fought for the SADF during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the context of the 'unfinished business' of examining the conflicts of the past and the growth of xenophobia, careful consideration must be given to the long-term objectives of reintegrating such communities within South Africa's civil society.

Integration of Armed Forces and Demobilisation in South Africa

In the South African context, 'demobilisation' refers to the specific process of discharging former MK and APLA cadres from the newly constituted SANDF, either because they did not meet the requirements for integration into the SANDF, or because they did not wish to follow a career in the military. This process was closely linked to the integration of the eight armed forces into the SANDF.⁶⁹ South Africa and Uganda are unusual in having opted to first unify the forces before demobilising (Kingma, 1996, p. 4).

Initially, it was envisaged that 138 000 personnel would be integrated into the SANDF in 1994: 90 000 former SADF members, 32 000 from MK, 6 000 from APLA and 11 000 from former homeland armies. In the end, no more than 101 000 personnel were integrated into the armed forces and, through a combination of demobilisation and rationalisation, SANDF force levels now stand at approximately 78 000. Only 15 000 cadres from the liberation armies remain in the SANDF, and thousands of former SADF members have taken voluntary severance packages or did not renew their contracts when these expired ([Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)).

The reductions effected through the official demobilisation process are complemented by other initiatives designed to reduce the total number of personnel employed. SANDF forces, for example, will be reduced further to approximately 65 000. Although this is being referred to as "rationalisation", it is, in effect, a further demobilisation process. In addition, and before the official demobilisation process began, in the early 1990s SADF and MK had already begun an informal demobilisation process. While MK cadres were returning from exile as "unarmed civilians" under the United Nations Repatriation of Exiles Programme, the SADF was reducing its force levels through retrenchments (Cock, 1993, p. 1). The majority of the former would have been among those who were later either integrated into, or formally demobilised from, the SANDF.

A large number of ex-combatants have not been included in either integration or demobilisation processes. This includes 12 872 former liberation fighters whose names

appeared on the Certified Personnel Register (CPR). Attempts to locate these cadres were being made but, by June 2001, the 'response' rate remained minimal (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2001). In addition, many thousands of other combatants, including the bulk of those involved in various self-defence formations (discussed in more detail below), were excluded.

The SANDF integration process

Integration and demobilisation in South Africa have been a source of substantial controversy, particularly within the ranks of the non-statutory forces. Because of the interlinking of the integration and demobilisation processes in the South African context, a closer look at how the process of integrating different armed forces into a national defence force unfolded is required. In addition, it provides insight into the problems and tensions generated in the process, and the subsequent decision of some soldiers to leave the SANDF.

"Integration refers to a process whereby after cessation of hostility, armed forces, equipment and the military traditions are merged to form one defence force" (Mokalobe, 1999 after Williams, 1993). However, in South Africa, constitutional guarantees ensured that "retention of standards" reinforced the superior capacity of the SADF within the new defence structure (Nathan, 1991, and Seegers, 1996 in Mokalobe, 1999, p. 12). The SANDF was, in effect, brought into existence through the absorption of MK and APLA into the SADF. This was a cause of considerable resentment among the non-statutory forces, as rank-and-file cadres were not party to the decisions and compromises made at the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) and by their military commanders in the bi-lateral negotiations between SADF and MK. The situation was compounded by a failure of MK and APLA commanders to adequately explain and communicate what the implications of the agreements really were to the soldiers on the ground (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, Frankel, 2001).

The first major step of integration and demobilisation was the compilation of The Certified Personnel Register (CPR). This required seven armed forces - SADF, each of the former TBVC defence forces (Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda, Ciskei), MK and APLA - to submit a list of all their members to be integrated. To some extent members of SDUs were also included in the process under the auspices of MK (Mashike, 1999). The Inkatha Freedom Party claimed it had no military wing and was not represented in the integration process. In 1996, however, approximately 2 000 of its members, mainly drawn from Self Protection Units (SPUs) were admitted into the SANDF, not through the integration process, but as new recruits (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998). For the non-statutory forces - MK and APLA - the compilation of the CPR presented a significant challenge, largely because of insubstantial personnel records and the historical use of *noms de guerre*.

The final number of MK and APLA cadres included on the CPR totalled 44 143. Of these, about half were eventually integrated into SANDF (21 212 of which 14 791 were MK and 6421, APLA).⁷⁰

The integration process commenced in 1994, with the assembly of MK and APLA members at SADF bases in Wallmansthal, Hoedspruit and De Brug, where administration took place. During the subsequent placement process, overseen by representatives of all the integrating forces and the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), MK and APLA

cadres were tested, graded and ranked. Those who made the grade then received training aimed at orientating them into a conventional (as opposed to a guerrilla) armed force. Those who failed were automatically demobilised (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 90).

The process was fraught with problems. It was originally envisaged that the integration of the various armed forces would be completed by the end of 1994. Although this was subsequently extended for three years ([Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)), according to the Chairperson of the Integration Committee, the process eventually took seven years (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2001).

Many liberation movement fighters who successfully passed the grading process chose demobilisation rather than integration when faced with what they perceived to be an unfair and disrespectful integration process. Although a number of the problems that gave rise to the initial complaints of integrating MK and APLA cadres (including lengthy delays in the process, language of instruction, inappropriate ranking and disrespect for cultural differences) were resolved, others have persisted (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998). This has contributed significantly to the number of former liberation movement cadres deciding to quit the military and make a life elsewhere. "Those who have integrated are resigning in droves ..." said a parliamentarian in 1996, "they don't feel at home, they don't get good treatment and there is no neutral complaint system. Some feel like they are being victimised and pushed out" (in Motumi & Mackenzie, 1998, p. 193).

The departure of many former non-statutory force members from the SANDF was often based on their exposure to the inherited organisational culture of SADF, which led to allegations of racism and intransigence that have plagued the integration process (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998). Although such allegations have been taken on board at a policy level, ⁷¹ this is taking time to filter down to soldiers on the ground. In the meantime, whether slow moving transformation is a key reason, or triggering factor, for incidents such as the Tempe shooting late in 1999, remains uncertain. What is clear however, is that adapting to life in the SANDF has been a harrowing experience for many, resulting in numerous decisions to leave voluntarily. These experiences and perceptions that little is being done to address the problems will have undoubtedly contributed to feelings of disappointment and resentment.

South Africa's demobilisation programme

The demobilisation programme was initiated in August 1995, 16 months after the integration process got underway. This programme facilitated a way out of the SANDF for former MK and APLA soldiers who were "not eligible for service in the SANDF based on age, education or health; [as well as] those refusing integration into the SANDF; and those dissatisfied with rank or salary after acceptance into the SANDF" ([Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)).

Many of the tensions associated with both demobilisation and integration processes relate to the fact that only former non-statutory force members (MK and APLA) were directly affected.⁷² This has led commentators to deduce that the South African demobilisation process, "was not so much an attempt to reduce the force numbers, as a way to deal with ex-combatants from the liberation forces who did not qualify for integration, or chose not to

integrate" (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 194).

The programme consisted of three key components, namely the provision of once-off cash gratuities, limited counselling and an opportunity to participate in literacy and vocational training courses provided by SANDF's Service Corps. In a context of enormous need, the assistance provided was inappropriate and inadequate, with the overall programme being characterised by bureaucratic delays and legal problems (Motumi & Mckenzie, 1998; [Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)).

The following tables show the spread and amounts of the cash packages paid out to demobilisees as of 1998.⁷³

Category	Period Spent in Service	Years of Former Service	Amount Paid Per Category of Demobilised Soldiers	Number of Persons Demobilised	Total Gratuity Paid per Category
A	Jan 61 – Dec 72	22 – 23 years	R 42 058	171	R 7 191 918
B	Jan 73 – Dec 76	18 – 21 years	R 34 313	144	R 4 941 071
C	Jan 77 – Dec 82	12 – 21 years	R 28 721	1 090	R 31 305 890
D	Jan 83 – Dec 89	5 - 11 years	R 20 201	1 877	R 37 917 277
E	Jan 90 – Dec 94	0 - 4 years	R 12 734	2 643	R 33 655 962
Z*				1 413	R 52 973 686
				7238	R 167 985 805

Demobilisation Gratuities (Defence Review, 1998, p. 73 in Mokalobe)

In 2001 it was reported that a total of 9 771 members of former non-statutory forces had received demobilisation gratuities (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2001).

Key problems of the demobilisation programme included the lack of mechanisms to advise and support demobilisees to invest their money. Although the cash payments provided a temporary illusion of benefit, the limited packages were quickly spent. The training provided at the Service Corps was not demand driven and did not reflect cadres' needs. Furthermore, it was conducted by the military who, it is argued, are neither suitable nor equipped to provide skills required in non-military environments. Critical needs during this period, such as psychological counselling and life-skills advice, were not given sufficient attention (Mokalobe, 1998).

These problems were compounded by the reluctance of many to take advantage of the

available programmes. There is no doubt that the linkages between the integration and demobilisation processes meant that negative perceptions of the former coloured perceptions of the latter (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 188). "Some soldiers view joining the SANDF like surrendering to the enemy. Thus going for training under their command would be an insult" (Mashike, 1999, p. 14). Disillusion and demoralisation also contributed to unwillingness to participate in the services offered.

The leadership lost contact with us. It was no longer visible. Many were occupied with high politics factors and lost interest with the grassroots. I was demoralised and decided to leave without any training and counselling (in Mokalobe, 1999, p. 19).

Given the limitations of the demobilisation programme, it is not surprising that government has been criticised for failing to adequately address reintegration needs and for repeating many of the mistakes made in other developing countries (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998; Mokalobe, 1999). Shortcomings have been attributed to a range of factors, including the lack of sufficient preparation and an absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Minimal effort was invested in developing a nuanced understanding of the various situations faced by ex-combatants, and their resultant needs. The approach was essentially driven by SANDF management, was not participatory, and excluded organs of civil society.

By and large, the demobilisation process was not very successful on a range of fronts: "Arguably, the key failure was a lack of planning, compounded by poor communication and a lack of adequate political support" ([Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)). The military has recognised some of the existing shortcomings, and a number of processes have been initiated to ensure that they are not repeated as further personnel are laid off during the next few years. The Service Corps, for example, has substantially altered its training approach, developing partnerships with, and contracting accredited training providers in the private and non-governmental sectors. In addition, the military has undertaken a series of economic environmental scans in order to develop training suited to specific needs and opportunities in particular areas.⁷⁴ Despite these developments, negative perceptions of the Service Corps persist (Frankel, 2000, p. 205) and have been exacerbated by allegations of financial irregularities and fraud in the demobilisation process.⁷⁵

In the same period as the implementation of the demobilisation programme large numbers of former SADF members have also been leaving the SANDF. This has been facilitated through specific mechanisms to reduce force members in line with recommendations made by the 1997 Defence Review (in terms of reconfigured budget allocations). Mechanisms have included voluntary severance packages and the non-renewal of short-term contracts.

According to SANDF figures, by May 2002, 61 747 members had left the SANDF since 1994. Of these 1 640 were former APLA, 4 709 former MK, 5375 from the TBVC armies and the bulk of these, 45 508 from the former SADF. 4 515 SANDF members had also left during this period.

By 2001, the SADF component of SANDF comprised 43 036 soldiers, a dramatic reduction from 1994 when full-time former SADF members had amounted to 82 705 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2001). In the period April 1994 to March 2000, from the SADF

contingent, there had been 13 969 resignations, 2 498 discharges and 14 310 personnel who took voluntary severance packages.⁷⁶

The integration and demobilisation processes were formally and legally brought to an end in December 2002. Only those who reported by the last integration intake (December 2002) qualified for demobilisation, subject to the appropriate amended legislation passed by parliament (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2003). As such, some former combatants were still applying for demobilisation payouts as late as 2001. Their belated engagement with the process may be a result of their names being initially omitted from the CPR; or because they had only recently returned from the countries where they were exiled. At this time provisions were also reportedly being made for the families of combatants who fell in service to receive their family-members' demobilisation payouts (Mokalobe citing Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce Masangu, 1999, p. 18).

Despite the completion of demobilisation process and the implementation of mechanisms to reduce personnel numbers, force reduction has not yet met the recommended target. As a result, the Personnel Rationalisation Strategy for the Department of Defence was approved in 1999 ([Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)). The objective of the strategy is to finally reduce the total number of personnel to between 65 000 and 70 000 members as well as to promote equal opportunities, affirmative action and gender equality within the broader constitutional commitment to make the armed forces more representative. Over and above the challenges presented by bringing about this objective (see [Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)), on the basis of the current force size, this means that another 8 000 to 13 000 personnel must be removed from the existing force and added to the ranks of South Africa's ex-combatants.

Chapter Three: Militarised Youth: Integration and (lack of) Demobilisation Initiatives for Self-Defence Structures

Arguably, the greatest demobilisation challenge facing South Africa, but the one which has received least attention, is that of militarised youth and, in particular, former members of community self-defence structures. While the integration and demobilisation of APLA and MK members were put on the agenda during the negotiations period, structures at the local level have received little co-ordinated, national attention (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998). As a result, only a minority of combatants at this level were drawn into formalised integration processes.

Self-defence structures lacked uniformity in relation to their activities, their allegiances and their accountability to an internal command structure and the communities they served. Although some individuals argued their MK status, especially those who received 'internal training' during the pre-1990 era, the bulk of former SDU members remained excluded from the official processes set up for ex-combatants. One key exception was the accommodation of 2 000 members of what officially became known as the Kwa-Zulu Natal Self-Protection Force, comprising IFP-aligned SPU members who received military training during the early 1990s in the run-up to the 1994 elections. They were not subjected to the integration and demobilisation processes, but "taken into the service in accordance with normal employment policies and regulations" (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2001).

There have been several other initiatives to address concerns relating to self-defence structures, but these have been limited and focused on certain geographical areas - primarily around the metropolitan areas of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. In the Katorus township complex, east of Johannesburg, a Presidential Lead Project designed to integrate SDU and SPU members into the police service as paid reservists commenced during 1994. This intervention began only after violence had again flared up in the area during the immediate post-election period. Negotiations between the ANC and IFP's national leadership did not resonate with fighters on the ground and sporadic fighting continued for several months. Some analysts interpreted this as "a response by SDUs who felt left out and marginalised, having, in the new political dispensation, lost much of the reason for their existence" (Minnaar, 1996, p. 14). It seems just as likely, however, that the violence was also a reflection of local dynamics.

Indisputably the most violent place in the country between 1990 and 1994, Katorus had already been earmarked for specific development attention. The police reservist programme, however, was essentially an afterthought, which gave currency to the belief amongst many militarised youth, "that the only way of achieving any 'real changes', or receiving attention from the state is through their engagement in acts of collective violence" ([Marks, 1995](#)). The plan to integrate former street combatants into local policing structures and initiatives was punted as the most practical solution to address the post-conflict challenge of militarised youth. Theoretically this would enable them to continue their role of "protecting and defending", and at the same time keep them accountable within a formal policing structure.

The Katorus Project

In October 1994 a peace treaty facilitated by the Gauteng Department of Safety & Security and Rev. Mvume Dandala of the Central Methodist Church, was signed by the SDUs' Central Command and SPU commanders. A key component of the treaty was the integration of approximately 900 members of SDUs and SPUs into the SAPS as paid police reservists, or "community constables" as they are more commonly known. SDU and SPU commanders put forward names of those keen to be integrated, and after aptitude tests and four weeks of training, the community constables were deployed in Katorus' townships (Thulare, 1997). Although the process involved many of the key protagonists, it was never clear just how inclusive this treaty was as not all the SDU commanders supported it (Thulare, 1997).

Considerable cooperation problems with the assimilation into SAPS included relationships between the members of former enemy units, as well as with some of the permanent police personnel. On the one hand, the latter had been accustomed to treating their new colleagues as criminals and, on the other, they feared that their positions in the service were under threat (Thulare, 1997). Strained relationships between police management and the community constables initially resulted in a parallel policing command structure. Reservists took orders both from their former unit commanders and from the police; or sometimes spurned police management altogether in favour of their former leaders – clearly an untenable situation. This was later resolved when station commanders and former defence unit commanders agreed that the role be restricted to the station commanders.

Relationships between the community constables themselves soon improved as they

undertook joint patrols and developed a unified position over labour grievances and related matters. As a pilot process, the Katorus initiative had ramifications for other community defence structures, but no policy framework to guide or consolidate an integration process emerged from either the SAPS or policing ministries. In Katorus itself, the long-term status of the community constables in SAPS became a vexed issue (Thulare, 1997, p. 15). The former combatants went 'on strike' to elicit some future commitment to keep them in the service. Despite considerable effort on the part of the Gauteng Ministry for Safety and Security to solidify their position, only ad hoc measures were implemented to retain them in SAPS in the short-term, albeit under improved working conditions.⁷⁷

In 1996, and outside of the specific Katorus process, the Cabinet established an inter-department task group to investigate the possibility of training SDU and SPU members in policing skills through the SANDF's Service Corps. Owing to a number of constraints, however, this option did not materialise (Minnaar, 1996, p. 25). During this period, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Young People at Risk established a sub-committee to deal with the SDU/SPU issue but no recognisable programmes emerged from this process.

In February 1998 the Cabinet established a high-powered inter-departmental task team, headed by the National Secretary for Safety and Security, Azar Cachalia, and tasked to finally resolve the Katorus community constable issue (Naughton, 1999). Tense negotiations followed, resulting in the development of business plans for the reintegration of the constables into civil society; the implementation of skills and ambition surveys; and pressure on SAPS to relax their entry criteria. That not all community constables could integrate into the service became clear – not least because there were certain recruitment criteria on which SAPS refused to bend. For those people who were not eligible for integration, Cachalia secured *ex-gratia* payments in recognition of their four years of service as reservists. Those without matric, or with matric, but who had failed the SAPS psychometric tests or had not made an impression at the interview stage received R20 000 and the offer of orientation training (financial advice, vocational training, private security training and accreditation with the Security Officers Board).⁷⁸ Approximately 100 members met all the entry requirements and were subsequently assimilated. In addition, a further 300 with Std 8 or 9 are being put through an accelerated matric-plus-one course at Technikon SA to allow them to apply for posts in SAPS (Naughton, 1999).

In response to calls from Jessie Duarte, Gauteng MEC for Safety & Security, and Rev. Dandala, the Simunye Project was also launched in Katorus in an effort to provide viable economic alternatives for other SDU and SPU members not included in the Reservist Programme (Minnaar, 1996, p. 11). The extent however to which this RDP initiative was able to draw in and sustain former combatant participation is unclear, and to date the project's success in this regard has not been evaluated.

Community Constables – antidote or recipe for crime?

The inclusion of former combatants as police reservists in Katorus brought both benefits and problems. Research conducted between 1994 and 1996 found that "they have been both helpful as well as brutal to members of the communities they serve" (Thulare, 1997, p. 14). On the plus side, their local knowledge, and ability to move in areas that had previously been 'out of bounds' to the police, had a significant impact on arrests and the reduction of

crime levels in Katorus. On the other hand, however, loyalties to former unit commanders sometimes superseded obedience to the SAPS and its code of conduct. Former combatants were also accused of complicity in crime, of running kangaroo courts, and of using their weapons outside the bounds of their duties (Thulare, 1997, p. 14). Community constables have been accused of involvement in a range of incidents, including armed robbery, hijackings and rape (Naughton, 1999).

Community perceptions of the project have also been mixed, with some residents seeing it as beneficial to the consolidation of peace in the area, and others concerned about the lack of accountability with regard to violations perpetrated during the 'war', and atrocities and other criminal activity allegedly committed since the start of the project (Thulare, 1997, p. 21; Naughton, 1999). Community perceptions are further moulded by the continued exposure of these youths to violence. By the end of 1999, 100 constables had died since 1994, only two of them in the line of duty (Naughton, 1999). Although suicides and accidental killings account for some of these (Thulare, 1997, p. 15), a detailed breakdown and analysis of the causes and circumstances of these deaths has yet to be undertaken.

The percentage of former Katorus combatants who benefited from the reservist programme remains unclear: "In theory about 9 000 former SPU and SDU members were eligible for integration. However, some of them were not involved in the peace process, and many did not pass the aptitude and medical tests. These people, according to Thulare, "either continued with their former defence/protection activities, or turned to crime" (Thulare, 1997, p. 19).

SDUs and the Policing Question

The Katorus project set an important precedent in attempting to tie community security structures to formalised local-policing initiatives. The tendency for former defence and protection unit members to aspire to integration into policing structures is raised in much of the literature dealing with post-conflict street combatants (Minnaar, 1996; Safety and Security, 1996-1997; Gillespie & Radipole, 1994; Thulare, 1997). Researchers in the Western Cape, for example, found that "underlying the youth's frustration and hostility towards the police, was a desire to be integrated into the SAPS. They felt they had been involved in policing activities for several years as defenders and protectors of the community; and wanted to continue that role and function in their communities. Their expectations had been raised by the integration of the non-statutory armed forces into the SANDF and by the Katorus project." (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, pp. 5-6).

Despite the problems that accompanied the process, it has been argued that the Katorus project had shown that the inclusion of defence unit members into policing structures could have a positive impact on crime, and could enhance both levels of representation and legitimacy for the police service (Thulare, 1997). Inadequate support and attention to emerging problems, however, appear to have undermined many of these positive developments and opportunities.

The difficulty posed by the absence of a clear policy framework around the integration or demobilisation of community defence units was compounded by varying degrees of cooperation from SAPS management regarding entry requirements, as well as the subsequent moratorium on police recruitment. Attempts to include former combatants in

formal policing structures have therefore been limited and have taken a number of forms. Ex-defence structure members, for example, have been encouraged to join the SAPS as reservists, and to participate in community police forums, but these options are less attractive, primarily because they are not paid positions.

In some areas, defence structures more or less usurped policing functions from SAPS on their own initiative or that of other stakeholders. In the Eastern Cape, for instance, 'Anti-Crime Committees' began to take over the functions of the Transkei and Ciskei police before the latter were incorporated into the SAPS, and in response to the breakdown of law and order resulting from transitional problems in the formal policing services (Minaar, 1996, p. 18).

Shortly after taking office, the provincial policing minister in the Eastern Cape set up his own "volunteer" armed unit of former MK and SDU members to recover stolen government vehicles. This was reportedly in response to a lack of cooperation from the Transkei police. By 1995, members of the unit had been implicated in a series of violent crimes, had allegedly taken over a range of policing functions in certain districts, and were accused of launching attacks on opponents. The unit was disbanded and the official suspended when a hit-list targeting senior policemen was uncovered during an investigation into its operations (Minnaar, 1996, pp. 10-11).

In KwaZulu-Natal, following the closure of the SPU training camp at Mlaba, controversy and uncertainty abounded regarding the prior remuneration of trainees. The situation was complicated by claims that they had been, or would be, integrated into a national policing structure. Many were under the impression that they would be deployed into the KwaZulu homeland policing structures, and expected that their futures would thereby be 'looked after'. Finally, after much confusion and discontent, 1 400 SPU members were integrated into the KwaZulu Natal Police (Minnaar, 1996, p. 9).⁷⁹ An assessment of this process and its impact on policing in the province has not been made.

Several NGO and community-based initiatives targeting street combatants have also taken place. The experiences, processes and impact of these however, have not been well documented, and an environmental scan of the initiatives – which is beyond the scope of this study – has yet to be undertaken. The role of former combatants in local policing remains contested and efforts to integrate them into a policing environment, itself desperately in need of transformation, have been fraught with problems.

The question remains as to whether a future in the SAPS is necessarily the best path for former community defence members. To simply integrate them into policing structures does not reduce the possibility of their involvement in crime, nor does it necessarily facilitate their productive and positive reintegration. This is only too clear from the Katorus experience, and illustrated most profoundly in the numbers of deaths of community constables, most of whom have been killed outside the line of duty.

Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee's (UMAC) Militarised Youth Project

In the Western Cape a project with militarised youth facilitated by the Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee (UMAC) began when there were calls for a full-blown

integration of former SDUs into the SAPS.⁸⁰ The initial stages of the project focused on facilitating constructive dialogue between the defence units and the local police in several affected communities. This was necessary both because of the hostile relations between the SDUs and SAPS, and because of demands by the former to be assimilated into the latter. UMAC lobbied for a national process to consider the possibility of a broad-based integration strategy. In September 1995 the Ministry of Safety and Security together with the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Youth at Risk convened a national workshop to discuss the issue.

Although it was decided at national level that a blanket incorporation of defence unit members into SAPS was not possible, the UMAC initiative had demonstrated what could be done given the necessary support and buy-in from relevant stakeholders. In the targeted areas there had been a fundamental improvement in SDU-SAPS relations: attacks on SAPS members by the SDU had ceased; SDU involvement in crime, and taxi violence in particular, dropped significantly; and a number of joint crime-fighting operations between the two parties proved very successful (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 13).

But in light of the project as a whole, some resolution on the policing issue was arguably the least of its contributions, albeit a crucial first step. Despite the disappointment for SDU members of not obtaining agreement for integration into the SAPS, UMAC extended the project in the recognition that militarised youth in these communities were still vulnerable to crime, especially in the context of limited socio-economic opportunities (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 14). A second phase of the project began to address issues of education, training and employment. A detailed survey of participants' skills and needs was implemented as was an assessment of the local economic environments. A range of initiatives was then undertaken including partnerships with organisations for skills development in areas such as conflict resolution, crowd control, community liaison, first-aid, bricklaying, construction, adult education, computer and small business skills, as well as in those required in the security industry.

During the second phase, it became increasingly apparent that facilitating entry into alternative methods of income generation was only part of what was required for the reintegration of these young combatants. The need to support them to broaden their visions beyond an exclusive focus on policing/security interests emerged as a critical challenge: "The identities of the militarised youth were constructed so closely around defending and protecting their communities, that a change of career direction turned out to be a very big shift for them" (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998; p. 21). UMAC was adamant that the youth themselves should drive the process, and that UMAC's role should remain one of facilitation, not determination. But at the same time UMAC feared that assisting them to obtain security-related training would re-militarise rather than demilitarise the youth. This was not, however, the case. By developing self-confidence and awareness of other options, "it seems that as time progressed, the youth dared more and more to go into other areas." Requests for training in the security industry dropped off markedly in favour of other preferences (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 16). The process showed that when given the opportunity to explore and grow in other areas, security-related work lost much of its appeal.

In addition to the shift in identity away from a security/policing focus, the UMAC process

also saw a move from an entrenched group identity (in the 'comrade') towards a more individualistic approach better suited to the employment market. Initially, participants stuck together and followed others in their training choices rather than considering their own aptitudes and desires: "We needed to get them out of that, that solidarity, they had to learn how to focus on themselves. It was a major thing for them, it meant changing their mindset. 'Go on your own,' we used to tell them. 'Do your own thing!'" (in Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 22). In addition, greater individualism in approach was partly necessitated by the departure from the project of the SDU leadership. Because they often had more skills than other unit members, they were the first to enter training or employment.

Presenting a considerable challenge to the project was a lack of individual initiative that UMAC detected in these youth - especially in the initial stages of the project. Facilitators complained of participants' lack of drive and commitment to the process, feeling that they often expected UMAC to do all the work. In turn, the youth became frustrated with what they perceived as an inability on UMAC's part to implement ideas, find them employment, or negotiate preferential treatment for their entry into the SAPS or the Department of Correctional Services (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 22). UMAC felt that these dynamics reflected the levels of psychological trauma faced by participants, who were often unable to take the initiative or make opportunities for themselves, but were willing to blame others. Consequently, in its evaluation UMAC highlights the importance of adequate trauma-related resources as necessary to future interventions (See section 'Dependency and Trauma' below).

Outcomes of UMAC's Militarised Youth Project

UMAC's project evaluation report helpfully disaggregates various facets of social reintegration that emerged during the process. In terms of impact, improved relations between former SDU members and the SAPS apparently also contributed to improved community / police relations more generally. And the project claims it succeeded in halting the slide of militarised youth towards crime. "A former member of the SDU Regional Management Committee estimates that the project has been nearly 100% successful in channelling youth away from military activity, and that only 2% of the militarised youth are now fully involved in crime." (Khalane & Parlevliet , 1998, p. 28)

Although UMAC was unable to maintain a detailed record of subsequent developments, especially with regard to how many former SDUs entered employment, anecdotal evidence suggested that many gained employment and/or related opportunities in a variety of sectors, including community-based projects. The project focused participants on understanding the importance of skills training and education, which in turn resulted in an increased desire to engage with these activities. Even for those who slid away from the project, this has apparently had a lasting impact (Khalane & Parlevliet , 1998, p. 29).

Importantly, the project brought about shifts in attitude and self-perception – a sense of purpose and identity that was not linked to violence or military activity. This could be 'measured' by the dramatic improvement in participants' relationships with state bodies, particularly the police. Moreover, these former combatants came to firmly reject the label "militarised youth", which they saw as reflecting their previous situations. This shift in self-perception and identity was accompanied by a move away from resorting to violence as a problem-solving mechanism. "Instead of fighters people have become thinkers." (in

Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 27).

The voluntary decision by defence unit members to disband the structures in mid-1997 bears especial witness to the power of the project as the SDU members themselves had concluded that the continued existence of defence structures was no longer appropriate or desirable. UMAC had accessed and initially dealt with the SDU as structures rather than as individual members. Apart from the necessity of this approach to access the ex-combatants, it fulfilled the need to recognise them in the groups they perceived themselves so thoroughly part of, as well as the historical contribution they had made. But it was the group that ultimately made the decision to bring an end to the group identity. "At the time that decision was taken to disband ... they were dancing around toyi-toying, singing freedom songs – like a shared farewell, 'this is the last time we're doing it'" (UMAC fieldworker in Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 26).

Dependency and Trauma

Programmes dealing with militarised youth are frequently faced with issues of 'dependency'. Researchers interviewed in the Western Cape, for example, "were exasperated and puzzled about the lack of interest, despite the immense effort being put into training the former SDU members of Khayelitsha and Nyanga to become security officers in the industry ... [they] are gradually coming to the conclusion that there may be a need to expose the trainees to some form of trauma counselling so that they can emerge from the rut in which they seem to be stuck" ([Schärf, 1997](#)).

McKay's research in KwaZulu-Natal with young survivors of political violence cites dependency on external agencies to change their situations as one key response to feelings of disempowerment (McKay, 1997). Experiences of trauma and its impact were the focus of this research which was conducted through the Programme for Survivors of Political Violence. Traumatic experiences, McKay argues, have hardened attitudes to the point that these young people do not easily accept that talking about their feelings is legitimate: "Violence and hardship have bred an attitude of stoic survival, in which it is not permissible to talk about fear and vulnerability and not coping." (Straker & Moosa, 1988 in McKay, 1997, pp. 299-300). This is compounded by self-perceptions that they are, or at least must be seen to be, "strong and invulnerable youth leaders, at the forefront of community struggles" (McKay, 1997, p. 301).

Expressions of vulnerability, it is noted, seem only legitimate in requests for financial assistance or employment. Without diminishing the fundamental significance of material circumstances, talking endlessly about economic hardship, because it is the only 'acceptable' vulnerability, McKay suggests, may function as a defence against confronting other issues. As one participant put it, "We can find work, but we are not motivated, we don't have the right attitude and we can find ourselves losing that job" (McKay, 1997, p. 301).

Facilitators in the UMAC project attempted to address unrealistic expectations and issues of dependency by developing participants' awareness of the broader political processes of transition and reform. This helped generate an understanding of what was, and what was not, possible and was integral to, as well as a signal of, participants' gradual reintegration into civil society. In addition however, they identified the need for trauma-related services

to be built into such projects as an important learning.

Chapter Four: Demobilisation, Conflict and Related Instabilities

The lasting success in meeting the challenge of reintegrating arms and soldiers into society after an internal armed conflict depends largely on the extent to which short-term concerns about security and political stability are not only addressed, but also effectively reconciled with long-term strategies for economic reconstruction and development (Berdal, 1996, p. 8).

In situations where 'peace' has been brought about by negotiated settlement many of the issues that initially fuelled the conflict and motivated its players' participation must still be addressed (Berdal, 1996; Willet, 1998). Although the prioritisation of strategies to disarm, demobilise, and improve civil-military relationships is essential for the overall process of demilitarisation, these strategies will not be effective unless complemented by 'proactive efforts to address root causes and structural factors, such as an inability to meet basic needs and inequality in relation to both economics and political representation (Willet, 1998 & Nathan, 2000 & Berdal 1996 & Kingma 2000).

Demobilisation is therefore one component of the long-term transition to a post-conflict society, and the affected ex-combatants only one category of actors in the complex transitional environment. Bearing this in mind, demilitarisation is nevertheless a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for democratisation – a "first step" (Cock, 2000, p. 16). The demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants is a crucial facet of this and "the most significant aspect of demilitarisation as a social process" (Cock, 2000, p. 3).

The Economic Argument

More so than any other aspect of demobilisation, unemployment contributes to disaffection and frustration among former soldiers (Williams, 1998, p. 209).

Unemployment and a lack of marketable skills create significant obstacles for former combatants trying to secure a living in a civilian environment and are the bases of the most common argument presented in the literature for ex-combatants to pose a potential threat to peace and security. This is that without skills other than in the use of weapons, and in contexts of high levels of unemployment, former combatants will turn to crime for a living. At its basic level, the motivation is described as purely economic, it is only the lack of employment which results in ex-combatants becoming involved in crime.

While it is evident that some former combatants have become involved in a range of violent activities, it is not always clear whether socio-economic circumstances are primarily or solely responsible. Immediate economic motivations are often intertwined with unrealised or crushed expectations, frustrations, and a general dissatisfaction with the new democratic order. On the one hand disaffected ex-combatants, especially, it is suggested in the literature, pose the greatest threat, while on the other, unemployment breeds dissatisfaction.

Crime and banditry

Available research that interrogates the extent and nature of ex-combatants' involvement in

crime is limited. No national empirical studies have been conducted in South Africa and intelligence and criminal justice agencies do not appear to have collected or collated information on the backgrounds of perpetrators of violent crime. Reports from particular areas, such as the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands and the Katorus townships of East Rand, do however confirm that former combatants both from MK and self-defence structures have become involved in violent criminal activities in the post-1994 era.⁸¹

In response to armed cash-in-transit heists (CITs) carried out with "military precision", there has been considerable speculation, predominantly in the media, that the perpetrators of these crimes are former members of guerrilla formations. Although amongst the suspects and accused are ex-combatants who have backgrounds in MK,⁸² not all have histories in the former non-statutory forces. Some, for example, were previously employed by the state security forces, while others are still serving members of the SAPS.⁸³ Several police suspects also have a background in MK.⁸⁴ An earlier study on bank robberies found that "that the robbers often had training in using weapons, either during military service or as members of the police service" (Maree, 1999, p. 13). Indeed, there has been some speculation that former enemies have joined forces to pull off the heists, with analysts and security sources pointing to the use of police and army-issue weapons and ammunition.⁸⁵

CIT heists between 1996 and 1998 received considerable attention from the media and the police. During the same period, the number of heists actually declined, although the spectacular and violent nature of specific incidents, and the increased number of deaths of security personnel, guaranteed attention (Maree, 1999). Police investigations and the arrests of numerous suspects also appear to have resulted in a diversification of targets, as syndicates focus on softer targets, such as shopping malls and jewellery stores.⁸⁶

The extent to which former combatants are involved remains unclear. In a 1998 article in *New African* (Sipho Siso, G.) it was alleged that most suspects of bank robbery and cash-in-transit heists and the majority of those arrested for these crimes were former MK cadres. In February 1998, the National Party, Inkatha Freedom Party and African Christian Democratic Party called for an independent inquiry into possible links between MK involvement in heists and the funding of the ANC.⁸⁷ The evidence of widespread MK involvement, let alone a link to funding of ANC coffers was tenuous. As Laurence (1998, p. 8) has argued: "Recognition that neglect and dissatisfaction has metamorphosed some former MK combatants into dangerous bandits does not mean that they are responsible for all heists or even the majority of heists". Figures provided to Laurence by the SAP's Special Investigations Unit in 1998 showed that of the 80 people who had, as of that time, been arrested on suspicion for cash-in-transit heists, only two had been positively identified as former members of MK. Furthermore, none of the suspects had been convicted.⁸⁸

The cautionary note which Laurence (1998, p. 6) brings to the heist issue, where "the MK factor" is detected "on the flimsiest of evidence," is informed by Cock's analysis of the social reactions which accompany "transition anxiety" - "a deep well of social anxiety, as familiar social identities and traditional practices have been disrupted and breached" (Cock after Hall, 1998, p. 126). These anxieties tend to give rise to a search for answers which are found in "scapegoats" who can be blamed for disturbing experiences, however complex these experiences might be. Ex-combatants and illegal immigrants are two key categories

of scapegoats in the South African transitional environment (Cock, 1998).

High levels of crime and banditry have nonetheless accompanied demobilisation in transitional societies, and ineffective demobilisation and disarmament programmes, combined with a lack of employment opportunities for ex-combatants, are accessories to the trend. Banditry, particularly, has been linked to ex-combatants in Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (Kingma, 2000a; Willet, 1998). However, studies that have investigated the involvement of ex-combatants in crime suggest that the links drawn between demobilisation, unemployment and crime are often exaggerated (Kingma, 2000(a), Kingma, 2000(b)). In addition, it is "hard to distinguish the impact of demobilisation on the security situation from the impact of the broader processes of economic reform and social change" (Kingma, 2000(b), p. 238).

Research commissioned by the World Bank on the relationship between security and demobilisation in Uganda, for example, found that the demobilisation programme there had the paradoxical effect of both increasing and reducing crime levels in local areas (reported by Collier, in Cilliers, 1996). The decisive variable appeared to have been ex-combatants' access to land. In the short term, those without access to land resorted to crime. At the same time, during the first four months following demobilisation, crime levels across the country fell. This was ascribed to the fact that the demobilised soldiers who were landless constituted a very small minority and those that did have access to land in fact provided a deterrent to crime in their localities by virtue of their "military attributes". In the following eight months, "what appears to have happened is that the landless, after some initial desperation, settled into their communities, while the landed majority rapidly lost the military attributes which had provided a deterrence to crime ..." (Collier, 1996, p. 105).⁸⁹

The South African reintegration context contrasts with those of other countries such as Uganda, where many combatants originated from rural areas, and where reintegration has required a focus on rural processes and prospects for subsistence from agricultural activities. The majority of South Africa's ex-combatants came from urban backgrounds which effectively discounted rural subsistence as a realistic possibility for most (Cilliers, 1996, p. 10; Dada, 1999, p. 7).

Even where agricultural enterprise has been considered a viable option for demobilising soldiers, the implementation of such programmes has often proved untenable, as in Zimbabwe and Namibia (Dada, 1999; Rupiah, 1996; Taju, 1998; Preston, 1997). This underscores the importance of surveying the aspirations and abilities of the demobilising population as well as the economic environment.

In Mozambique, prospects for subsistence farming initially looked quite promising. The devastation of the country's infrastructure after 15 years of war, the proliferation of landmines, and gendered status-perceptions regarding paid work, however, have resulted in many ex-combatants leaving their families to till the land, while they seek employment in the cities (Taju, 1998, p. 59; Vines, 1998, pp. 5-6). This migration of ex-combatants to the city in a context of general instability, rising consumer prices and the proliferation of small arms, has contributed directly to the likelihood of them becoming involved in crime, as the various pressures of the urban milieu take hold: "There, their vulnerability to crime of all kinds is real, not only because the products on offer in the informal economy are stolen, but

also the temptation to use anything at their disposal for survival, including weapons, is very high" (Chachiuu, 1999). Even so, field research and data on criminal cases from Mozambique reveals that a disproportionately low number of arrests involve former soldiers (Taju, 1998, p. 47; Willet, 1998), suggesting that the link drawn between former soldiers and armed crime has been substantially exaggerated.

Like elsewhere, some Mozambican ex-combatants are involved in armed crime:

There is no work for me. I have few skills except using a gun and it's easy money. The occasional action makes money. I used to be FRELIMO, then joined Renamo, then joined FRELIMO. I have played war for both. Now I work for myself and my group. As long as we move around, we get few problems. We can pay for information about police activity. Prices have gone up since those South Africans got involved. Our secret is to be careful. We try not to kill people, but accidents can happen during confusion. (Mozambican ex-combatant, quoted in Vines, 1998, p. 7)

But there is nothing to suggest that ex-combatants are any more prone to crime than other members of the society (Vines, 1998, p. 6; Taju, 1998, p. 47).

While no South African studies focus specifically on the involvement of ex-combatants in crime, existing research suggests that this phenomenon is most prevalent in relation to former members of self-defence structures. As has been discussed elsewhere, even at the height of conflict, criminal enterprise rather than defence commitments pervaded a number of these structures. But according to a number of commentators, other self-defence structure members have since turned to crime mainly because economic alternatives have not materialised (Thulare, 1997; Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998; Burger, van der Westhuizen, Geldenhuys & Minnaar, 1996).

With the official disowning of the SDUs and the withdrawal of support (financial and otherwise) by the ANC from SDU-structures, a number of ex-SDU members turned to criminal activities in an effort to survive economically. In the period after the April [1994] elections there were increasing reports that ex-SDU members were involving themselves in bank robberies and car hijackings using their illegal firearms (Burger *et al.* 1996, p. 8).

Although policy makers were acutely aware of these problems few interventions have taken place, and those that have were restricted to areas considered most problematic, such as Katorus (Secretariat for Safety & Security, 1996-7). Whether they actually succeeded in averting the slide towards criminality is not clear. Elsewhere, initiatives have been reliant on non-governmental participation. In this regard, UMAC's Militarised Youth Project in the Western Cape was perceived as relatively successful in halting the slide of militarised youth towards crime. A number of former SDUs who had played a fundamental role in local taxi violence, by withdrawing themselves from the conflict, "had a positive impact on keeping taxi violence at bay in general" (Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 13).

In general, the involvement of ex-combatants in criminal activities, arrests for possession of unlicensed or stolen weapons, taxi violence, domestic violence and so on remains

anecdotal. In one notorious recent case, a former MK (and SANDF) member pleaded guilty to 40 charges of murder, attempted murder and illegal possession of arms and ammunition. This followed his arrest in connection with the violent dispute between taxi associations and the Golden Arrow bus company in the Western Cape.⁹⁰ Another former MK member was recently arrested in connection with a spate of killings in several provinces across the country.⁹¹ The potential security threats that accompany demobilisation remain a concern for ANC leaders and there is anxiety that these problems will be exacerbated by further retrenchments during the ongoing SANDF rationalisation process.⁹²

The significant increase in attacks on predominantly white-owned farms and smallholdings in South Africa has led some commentators, particularly within the farming community, to suggest that attacks are linked to a political agenda.⁹³ In these incidents, the relatively sophisticated planning suggests the possible involvement of former combatants.⁹⁴ This belief is compounded by the experiences of farmers in border areas, many of whom were attacked by MK and APLA cadres during the conflict of the 1980s and the early 1990s. Available research nevertheless concludes that attacks tend not to be politically or racially motivated, but criminally inclined instead, and that as a result of rural poverty, farms are "logical targets of relative wealth."⁹⁵ Interviews with 48 men jailed for their involvement in such attacks concluded that the major motivation for these attacks was robbery. In none of the 60 cases was there any political motivation. The research also found that most perpetrators had gleaned information about the whereabouts of money on the farms, prior to the attack, and that they had invariably spent several days on the property beforehand. This explains why attacks have had the appearance of being carefully planned, and implies the knowledge and collusion of either workers on the farms, or relatives of the workers.⁹⁶

Crime as a Political Tool and Ex-combatants as Political Pawns

As soon as the economic argument for ex-combatants' involvement in crime is linked to their dissatisfaction (as opposed to purely economic need), the resultant 'criminal' activity takes on a strongly political flavour. Although the broad, 'overview' literature on demobilisation generally talks about the potential for ex-combatants to resort either to (possibly violent) crime or destabilising political activity which may become violent, the blurring of the distinction between these categories emerges, and is acknowledged to differing degrees by various commentators.

Crime itself may become a political tool. Just as political parties in the run-up to South Africa's second democratic elections mobilised crime issues as part of their electioneering ([Hamber, 1999](#)), so too can ex-combatants utilise their stigma of threat to get what they want. In Mozambique, for example, "many of the claims made by ex-soldiers about their links to serious crime were bluffs designed to extract government concessions" (Vines, 1998, p. 6).

Alternatively, ex-combatants' *de facto* involvement in crime may emanate from political motivations as much as from economic need. One former MK combatant, for example, told researchers about the havoc he unleashed on the community to which he returned. He aimed to discredit the ANC because it rejected his request to support his studies. He subsequently joined the National Party and became involved in a series of criminal activities, including car hijackings, muggings, and house-breakings, as well as lending his

support to criminal elements in the local police service (Mashike, 1999, p. 9). The example highlights the interrelationship between possible variables (i.e. betrayal, anger, economic needs, opportunity, skills) which may contribute to involvement in violence in the 'post-conflict' environment. Another important factor is post-traumatic stress, discussed in detail below (see [Chapter Six](#)).

Ex-combatants' commonly precarious economic circumstances and limited marketable skills can make them susceptible to pressures from others whose intent or interests may have violent consequences. This may result in former combatants becoming involved in criminal gangs, such as those responsible for armed robberies and CITs. Alternatively, it might involve working in the private protection arena. Although aspects of this profession are regulated, others are not, and bodyguards have been drawn into certain internecine conflicts, such as the UDM/ANC conflict in the Richmond area of KwaZulu-Natal.

Former combatants have also been involved in violence related to the taxi industry. "Askaris" (former MK cadres turned police informers) and SDU members, for example, have been implicated as hit men in taxi violence in the Western Cape and Gauteng ([Rauch, 1993](#); Khalane & Parlevliet, 1998, p. 13). In some situations former SDU members on Gauteng's East Rand have been "exploited as 'hit men for hire' by taxi owners, and also by 'community leaders' in informal settlements who are trying to enforce their control" (Thulare, 1997, p. 22). Whether in these circumstances, it is primarily disaffection, economics, or other factors such as trauma that motivates ex-combatants' involvement remains to be investigated.

The most recent and ongoing manifestation of ex-combatants being mobilised for use in power struggles is in Zimbabwe, where "war veterans" are at the forefront of efforts by the ruling ZANU-PF to force white farmers off the land, as part of President Mugabe's efforts to expedite land-redistribution. Although a number of former combatants are certainly engaged in this campaign, many others, too young to have fought in the liberation war, are claiming "war veteran" status as a means of legitimising their actions. ZANU-PF and Mugabe's land programme has been characterised by intimidation and violence, and seems unlikely to resolve Zimbabwe's outstanding land issues or its economic woes. A number of people have lost their lives, hundreds have been injured, and thousands have been forced to flee (Amnesty International, 2000, 2001, p. 28-34).

Conflicts with complex and multi-faceted roots may manifest in criminal activity. Further back in Zimbabwe's history for example, ex-ZIPRA cadres (the armed wing of ZAPU) who deserted from military camps during the integration of the armed forces during 1980 and 1981 were accused of resorting to banditry. This was used as a pretext for the violent suppression of opposition to the ruling party, ZANU, led by Robert Mugabe. In turn, this led to further desertions of many former ZIPRA cadres, an unprecedented polarisation of the conflict, and thousands of deaths. Although the roots of this conflict (which became known as 'the dissident war') were embedded in past differences, these differences had been patched up with the formation of a Patriotic Front between ZAPU (the Ndebele-dominated minority party) and ZANU (the Shona-dominated majority). Unity in opposition to the Rhodesian Front government and puppet independence candidate, Abel Muzorewa, soon gave way however, after ZANU cemented its electoral dominance. South African destabilisation activities that actively supported dissident elements exacerbated the situation (Berdal, 1996, p. 55, Kingma, 2000a). Up to this point the two liberation movements'

differences had not manifested in any significant way (Rupiah, 1996).

Potential for Political Instability or Conflict at the National Level

Former combatants can play a role in a variety of contexts of political instability and conflict. These may emerge from 'latent' conflicts that have remained suppressed or otherwise concealed. Alternatively, they may be 'residual', powered by the hangovers of unresolved issues, or emerging conflicts reflecting the new fault lines of transition. Despite this categorisation, typologies of conflict are rarely distinct, and often closely interrelated, as emerging concerns clash with unresolved issues.

Latent conflicts

As has been shown above in relation to the conflict between the former liberation movements in Zimbabwe, conflicts which had been shelved, or largely hidden, in the interests of broader national liberation may, after the liberation is achieved, come to the fore (Atlas & Licklider cited in Kingma, 2000a, p. 18). While the roots of this particular conflict were historical, the conflict that followed liberation took the form of suppression and insurrection, and was informed by post- independence conflict power relations.

Residual conflicts

In Angola, following the demobilisation process of 1991, most combatants were effectively prevented from becoming ex-combatants. For those who did, the return to civilian life was short-lived. Because the leadership of both warring parties avoided demobilising their soldiers, and instead cached both men and weapons, it was a short step back to full blown war when UNITA rejected the 1992 election results.

The demobilisation process following the signing of the Lusaka Protocol in 1994 was only marginally more successful. Again, neither side participated fully or transparently. UNITA, for example, ensured that its crack units did not submit to the process, and many of those who did demobilise effectively remained under UNITA control (Kingma, 2000a). Government forces also failed to adequately engage with the process. The 'peace' process remained extremely fragile and localised fighting continued (Batchelor, 1997). By December 1998, the violence has escalated into a fully fledged war. As the conflict intensified, both sides engaged in intensive, and sometimes forcible, recruitment pulling numerous of the 'former' fighters back into the conflict. Some potential recruits escaped to neighbouring countries, augmenting the refugee diaspora, while others "are said to have turned to crime, living from their weapons" (Kingma, 2000a, p. 8).

The rekindling of the conflict in Angola underscores the importance of ensuring that all components of peacekeeping initiatives have appropriate political support and follow through. Demobilisation was clearly one of several weak links in both peace initiatives. The process, however, ultimately failed because of a lack of political will. It seems that peace in Angola, a country that has been at war for 40 years, will be secured only when the leaders of both sides believe the material benefits of peace outweigh those of war.⁹⁷

Although the return to war in Angola is categorised as the product of "residual conflict", in that former enemies remobilised against each other, the situation is undoubtedly more

complex at an individual level. Combatants on the ground do not necessarily contemplate a return to war in the same light as their leaders. While some may sympathise with their leaders' interests in continuing conflict, for many, individual options are limited. Given the duration of the conflict, many combatants know little else, and, faced with the insecurities of civilian life, may be more inclined to support the retention of their combatant status (Kingma, 2000a).

Emerging Conflicts

The organisation of 'ex-combatant' identities

In contrast to the situation in Angola, where the return to war largely averted the emergence of an ex-combatant phenomenon, in other situations political and/or social instability and conflict may develop where ex-combatant experiences and ex-combatant identities become defining factors.

Zimbabwe provides the most obvious contemporary example, where the requirements of many former liberation movement fighters have "become a hot bed of political tension" (Musemwa, 1996, p. 55). Demobilisation in Zimbabwe began in 1981 yet continues to haunt the country two decades on. Primarily, this takes the form of protests, spearheaded by the War Veterans' Association, demanding that the government address the plights of the veterans. In 1997, under intense pressure from the veterans, the government responded by agreeing to pay compensation packages and monthly pensions to the veterans. At a time of severe economic hardship, this drain on state coffers precipitated an economic meltdown that continues today (Kingma, 2000a, p. 16). It was also seen by some as an attempt to deflect allegations that some members of the Cabinet, and other prominent politicians close to the president, had allocated to themselves more than half of the existing veterans' pension fund.⁹⁸ The compensation packages, however, did not assuage elements within the ex-combatants' ranks and by 1998 reports were being received of ex-combatants storming farms, usurping portions of land for themselves and encouraging landless farmers to do the same.⁹⁹ This was the prelude to a concerted state-sponsored campaign to take over most white-owned farms that accelerated during the course of 2000 and 2001.

Commentators are divided on what specifically constitute the shortcomings of Zimbabwe's demobilisation process. On the one hand, the original gratuities that were paid out in the early 1980s were regarded as "paltry", and the situation for former fighters was compounded by a lack of support for reintegration and other needs (Dada, 1999, p. 8; Musemwa, 1996). There is general agreement that cash payments should have been more meaningfully linked to investment, educational and income-generating initiatives and opportunities.

Some however, argued that the payments to veterans were too high, especially when the 1997 disbursements were taken into account. This, it was suggested, had simply brought about a dependency and over-reliance on the state (Berdal, 1996; Todd, 1997). Similar dependency issues involving ex-combatants have been noted in Namibia¹⁰⁰ and Mozambique (Taju, 1998).

In Zimbabwe, the promotion of ex-combatants' interests was met with concern about

possible ramifications: "It can ... safely be said that no other group in this country has, since independence, received greater assistance than ex-combatants ... Zimbabwe's political leadership has placed too much emphasis, verbally, on the role of ex-combatants. A war affects everyone ... It is not helpful to the overall development of a community to assert that one group (the ex-combatants) is more important than any other. This leads ... to ex-combatants believing years after the conflict has ended that they still have the right to special resources from the State and this, in turn, stirs up resentment in other sectors of the community ..." (Todd, 1997).

Furthermore, in Zimbabwe there have clearly been personal and political interests at stake within the operation of the Veterans' Association itself. Executive members of the Association have been implicated in embezzling funds,¹⁰¹ and accused of exploiting ex-combatants to "terrorise the government and thus jeopardise the economic well-being of the country for which the real ex-combatants once purported to fight" (Todd, 1997). Similar allegations were raised in Namibia regarding mismanagement of funds intended for veterans (Kingma, 2000a). In South Africa, concerns have been raised about the misappropriation of funds earmarked for ex-combatants in both the veterans' association (for MK cadres),¹⁰² as well as the SANDF's Service Corps, which is responsible for re-training demobilised soldiers.¹⁰³

As can be seen in the case of Zimbabwe, 'ex-combatant' or 'veteran' agendas may act as a catalyst in terms of social protest and, in so doing, attract other groupings willing to mobilise around socio-economic and political problems and interests (Kingma, 2000a). Former combatants, primarily from ZANU's ZANLA forces, have participated in the land invasions that have led to the occupation of several thousand farms. Many of those involved in the farm invasions, however, are simply too young to have participated in the war against the Rhodesian Front (Amnesty International, 2000; Todd, 1997). In Namibia ex-combatants, who had been demobilised after independence (in 1989) demonstrated in the capital city, Windhoek on issues of unemployment and poverty. These demonstrations were also believed to have included large numbers of unemployed youth masquerading as ex-combatants (Kingma, 2000a).

Interestingly, the ex-combatants' association in Mozambique (AMODEG- Mozambican Association for Demobilised Soldiers) includes former soldiers from both sides of the previous conflict. Former enemies may unite around a new ex-combatant identity as their experiences of reintegration (or lack thereof) converge. In Zimbabwe, former members of both the liberation armies (ZANLA and ZIPRA) are organised under the Liberation War Veterans' Association (Musemwa, 1996, p. 52). In South Africa, although the main armed formations have their own veterans' associations, such as the MK Military Veterans' Association (MKMVA), APLA Veterans' Association and the SA Legion,¹⁰⁴ there are also a multiplicity of smaller associations and clubs that cater for different parts of the armed forces (i.e. army, navy, airforce) from the SADF era, as well as specific units. Some associations (such as the SA Jewish ex-service League), however, are primarily forums where former colleagues can get together to socialise. While these associations have inadvertently served to preserve the distinctions between the various armed formations in the current South African contest, efforts are apparently underway to establish an association that represents former combatants from opposing armed forces.

The establishment of the Zimbabwe War Veterans' Association was informed by grievances and dissatisfaction over the ever-increasing gulf between former rank-and-file combatants and their superiors (Kingma, 2000a, pp. 15, 18). In the late 1980s, the Willowgate scandal broke, illustrating how senior ZANU cadres abused their positions by enriching themselves, at a time when many ex-combatants were faced with severe socio-economic circumstances: "The Association was formed after we had discovered that the politicians who made us what we are had ditched us" (Musemwa, 1996, pp. 52, 57).

Sentiments of this nature appear widespread. In Mozambique, former RENAMO combatants have been involved in violent protests, complaining that the party's leadership has forgotten the sacrifices they made during the 16-year civil war.¹⁰⁵ In Liberia, war veterans have vented their anger against a number of senior politicians, whom they hold responsible for holding back promised payments.¹⁰⁶

In South Africa, officials from the MKMVA have raised concerns that some ex-MK soldiers are more likely to pose a threat to the ANC and their former MK leaders than to society in general. "It is a question of pointing fingers, saying 'you see, that one is now comfortable up there'" (Mashike, 1999, p. 24). Grievances, however, cut across a range of interrelated issues, especially with regard to integration and demobilisation and have resulted in a number of fissures. A group of former MK and APLA cadres, organised under the banner of the APLA-Umkhonto we Sizwe Revolutionary Movement, protested in Durban in early 2001 against the "flawed integration process", and called for intervention from senior political leaders.¹⁰⁷

Former SADF soldiers have also made their dissatisfaction known: ex-combatants from the Cape Coloured Corps demonstrated in Cape Town during February 2001 about the lack of job opportunities since demobilisation. More recently, up to 3 000 (black) former SADF member members protested at the border post with Botswana, claiming the integration process had favoured former liberation movement fighters: "During apartheid we were discriminated against in favour of whites and now we are discriminated in favour of these soldiers." They claimed that they felt obliged to take the severance packages offered by the SANDF. Now faced with the prospect of long-term unemployment, many wanted their jobs back. Although some of these protests have had the potential for violence, most have been non-violent. In the Botswana border-post incident, for example, the ex-soldiers dispersed after a week-long protest when they were threatened with arrest: "This was a peaceful protest, hence we handed our firearms to the police. All we wanted was to seek intervention from SADC and the UN in Botswana."¹⁰⁸

Possible insurrection by disenchanted former combatants is seen as a central threat associated with demobilisation, and the emergence of strong-willed veterans associations tend to be perceived as signalling this threat. In the Namibian context, "the fact that ex-combatants can, after nearly eight years of having been demobilised, still come together within large groups in a few minutes says a lot ... it is an indication that they have not yet fully reintegrated in society. In other words, they are on somewhat 'alert' at all times. They remain the most organised group in society and are able to respond to a call to come together at very short notice" (Aluteni, 1997 in Kingma, 2000a, p. 12).

On the basis of the Namibian situation, Preston (1997) predicts that although there will be

ongoing "periodic manifestations of discontent among those who continue to feel that their contribution has not been rewarded", it is likely that containment strategies (which is how the reintegration 'support' has been interpreted in Namibia) within stable societies will prevent these from developing into more destructive conflicts (Preston, 1997, pp. 469-470). A similar approach is likely in South Africa, as intermittent efforts are made to deal with sections from the ranks of former combatants, including, for example, proposals to establish a pension plan for them.¹⁰⁹

The extent to which organised ex-combatant groupings present a threat to governments and society in general is questionable, and clearly varies from situation to situation. The Zimbabwean government's reaction to the war veterans' demands in 1996 and 1997 for example, suggested a high degree of nervousness regarding their potential for disruption (Musemwa, 1996, p. 54). At this time, representatives from the veterans' association claimed that they had no intention of using violence against the government precisely because of the likelihood that a similar status-quo, where the benefits remain in the hands of a few, would emerge if insurrection were to be realised: "We will never go to war again. For what? To fight for someone to enjoy, while we suffer." (cited in Musemwa, 1996, p. 55). The subsequent co-option of the Veterans' Association as the primary agency involved in Zimbabwe's unorthodox land-redistribution programme, however, suggests that the government may have already had 'long-term' plans for how they would utilise these ex-combatants. While, much has changed in Zimbabwe since the late 1990s and it appears that many war veterans are supportive of the ZANU-PF government, the extent to which the government has control over these veterans is unclear.

Emerging conflict at the local level

While the potential 'political' conflicts linked to demobilisation discussed thus far are generally of a broad-based nature (involving ex-combatants en masse), in countries where a national "peace" agreement is relatively effective – unlike the case of Angola where there was a return to full blown civil war - the danger of violence erupting is most acute at the local level. As Hamber warns in the South African context,

It is vitally important that it is acknowledged that the apartheid past has left a legacy of violence and mistrust within communities themselves and not merely between the state and its citizens ... It is within communities, and at the local level, where future conflict is likely to manifest itself. This will occur when new power struggles emerge, as leaders vie for the support of the marginalised sections of the population. In this context disaffected individuals, and those who feel their right to justice under the amnesty laws were sacrificed for minimal return in the past, and while structural conditions remain unchanged, who will become the first recruits of political entrepreneurs who will exploit past resentments ([Hamber, 1999](#))

Although Hamber is not referring specifically to ex-combatants, it is evident that they may well feature among the ranks of "disaffected individuals".

Well-conceived demobilisation and reintegration programmes go a long way to averting the threat of violence or destabilisation posed by ex-combatants, but they are unable to adequately address the complex nature of societies undergoing transition into which ex-

combatants must integrate. Such societies are typically characterised by fragile political and institutional environments in which democratic structures and mechanisms for the safeguarding of security, law, order, and peaceful conflict resolution are either not in place or lack legitimacy and capacity for effective implementation. The situation is compounded by conditions on the ground, where many people continue to face social, material and physical insecurity. Such conditions are closely intertwined with what [Simpson & Rauch \(1993\)](#) referred to as the "deregulation of social control" - the vacuum created when sources of repressive authority are dismantled and viable alternatives are only nascent or not yet existent.

At the local level the experience of war leaves rifts and in many situations local mechanisms of non-violent dispute resolution are ruined (Kingma, 2000a; Hoffman & McKendrick cited in [Rauch, 1993](#)). In this environment, even small disputes may play themselves out in violent conflict. Individuals or groups of individuals are more likely to take the law into their own hands, as witnessed by the ongoing problems of vigilante violence. In many communities limited policing capacity facilitates impunity. As a result, the return of ex-combatants, or indeed other displaced peoples, into fractured and insecure communities may contribute to levels of conflict (Kingma, 2000a, p. 17).

Communities have also sometimes looked to former combatants to provide leadership in the fight against crime. In post-1994 South Africa, a number of former combatants have become involved in "community policing" and "community protection" initiatives. The Peninsula Anti-crime Agency (PEACA) in the Western Cape, for example, comprises mainly former MK and APLA members. Based in Khayelitsha but operative throughout the Peninsula, PEACA's services "to bring people to justice" can be bought by those who can afford them. As confidence in the criminal justice system wanes, more and more people seem willing to utilise alternative expertise.¹¹⁰

War Orders

The focus on reconstruction, reconciliation and reintegration in 'post-conflict' societies seems often to imply that there is something tangible that can be regained. Fundamental, however to engaging with the dynamics in such societies is the extent to which the experiences of conflict generate alternative social and economic systems, new identities, ways of acting, relating and securing income. "Part of the problem is that we tend to regard conflict as, simply, a breakdown in a particular system, rather than as the emergence of another alternative system of profit and power" (David Keene in Berdal, 1996, p. 15). This is a dynamic and ongoing process. It is not then so appropriate to attempt to get things back to the way they were, but rather to transform things from the way they are.

Because conflicts generate new ways of doing things, processes intended to demilitarise society, such as disarmament and demobilisation, may have far-reaching implications for different groupings affected by the social and economic order of the conflict (Berdal, 1996). Numerous examples of the breakdown of social and economic structures and the generation of "war orders" are available from South Africa.

Local war orders

Self-defence structures in South Africa emerged largely to 'fill the gap' created by the

illegitimacy of the SAP and the lack of policing for black communities (as opposed to of them). Although born of a long history of local mechanisms of social control in black communities, such structures were essentially a feature of the transitional period (i.e. late 1980s and early 1990s). Paradoxically it was during this era of political negotiation that thousands of people were first introduced to combat roles.

The development of these structures led to the evolution of new power relations, which in turn affected the socio-economic landscape and conditions in many localities. Displaying diverse degrees of alignment, and allegiance, to national political organisations, local conditions and issues tended to dominate, frequently manifesting in episodes of internal violence. Indeed, incidents of inter- and intra-SDU violence in certain areas (i.e. Katorus, Sharpeville) during 1994 and 1995 (Minnaar, 1996) illustrate the importance of local power plays in conflict that political structures were often helpless to avert. In Sharpeville, for example, numerous attempts by provincial ANC leadership failed to prevent an extended cycle of tit-for-tat killings between various SDU structures that had carved up the township into various zones. Their allegiance, ostensibly to the ANC, was however much more locally focused. As such, SDU structures were part of a new local 'war order' in which, according to Minnaar (1996), they often "wielded far too much power". Even after the formal cessation of hostilities, certain of these dynamics continued to play themselves out.

Interruptions to "war-orders" or threats to the status quo may generate new conflicts. The return, for example, of MK members from exile into this environment constituted such an interruption in some localities. A Mail & Guardian report (13 June 1997) outlines a situation in Kwa Mashu, KwaZulu Natal, where former MK members clashed with former SDU members during 1997. Both parties had established gangs based on previous allegiances. The returned MK members accused the former SDUs of perpetrating crime in the area and subsequently "mounted an anti-crime campaign in the township, which the latter gang took as a threat to their influence". Despite being ostensibly on the same side during "the struggle", the resultant feud left eight dead and at least 13 wounded during a week of clashes. Returned MK exiles complained that, "while we were busy fighting for freedom, they [the SDU members] were busy smoking dagga". Conversely, SDU members argued that "exiles want to dictate to us how we must live our lives. We are not employed, therefore we gista [steal cars] to get money ...".¹¹¹

SDU members felt that their previous role in the community and their subsequent problems resulting from unemployment legitimated their becoming involved in crime. Similar tensions were reported from other parts of the country as MK members tried, with varying degrees of success, to instil control and discipline amongst the defence-unit structures. In the pre-1994 context MK members had largely turned a blind eye to the criminal exploits of certain SDUs; energies were focused on addressing more immediate threats, such as the security forces and IFP-aligned hostel residents. Subsequent attempts in the post-1994 situation to rein in SDU elements were not uniform and depended primarily on local conditions and dynamics. In some areas, no ostensible action was taken and problematic SDU elements continued to exert undue influence and control. Elsewhere, as in KwaMashu, specific attempts were made to reconfigure and dismantle the local war order. Differences also emerged within and between SDU structures when attempts made by some to genuinely engage with anti-crime and community policing initiatives, brought them into conflict with former comrades.¹¹²

*Economic war orders*¹¹³

Demobilised ex-combatants without employment opportunities are typically considered a dangerous grouping - their lack of income generating opportunities making this so. But it may have been very similar socio-economic vulnerabilities that led them into combatant worlds in the first place. In Somalia, for example, it has been noted that the lack of other means of survival encourages participation in militias. While "the war aims of more and more insurgents and militias are more and more local and specific ... sustaining and enriching themselves ... have become the overriding preoccupation of some groups" (De Waal in Berdal, 1996, p. 17).

Similarly, during the early 1990s on the East Rand, the environment of unemployment and poverty, argued [Segal \(1991\)](#) was, "deeply implicated in the motives of the warring protagonists" and fundamentally influenced the scale and nature of the violence that engulfed the area ([Segal, 1991](#)). In this context, the distinction between criminal and political actions became increasingly blurred: "It must be said that many of those who fight the war subsist off their quasi-military activity. Homes attacked by hostel residents are invariably looted ... it is well known in Thokoza and Katlehong that members of SDUs use their money to buy ammunition and their guns to steal" (Steinberg, 1994, p. 10).

The relationship of social and economic factors to broader issues of struggle and violence are invariably complex. Rarely, if ever, is it reducible to one source or motive, but is affected by a range of issues. Combatants are drawn into conflict for a variety of reasons: ideology, conscription, coercion, opportunities, and material benefit. A number of Namibia's former South West African Territory Force, for example, were - contrary to popular belief - people motivated as much by "a regular salary" as by political purposes (Preston, 1997, p. 456).

Although for many others material interests may feature less significantly as motivators, if at all, war economies anyway evolve at the micro as well as the macro level. (See, for example, section, Proliferation of Small Arms for SADF members' involvement in smuggling and fraud). The extent to which material interests play a motivating role in encouraging individuals to participate as combatants impacts on their subsequent actions and decisions to desist or continue with such activities. Consequently, emphasises Berdal, "any post-peace reconstruction programme will to a large extent be influenced by the operation of the grass-roots war-economy" (Berdal, 1996, p. 15).

National war orders

Another powerful example of how alternative systems were generated through the South African conflict relates to the controversial phenomenon that came to be known as the "Third Force". In the same way that the emergence of community-defence structures can be viewed in relation to local war orders, so too can a number of "Third Force" issues be considered in terms of their connection with war-generated systems operating on the macro level (i.e. national and international).

The continuation and heightened nature of violence during the 1990s, argues Ellis¹¹⁴ (1998), was directly related to the identities and philosophies generated within the culture of the security forces' covert units. A key component of this culture was the development of

illicit economic dealings that fuelled the development of significant macro economic interests at home and abroad. Much of this had its roots in the growth of covert counter-insurgency activities during the 1980s, and the broader involvement of the state in criminal activities during this period (Ellis, 1998).¹¹⁵

The intertwining of military/security activities with illicit dealings, such as arms-dealing, diamond and drug trafficking, money laundering, and the establishment of front companies, became endemic in many of the covert structures.¹¹⁶ This was sanctioned (overtly and tacitly) by senior members of the security establishment, as well as by political leaders.

Covert structures of this nature were often self-financing and did not rely on 'official' sources of funding. Some elements also generated income and resources (i.e weapons, intelligence) that could be distributed elsewhere. Under the rubric of "Total Strategy", such actions were not necessarily regarded as suspect. In addition, because of the increasing tendency for covert units to operate on a "need to know" basis, and a related tendency for them to fracture into systems of vertical patronage (where operations could be carried out on the authority of just one senior official) units were able to raise funds for their operations without following the usual financial and managerial procedures. This allowed both senior security managers and politicians to "plausibly deny" any knowledge of specific operations, or the *modus operandi* of specific units (Ellis, 1998).

It is suspected that substantial links were developed with criminal networks by some units, our insight into these relations and their extent is limited. In addition, convicted criminals were recruited as sources and operatives. Increasingly security force operatives utilised these networks and activities for personal gain and as a form of insurance to guard against possible undesirable consequences of political change that they sensed was in the air (Ellis, 1998, p. 276-280).

The identities of operatives within the covert units, and the culture which provided a home for these, militated against the 'downing of arms'. The aggressive patriotism which was instilled to differing degrees in all members of the security forces was accompanied in covert cultures by an arrogance, sense of immunity, as well as a contempt of the law, civilians, ordinary soldiers or policemen (Ellis, 1998). Largely, as a result of the covert nature of the units, the counter-insurgency strategy employed, and the ambiguity and euphemism which had characterised the language of command, reigning in covert operatives, unsurprisingly, presented difficulties. Operatives had been immersed in a culture in which it was not uncommon for politicians and ministers to say what they did not mean; they were implementing a strategy of which the central tenet was to make the violence appear as the enemy's own doing, and they had become accustomed to operating on their own initiative and wielding enormous power.

Ellis's analysis (1998), which reaches far beyond the bounds of this discussion, emphasises that both the social and economic aspects of the war-order that was generated around the covert security structures played a crucial role in fuelling the violence in the period of negotiation:

Middle-ranking officers like Colonel Eugene De Kock and Colonel Joe Verster ... saw themselves as warriors, professionals who had been trained to attack the

enemy until unambiguously ordered to stop. They had been brought up to believe that to fight for volk and vaderland was their highest duty. Throughout careers spent in underground warfare they had learned the arts of camouflage and subterfuge which meant that even disbanding their units was not taken as an unambiguous signal to disarm. They had seen too many ruses of this sort to take them at face value. Many covert warriors had developed a financial interest in war, and this was an incentive to continue (Ellis, 1998, p. 293).

The self-perceptions, experiences and dealings of operatives situated in the covert units, that enjoyed great prestige and power within the security forces, remain largely unknown as does the extent to which they continue to utilise established criminal networks and contacts. Some individuals have been publicly named, and accused of involvement in criminal activities, at times with political objectives.¹¹⁷ Generally, however, public knowledge of such issues is sketchy.

Risks for Demobilisation: the Proliferation of Small Arms

The proliferation of small arms presents an enormous and dynamic obstacle to societies emerging from protracted conflict. Experience in Africa has shown that societies affected by an influx of small arms experience a concomitant rise in violence (Gamba, 1997; Potgieter 1997; Willet, 1998). Moreover, political violence, social instability and violent crime are fed by, and in turn feed, the availability of weapons, in an ever-increasing spiral of supply and demand (Cock, 1998; Gamba, 1997).

Ineffectual demobilisation and disarmament programmes are a principal source of uncontrolled access to weapons and, consequently, of the violence that accompanies their presence. Angola provides an acute example of ineffective disarmament, which undermined the peace initiative and subsequently fuelled the renewed conflict. The 1991 'peace' process was effectively doomed because neither party gave its full commitment to demobilisation or disarmament: "Both sides delayed demobilising troops, and cached large contingents of men and arms in order to be prepared to resume fighting should the peace process falter" (Batchelor, 1997, p. 111). In addition, the arms that were surrendered were "definitely not the arms with which they had prosecuted the bitter civil war" (Potgieter, 1997, p. 138), and tended to be obsolete or nearing the end of their life span. Even these old weapons found their way back into the hands of combatants as UN observers were unable to retain effective control over the arms stores that were situated alongside the assembly areas where the troops were congregated. The combination of available weapons and personnel ensured that Unita's rejection of the election results led to the resumption of full-scale fighting: Angola's "third war" (Batchelor, 1997, p. 111).

Similarly, in Mozambique some soldiers did not surrender their weapons; while others surrendered only those of poor quality, holding on to others. In addition, many of the weapons that were handed over have subsequently leaked into the black market (Kingma, 2000; Cock, 1998). Experiences such as those from Mozambique and Angola highlight the importance of ensuring that weapons are never stored in close proximity to demobilising soldiers, and that the destruction of collected weapons is prioritised.

Weapons may be held back from disarmament strategies for a variety of reasons. In Angola, for example, weapons were cached as an "insurance policy", a fall-back position should the

peace fail. This approach, however, was a key component in the failure of peace. In other situations, weapons may be cached and used as a bargaining chip for future negotiations.

Issues of oversight and control can become central bargaining concerns. In South Africa, for example, the liberation movements kept secret details of their weapon caches. Attempts by SADF negotiators to place weapons and non-statutory force members under the control of the "statutory" military were rebuffed, although, "MK had no objection in principle to subjecting its armaments and personnel to the oversight and control of external structures ... (but) not the SADF" (Frankel, 2000, pp. 7-8). In the end, despite the handing over of some weapons by MK and APLA, no centralised or controlled disarmament process was put in place, leaving many combat weapons cached or in circulation.

At the individual level, ex-combatants returning to war-torn communities often fear for their physical safety, prompting them to hold onto their weapons for self-defence and protective purposes (Potgieter, 1997, p. 165). In South Africa in the early 1990s, many liberation movement cadres returned to communities that were under siege from violent conflict. Although the armed struggle was officially suspended, MK members urged the ANC leadership to take action, resulting in a decision to train and arm selected SDUs in affected areas. These weapons formed just part of the SDU arsenal, and many remain unaccounted for (TRC Report, Vol. 2, Ch. 7, pp. 455-459).

Apart from political incentives for retaining weapons (and sometimes, in addition to them) ex-combatants, faced with economic insecurity, also hold onto their guns for economic purposes (Gamba, 1997, p. 7; Berdal, 1996, p. 17; Cock, 1998, p. 141). They may, for example, sell the weapons for much-needed income, as is the case in Mozambique where "the sale of weapons spells cash to buy transportation, food, shelter and medical equipment for those who have left war behind" (Rana cited in Cock, 1998, p. 141). Guns have also been exchanged for food, second-hand clothes and blankets (Cock, 1998, p. 126). The consequences are manifold and dangerous, as "these weapons, now mere commodities on the black market, filter through porous borders and circulate throughout the region bringing instability, violence and death" (Gamba, 1997, p. 7).

In other situations, disillusioned ex-combatants may decide to use their guns for criminal purposes in order to meet their economic requirements (Potgieter, 1997, pp. 152-4). The proliferation of armed banditry throughout certain Southern African countries, such as Mozambique, Angola, and Zimbabwe (following their first wave of demobilisation in the 1980s) has been directly attributed to ineffectual demobilisation and disarmament programmes, combined with the lack of alternative employment opportunities for ex-combatants (Potgieter, 1997, p. 155; Willet, 1998, p. 421). In some instances, such banditry has taken on a political mantle. Disaffected ex-combatants from Mozambique, for example, have lent their support to former members of Young Pioneers in post-Banda Malawi, as well as to opposition groups in Zimbabwe.

But as Cock powerfully shows, the reasons for ex-combatants (and others) resisting disarmament are not restricted to political and economic factors. Guns often form the basis for social identities – specifically militarised masculinities. As the imprisoned leader of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), Eugene Terre'Blanche once said, "The Boer and his gun are inseparable" (Cock, 1998, p. 133). Especially in times of social unrest and uncertainty the gun is invested with notions of power and security for those immersed in

the "gun culture" (Cock, 1998, p. 131).

Some former combatants who no longer carry weapons speak of a type of separation anxiety and a sense of being exposed. Indeed, getting ex-combatants to part with their guns may also require the recasting of social identities that address more positive and secure aspects of masculinity. Such a development on a wide scale is unlikely in the face of an omnipresent "gun culture", which pervades the very societies into which many ex-combatants must reintegrate. "Gun culture", which has South Africa firmly in its grip for example, sanctions access to guns for diverse social groupings and institutions (Cock, 1998, p. 131). In this culture which remains rooted in the apartheid past, guns are intertwined with notions of citizenship,¹¹⁸ masculinity, and status and gun violence has become connected to different social identities (Cock, 1998). More South Africans are now armed, both legally and illegally, than ever before (Potgieter, 1997). The solution, Cock argues, must include the reconstitution of the powerful meanings and identities, which underlie people's attachment to their guns and gun violence.

While governments may follow demilitarisation strategies following the outbreak of peace, civil society is all too often arming (or continuing to arm) itself, thereby "eroding one of the key requisites of democratic transition, the state's ability to monopolise the instruments of coercion" (Shaw cited in Cock, 1998, p. 124). This happens in response to the proliferation of weapons (and the accompanying increase in violence) and, in turn, becomes one of its major causes. Civilians who feel vulnerable, and have little faith in transitional state-security forces to protect them, will obtain guns for self-protection, or employ others with guns to do the job. These guns, however, only contribute to the problem of violent crime: "The legal supply of small arms is generally the seedbed of illegal flows". In 1996, 17 600 licensed guns were reported lost or stolen by private individuals (Cock, 1998, p. 123).

Materially and socially, the proliferation of small arms in Southern Africa is a legacy of apartheid. Indeed, many of the weapons in circulation are linked to the conflicts of the past. Weapons left over from Cold War politics, 'support banditry, racketeering, political conflict, and general crime throughout the region' (Frankel, 2000, p. 165). In addition, many of the weapons that are smuggled through South Africa's porous borders from countries such as Mozambique and Angola, were provided by the SADF in the first place, as part of apartheid South Africa's regional destabilisation programme (Frankel, 2000; Cock, 1998). Cock has termed the return of these weapons to South Africa, 'the boomerang effect' (Cock, 1998, p. 123).

The liberation movements also carry responsibility for the widespread proliferation of weapons in the country. An integral component of Operation Vula, initiated in 1986 by the ANC's National Executive Council, was "to bring large quantities of weapons into South Africa, and to conceal them in 'dead letter boxes' so that they would be available if it became necessary. In the early 1990s, many such weapons were used by MK and SDU members in conflicts around the country" (TRC, Vol.2, Ch. 7, p. 381).

Various forces involved in South Africa's war cached their weapons or failed to declare caches so as to provide a contingency position during the negotiations period. Especially between 1990 and 1994, weapons 'leaked' from undeclared MK arms caches and the military arsenals of the former homeland forces. Approximately 20 tons of MK ordinances,

for example, were randomly dispersed within the country (Williams in Cock, 1998, pp. 138-139). Furthermore, significant quantities of weapons controlled by the security police were distributed to members of the IFP during the early 1990s, with tons of weapons delivered to former security policeman, and IFP Senator, Phillip Powell (TRC, Vol. 2, Ch. 7, p. 100-123). Although the IFP consistently denied the allegations made by convicted police hit-squad commander, Colonel Eugene de Kock, a substantial quantity of weapons was uncovered during 1999. This, however, represented only a fraction of the weapons De Kock claims to have handed over to the IFP (Electronic Mail & Guardian, 12 May 1999).

The bulk of these weapons remains unaccounted for.¹¹⁹ Whether or not they are in circulation and used in ongoing violent confrontations in KwaZulu-Natal remains unclear. Certainly, the illegal-arms industry continues to employ a number of former combatants in the post-1994 dispensation. There have, for example, been several incidents of MK members being arrested for continued arms smuggling (SAIRR, 1994 in Cock, 1998, p. 139).

Important to understanding the proliferation of arms in South Africa (and elsewhere) is the extent to which weapons become enmeshed with economic systems and social relations that are generated in conflict, and that continue to play out in 'post-conflict' dispensations. These systems involve a variety of actors, not only ex-combatants, and are likely to be reinforced by the transitional nature of states. Indeed, research suggests that illegal trade between Zimbabwe and Mozambique "provided a major stimulus to sustained economic expansion, social differentiation and shifts in power bases ... the collapse of state power removed some of the traditional obstacles to change, and gave rise to a new entrepreneurial class of bureaucratic entrepreneurs, artisans, money dealers, smugglers, pirates, racketeers ..." (Chingono cited in Berdal, 1996, p. 15). Once supply routes are opened and interests established, such initiatives are not easy to close down.

SADF security-force personnel were involved in the illegal arms trade, both to further the political objectives of "Total Strategy", but also, and progressively so, for personal gain. Egged on by sanctions, "the range of state-sanctioned law-breaking included sophisticated smuggling operations and currency frauds which brought the government's own secret services into business relationships with major smuggling syndicates, Italian Mafia money-launderers and other operators in the international criminal under-world ... Intelligence officers ordered or encouraged to smuggle and defraud in the name of national security found it progressively easier and more tempting to do this on their own account as they saw the power of the National Party inexorably slipping away and as they began to think hard about their own financial future and that of their families after apartheid" (Ellis, 1999, pp. 61-62). Some of the relationships have survived, nurtured by both those who remain in the security forces, as well as those who have left (Ellis, 1999; Cock, 1998, p. 143).

Furthermore, when firearms began to feature in the SDUs' weaponry (as opposed to knobkerries and homemade weapons), research revealed that they did not necessarily originate from MK sources, but that some SDUs were also utilising commercial gun runners (Rosenthal, cited in Cock, 1998, p. 130).¹²⁰ It is unlikely that these supply sources have evaporated, as the continued demand for weapons ensures that the supply of guns remains highly profitable.

The failure and limitations of demobilisation and disarmament programmes have certainly contributed to the glut of weapons circulating in the country and the region. The potential for ex-combatants to become involved in violence-related activities only increases in contexts of small arms proliferation. Again, commentators stress the importance of demobilisation programmes to provide meaningful reintegration as an antidote to ex-combatants making destructive choices at the same time as emphasising the need for effective disarmament strategies. But failed disarmament and demobilisation are by no means the only source of small arms and the connection between ex-combatants and weapons proliferation is not at all clear. Arms continue to leak from police and military sources and private gun theft is rampant. South Africa's own arms industries, both legal and illegal, are powerful sources, as is the phenomenon of international smuggling syndicates, the presence of which has been felt more intensely in South Africa since the transition to democracy.

Chapter Five: War-generated Identities as a Potential Source of Conflict and Violence

This section examines how the socialisation of combatants within military structures might contribute to subsequent violent behaviour and attitudes after combatants have left the military.

War and conflict contain transformative forces. The emergence of South Africa's SDUs, discussed above, is one example of the generation of alternative structures and identities in a context of violent conflict. Alternative social orders, identities and relationships are generated and/or mobilised in the experience of war and conflict. The transformative capacity of violent conflict is powerfully captured in the title of an IBI-Peace Action report (1994), "Before We Were Good Friends". Analysing the violence of the early 1990s in the East Rand township of Thokoza, the report shows "how people living side by side for decades have suddenly turned on each other. How neighbours, once friends, have become bitter enemies" (p. 1). This conflict saw the emergence and manipulation of divisive ethnic and political identities.¹²¹

The generation of alternative cultures and identities and their implications for "post conflict" societies, however, are often inadequately addressed. In a context where "war is increasingly a social phenomenon in the sense that it is fought primarily between social groups rather than between states ... a major gap in the literature on peace building and demilitarisation is a sociological lens, which focuses on the social interaction between individuals and groups, which are shaped by different identities, institutions and ideologies ..." (Cock, 2000, p. 1). These processes reach beyond the realms of combatant communities and continue to evolve and impact following the end of war. Transitions are therefore often characterised by the continuation and emergence of new social relations and consequent negotiations. These negotiations are invariably intertwined with, and rooted in, the recent experience of conflict.

The war-generated identities of ex-combatants are not uniform and are frequently complex, varying from context to context, and developing in response to specific conditions and situations. In South Africa (and many other countries transforming from authoritarian to democratic rule) the combatant's identity is situated in a context of both conflict and transition. At a general level, issues such as the nature and duration of the conflict in which

the ex-combatant participated, and the nature of the armed formation to which the ex-combatant belonged, play an important role in the generation of identities. Experiences between, for example, statutory (SADF) and non-statutory forces (MK and APLA) as well as between different units within these armed formations, differed fundamentally.

The implications of varied combat experiences play themselves out in different ways. The development of a "covert culture" within the apartheid security forces responsible for certain counter-insurgency actions, for example, certainly contributed to the generation of "Third Force" activities in the early 1990s (Ellis, 1998). Elsewhere, violence involving former SDU members and other "militarised youth" in the post-1994 era can, in part, be attributed to identities and cultures spawned in the violence that pervaded many communities in the pre-1994 dispensation. The emergence of powerful individuals with strong political support and allegiances, who take on the trappings of "warlords" is one possible outcome and in some parts of South Africa "may have become endemic for the foreseeable future" (Ellis, 1998, p. 299). Similarly, alternative methods of justice and punishment developed during the conflicts have continued to be sought, implemented and adapted in 'peace' time, manifesting in the vigilante and revenge violence prevalent in many communities.

Prolonged exposure to the military and combat experience is a critical factor impacting on ex-combatants' journey back into civil society, and in turn may contribute to their involvement in and/or exposure to subsequent violence and conflict.¹²² In some situations, such as Angola, where conflict has been ongoing for over 40 years, many combatants have no experience of "normal" civilian life. Reintegration in such circumstances is fraught with obstacles, as former combatants are effectively habituated to a way of living - a culture - that is at odds with the rights, responsibilities and skills required in civilian life. A range of challenges face them in the transition era, including disorientation, a dependency bred in military structures, alienation, and stigmatisation. In addition, the personal transition requires socio-psychological adjustments that former soldiers are usually ill equipped to cope with (Berdal, 1996, p. 17).

Military culture and economic reintegration

In the literature on demobilisation, the 'cultural aspect' of reintegration tends to receive most attention in relation to the economic implications of militarised identities. A lack of relevant skills hinders ex-combatants' ability to secure alternative employment in civilian society. "Militaries operate in a hierarchical manner with little regard for the creative and lateral thinking required in many sectors of civilian life Demobilisation programmes with a strong human resource conversion element can facilitate retraining and skill acquisition, and increase the chance of ex-combatants finding employment in the civilian sector" (Motumi & Mackenzie, 1998, p. 186; Williams; 1998).¹²³ Military culture has generally been considered an indirect threat to future conflict. The direct threat is considered to be unemployment – one possible consequence of a militarised culture.

Military cultures and specialist units

It has been suggested that certain categories of ex-combatant pose a particular threat following demobilisation. It is implied that this is the case, to some extent at least, because of the culture which prevailed in their specific environments: "(C)reating special military

and police units in times of war has posed particular problems later, both in terms of reintegration into civilian life and integration within a professional national force" (Berdal 1996, p. 55). There has, for example, been very little success in integrating members of the former South West African police counter-insurgency unit, Koevoet, into the post-independence Namibian police service (Berdal, 1996). In South Africa, a similar argument has been made in relation to the "Third Force"; in which most of "the operational components were products of the 'security and destabilisation' milieu in the Southern African region [of] the last three decades" (Henderson cited in Berdal, 1996).

Intelligence operatives, Berdal (1996) suggests, may present additional dangers by virtue of their specific professional skills and organisational attributes. Concerns have also been raised that "many of the security and intelligence forces of the region have been penetrated by criminal groups in a complex network of relationships" (Ellis, 1998, p. 297). Joe Nhlanhla, South Africa's first Minister for Intelligence, drew attention to these groupings when he cautioned that a possible effect of demobilisation in contexts of instability, was the proliferation of private armies and security agencies (in Berdal, 1996, p. 57). The integration of the military and intelligence services of former enemies has also caused some anxiety about the role of "old guard" elements operating both within and outside of these agencies.¹²⁴

In general, however, issues relating to militarised identities and cultures are hardly addressed in the literature dealing expressly with demobilisation. The exception to this trend exists in considerations of militarised youth.

Youth Combatants and Militarised Identities

Children have been exposed to violence in many different ways in this country, with a number of problematic effects. Stress, trauma, anxiety and depression are obvious sequelae to many of the acute or chronic situations children face; but a further inevitable effect has been that many children or youths have been drawn into an acceptance of a "culture of violence", a way of thinking which accepts violence as a natural part of daily living and a natural part of the solution to conflict and differences (Dowdall cited in Nina, 1999, p. 61).

Much of the literature dealing with militarised youth¹²⁵ emphasises the issue of militarised identities as a significant and potentially dangerous factor contributing to their involvement in further violence ([Marks & Mackenzie, 1995](#); [Schärf, 1997](#); Chachiua, 1999; Kingma, 2000). The importance of considering militarised identities and cultures as an integral component of demobilisation strategies is stressed in relation to young ex-combatants.

As with other combatants, the militarised identities that have developed are thoroughly enmeshed with combatant roles and experiences of violence, which in turn have a profound impact on the social and emotional development of militarised youth (Nina, 1999; Kingma, 2000). Many have been responsible for, and affected by, horrendous acts of violence and brutality. As a result, achieving effective reintegration presents an enormous challenge, and one that to some, appears insurmountable. Of the child soldiers of Sierra Leone and Liberia, for example, one commentator is of the opinion that, "It is impossible to rehabilitate children who committed such atrocities. To me, the only way peace will return to Liberia is

to eliminate all combatants. There is no way they can be rehumanised, let alone live with people whose souls they ravaged in their barbarity" (priest cited in Gbaydee Doe, 1999, p. 58).

Militarisation is a multi-faceted process that involves the mobilisation of resources for war, at political, economic, social, cultural and psychological levels ([Cock, 1989](#)). Ideologically, militarisation legitimises violence as a natural and viable means of problem solving (Dowdall in Nina, 1999; Marks & McKenzie, 1998; [Marks, 1995](#)). And, as a result, in contexts where youth are drawn into militarised activity, "a significant number of children emerge from violent experiences with an inclination to being violent" (Duncan & Rock cited in Nina, 1999, p 62).

Demilitarisation therefore goes beyond processes of demobilisation and a reduction in military spending, and requires action within both the parameters of state and civil society. Arguably one of the most critical objectives is to de-legitimise the utilisation of violence, and the values that underpin it. As such, demilitarisation "has to be about removing the instruments as well as uprooting the ideological basis. The latter means entrenching alternative values and means of conflict resolution" (Chachiua, 1999, p 1).

These concerns are especially pertinent in countries emerging from non-conventional warfare, where the boundaries between civilian and military have usually become blurred, and militarisation has seeped into civil society. The interrelationship between crime and politics that tends to manifest in these circumstances further complicates the situation. An additional factor in the South African context has been the involvement, through conscription into the SADF, of the majority of young white males.

In Mozambique, many youths caught up in the war between FRELIMO and RENAMO were subjected to a particular type of militarism associated with socialist revolutionary zeal, argues Chachiua (1999). These ideological underpinnings reinforced militaristic tendencies and have left a further aspect of militarisation that is "perhaps ... harder to reverse than the mere exposure to violence" (Chachiua, 1999). Espousing Marxist rhetoric in its fight against the South African sponsored insurgency, youths were recruited into the fight against the counter-revolution. Uprooted from their communities, they were reborn as "new men" of the modern nation. As such, their whole social being was reconstituted around their military identity as combatants in defence of the revolution (Chachiua, 1999).

Following the end of the conflict in Mozambique, demilitarisation initiatives failed to address a number of complex characteristics of militarisation, particularly those to do with the militarised identities of demobilised youth. Consequently, many possibilities were passed by, particularly with regard to developing community mechanisms that could strengthen ties between combatants and the communities they return to, and thereby contribute to the transformation of militarised identities. The few successes reported tend to reflect the important role and initiative of rural communities in integrating youth into their structures through traditional ceremonies, and rites of passage. (These ceremonies of healing and reintegration are discussed in more detail in [Chapter Six](#).) Conversely, narrowly conceived of demobilisation programmes have sometimes unintentionally contributed to the continued alienation of combatants (Chachiua, 1999).

In South Africa during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the prime identity of many young

people, primarily men, was a militarised one. In the milieu of state repression, individual acts of violence and collective violence targeted at the instruments of repression and its (perceived) collaborators were regarded in many quarters as both legitimate and necessary. Fuelling resistance and in response to a fast-evolving set of circumstances, the state also targeted youth activists and those associated with them. It is estimated, for example, that of the 80 000 recorded detentions, 48 000 detainees were under the age of 25, and that the vast majority were detained during the 1980s (TRC Report, Vol. 4, Ch. 8, ¶ 55). At least 15,000 children under the age of 18 years were detained under emergency legislation between 1960 and 1990 (Coleman, 1998).

The participation of South Africa's township youth in the low-intensity conflicts of apartheid has been contrasted to their counterparts in, for instance, Mozambique and Angola where there was an open and declared civil war. In these countries children and youths fought as part of the belligerent forces on both sides, whereas in South Africa their participation in conflict was primarily in the anti-apartheid camp, where they acted as "proxy soldiers" in the form of street militants (Nina, 1999, p. 46). A specific distinction in the South African context was that it "did not necessarily involve a defined enemy, but a wide range of repressive forces, and counter-forces" (Nina, 1999, p. 49).

Although many young people, often drawn from the ranks of 'street militants', left South Africa to join MK, there is little evidence (TRC Special Report, 1998 & Brett & McCallin cited in Nina, 1999, p. 54) of their direct engagement in military actions (especially those who left during the early 1990s). Certainly, many were spurred into exile because of their experiences of violence in the townships, and suffered considerable fear during the exile period as well as trauma related to the escape, separation from families, and harsh living conditions (TRC, Vol. 4, Ch. 9, ¶ 76). Literature on South Africa's youth combatants, however, is focussed on the "street-fighting" youth of the townships who were frequently exposed to violent and explosive situations in combination with the systemic abuses of the criminal justice system (Dowdall in Nina, 1999).

In contrast to the Mozambican child soldiers who were kidnapped, press-ganged and forced into becoming soldiers by RENAMO and consequently estranged from their communities (Miguel A Mause, 1999, p. 12), street combatants in South Africa were involved in violent conflict that often took place in their own localities. While the reintegration of former combatants is usually considered in relation to the situational and cultural distances created between the combatant and civil society, young street combatants usually remained closely involved with their communities. Paradoxically, it is these young people who regularly did not physically leave their communities that have become a source of particular concern in the post conflict area. Mainly, such combatants operated in familiar streets and suburbs, which they would again have to face in the new dispensation. (Hostels and their surrounding suburbs became contested territory in many communities, some still constituting flashpoints of tension and friction.)

Marks' analysis of the discourse used by Diepkloof youth in Soweto to justify their involvement in political violence during the 1984-1993 period, provides valuable insight into the elements at play in the "comrade" identity with which these justifications were intertwined ([Marks, 1995a](#)).

In the mid-1980s, as part of a revolutionary strategy to oppose and topple the apartheid

state and its security forces, the ANC made a call to render the country ungovernable. Township youth heeded this call and explained their use of violence as an acceptable response to the violence perpetrated against their communities. This justified both offensive and defensive acts and, at the same time, enabled them to deflect responsibility for their own actions

The responsibility for political violence perpetrated by these youth was seen as lying with the state The unintended consequence of this was that through their discourse, the youth deny themselves as actors consciously acting to change structural equality ([Marks, 1995](#)).

The Diepkloof youth believed that in their situation bloodshed was inevitable, necessary to achieve "real liberation" and that their central position in the liberation struggle required their involvement in acts of political violence. Violence was understood as a means to speed up the realising of liberation and necessary to maintain unity within the liberation movement ([Marks, 1995a](#)).

Such convictions were intertwined with the identity of the "comrade". With varying levels of organisation and discipline the comrades saw themselves as defenders of the moral and physical well being of their "community". In response to the violence that engulfed many communities, "it was almost an immediate reaction ... to move towards sites of perceived danger". This role and identity contrasted starkly with the norms of growing up in which they were expected to "attend school as usual and to carry on their daily affairs" (Straker cited in [Marks, 1995](#)).

Not all young people became involved, and many faced pressure not to do so from family and friends. For those who did, the comrade identity smothered the more conventional roles associated with youthfulness and facilitated the development of "generation/s of non-formally educated children". The structures and boundaries of 'normal' childhood and teenagehood did not apply, as militarised youth identities fostered a "great deal of autonomy" among the comrades, and resulted in a "lack of recognition of any authority but themselves" (Nina, 1999, p. 60).

These youths' discourses and militarised identities were strongly influenced by the ANC and its allies but also by their own experiences and involvement in violent acts through which they generated their own discourse ([Marks, 1995](#)). In this respect, their motivations were of a fundamentally local nature.

The "comrade" identity and the justifications employed for using violence persisted during the 1990-1994 negotiation period and beyond the election of a democratic government. The experiences and realities faced by militarised youth did not vanish with the announcement from 'on high' of the commencement of the negotiation process, or later in 1994 when a new government was democratically elected: "Beyond the possibility of participating in the political process every five years" their reality was embedded in a context of inequality, deprivation, and a lack of education and job creation (Nina, 1999, p. 62). As was later recognised by the TRC in its focus on children and youth affected by the conflicts of the past, this was a fertile breeding ground for further violence,

Those who grew up under conditions of violence will carry traces of their experiences into adulthood. Many have suffered the loss of their loved ones. Many carry physical and psychological scars. The life opportunities of many have been compromised through disruptions to their education. Some have transplanted the skills learnt during the times of political violence into criminal violence, as they strive to endure ongoing poverty. However, perhaps the most disturbing and dangerous aspect of this legacy for the future of the nation is the fact that those who sought to transform the country, and in the process gave up so much, see so little change in their immediate circumstances (TRC, Vol. 4, Ch. 9, ¶ 117).

The ANC's decision to suspend the armed struggle was not well received in all quarters, especially in the context of the increasing number of attacks targeting largely ANC-supporting communities in KwaZulu-Natal, on the Witwatersrand and in the Vaal Triangle. Vulnerable to attack from IFP-supporting hostel residents who were believed to have the backing and support of the security forces, many felt an armed response was both necessary and appropriate. Often "comrades" continued to act on these conditions and their own initiatives and regarded the negotiation process, from which they were excluded, with impatience, scepticism, and anger.

During this period, the moral identity of the comrade as "defender of the community" remained intact and in many instances became stronger. Negotiations had not presented opportunities for youth combatants to seek a return to "normal" living. Rather, the opposite occurred. On the one hand the living of the comrade identity had for many negated alternative possible roles. On the other, experiences such as deprivation, security force harassment, and attacks on their communities, the things which had fed the construction of this identity, continued to be the norm.

The early 1990s in fact saw the rapid development of even more organised defence structures. When, in response to the high levels of violence characterising the negotiations period, national leadership called for these structures to be set up, the youth, and especially those broadly aligned to the ANC, had frequently pre-empted these calls. Any generalisation of these structures is problematic because of the substantial differences from area to area. However, while many SDUs acted diligently in the protection of their communities, the structures have often been associated with ill discipline, disorganisation and a lack of accountability. Their behaviour was held up in contrast to the involvement of the more politically astute youth of the 1980s. Indeed, key youth figures active in the mid-to-late 1980s had by now left these youth organisations, creating a leadership vacuum which was filled with a less disciplined and sometimes criminal youth (Marks & Mackenzie, 1998, p. 225). The image of the "comrade" became increasingly distorted by the growth of the "comtotsi" phenomenon that denoted the fusion of criminal and comrade elements, and the blending of political and criminal acts, which were legitimated under the guise of community protection. This was compounded in some communities by violent confrontations both within and between various SDU structures (Marks & Mackenzie, 1998).

Despite these problems, the self-perceptions of many youths as "defenders of the community" prevailed in the early 1990s and beyond the democratic elections of 1994. This image provided those who assumed it with a deep sense of purpose, status and agency. To

expect these youth to relinquish their prime identity, and all that went with it, without any alternatives for the future or meaningful recognition of their historical role, is both disingenuous and unrealistic.

Commanders are reluctant to give up the roles they have played within their communities. The requirement that they project themselves into a future in which they are not commanders implied the loss of this identity (and all that comes with it) with no clear sense of what might replace it. It seemed to me that this prospective loss also resonated with the multitude of losses that these men have already experienced. What emerged was a sense that the contribution that they had made to the past (and the losses and sacrifices that this had required) was not recognised and that in the quest for a new future there was no opportunity to come to grips with and mourn the losses of the past (Memorandum by the Rev. H. Dandala, in [Marks & McKenzie, 1995](#)).

The broader rationale for the structures through which these identities were constructed and enacted fell away in the post-1994 dispensation, and their continued existence in the immediate post-1994 period and beyond, albeit through loose and informal alliances, was viewed as constituting a threat to peace, development and security. Very few of the young people involved can be considered to be beneficiaries of transition and, for many, collective violence is seen as the only way to achieve "real change", or to receive attention from the state: "It is in fact when violence breaks out in local areas that attention is given, and if possible, programmes of development constructed" ([Marks, 1995](#)).

This section has focused primarily on those militarised youth in the geographical locality of Diepkloof in Soweto, and with broad affiliation to the ANC. Importantly, numerous others of South Africa's young people were militarily involved and active in violent conflict. The broadly defined category "militarised youth" is made up of diverse groupings of players from a range of ethnic, racial and political backgrounds, including, most notably, the PAC and IFP. Furthermore, all white male boys were forced to devote, at the very least, a significant proportion of their youth to defend the apartheid regime. Identities were constructed upon the legitimacy and necessity of their actions, and required numerous untold sacrifices. As one former national service man reflects:

I resent them for stealing my youth and often I ask myself ... What for? Namibia is independent, South Africa is free now. All those guys died for nothing (Charles Hodson, former national service man cited in Tham, *SA City Life*, March 1999).

The "Mental Uniform"

While studies on militarised youth highlight the significance of their war-generated identities and the possible impact of these on continued involvement in violence, much of the general demobilisation literature raises issues of military culture and identities only in brief, and then mostly in relation to the issue of skills limitations. Studies that examine the "making of a soldier", however, suggest that the issue of identity requires further attention. The intensity of the processes involved no doubt has implications for what happens when soldiers eventually make the transition to non-combatant status.

The following discussion focuses on some elements of these processes, mainly in the context of conventional militaries, and to a lesser extent in non-statutory armed formations. Although there are clear overlaps between these broad categories, there are also considerable differences, both of which are only touched on here.

The making of a soldier in conventional militaries

The army doesn't help you to know yourself: it teaches you to subjugate yourself and your own personality to something much bigger, which is why it can't cope with non-conformists. In a way it brainwashes you: you not only wear a uniform, but you are, and you have to be, mentally in uniform yourself (Parker cited in Cock, 1991, p. 94).

The 'construction of the soldier' involves a complex process of socialisation which, bluntly put, is "designed to ... make people capable of killing or dying on command" (Cock, 1991, p. 56). Typically, militaries spend a great deal of time and energy ensuring that their soldiers are mentally, as well as physically, in uniform. Training for the US forces that were deployed in Vietnam, for example, comprised three interlocking components: "The acceptance of psychological control, the equation of masculine identity with military performance, and the equation of the entire military mission with raw aggression" (Eisenhart, 1975, p. 14).

Creating in soldiers submission to authority and aggression towards the enemy is at the core of the construction of this identity (Cock, 1991). Dehumanisation of the soldier himself is central to this process:

Dehumanisation begins with the regulation crew-cut and issuing of the uniform and continues with verbal and physical abuse as the individual's self-image is reshaped. Men resign themselves to daily routinised activity over which they have no control, and accept the overall, unchallengeable authority of the drill instructor and the military (Jochelson, 1987, p 7).

These processes highlight the formidable transformative power resident not only in the combat experience but also in the preparation of individuals for combat: military training.

Masculine identities and the making of soldiers

The construction of a soldier's identity is of an essentially gendered nature. Indeed, "a vital aspect of any process of militarisation [is] the transmutation of dross, civilian stuff into masculine gold – that which is hard, tough, aggressive and able to kill" (Vetten, 1998). Notions of masculinity are thoroughly enmeshed with the process of "making a soldier", in which aggression is fused with masculinity and sexual virility. Often the process succeeds in having trainee soldiers believe that their manhood will be born and validated once 'bloodied' by combat.

The myth of combat dies hard ... there is still the widespread presumption that a man is unproven in his manhood until he has engaged in collective, violent, physical struggle against someone categorised as 'the enemy' – i.e. combat. For men to experience combat is supposed to be the chance to assert their control,

their capacity of domination, conquest, even to gain immortality. (Enloe cited in Jochelson, 1987, p. 5).

Within this process, 'feminine' attributes are despised, and women are regarded, along with the enemy, as a 'contemptible other' – the antithesis to the soldier himself. SADF trainees, for example, were derided as "moffies", "girls" and "women". Those who are not prepared to fight are also labelled as lacking in masculinity. One commentator reported a bystander at an End Conscription Campaign demonstration as saying: "Look, there's the moffie brigade" (Cock, 1991, p. 174). That women are defined as possessing contemptible qualities (i.e. being weak, passive, soft, vulnerable) renders them, by virtue of these qualities, in need of the soldier's protection. In this way, "male violence is normalised and reinforced by the sexual division of labour and unequal gender relations which underpin the protector/protected ideology" (Jochelson, 1987, p. 15).

The fact that women are so often raped in war has been explained by the connections that are made between militarism and masculinity, which conflates aggression, sexuality and violence. This is apparent in relation both to conventional and non-conventional (or guerrilla) forces.¹²⁶ Because military victory is defined as integral to the soldier's maleness and sexuality, to degrade and conquer 'enemy' women demonstrates the soldier's superiority to the enemy. Or, in response to the fundamental contradictions of war – which is not affirming, but chaotic and terrifying – rape may be perpetrated to increase morale or to create a space of power and dominance where the soldier is otherwise powerless and consequently experiencing masculinity insecurity. (See Jochelson, 1987 and Brownmiller, 1975) for a more in-depth analysis of why soldiers might rape.)

Various modes of sexual assault by members of the armed formations were certainly a part of South Africa's violent conflicts. Most reported has been the assault of women in detention (TRC, Vol 4, Ch. 10, ¶ 53-63). Jessie Duarte, Gauteng's first provincial Minister for Safety and Security, told a women's workshop in 1996 that, "I think I can speak fairly comfortably about a number of women who were in fact raped in prison cells while in detention or in the van that was taking them to detention" (Goldblatt & Meintjies, 1997, p. 10). It is generally accepted that the sexual abuse of women has for a variety of reasons been substantially under-reported to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Goldblatt & Meintjies, 1997, p. 10), and just how widespread these violations were, remains unclear.

The discourses that support the making of soldiers are at their most intense within the military, but are rarely, if ever, restricted to this environment. In South Africa, white women played a fundamental role in the construction of militarised identities, and exerted an element of "ideological coercion" aimed at ensuring that boys would embrace their (compulsory) military service (Cock, 1989; 1991). Domestic pressure was compounded by the propaganda offensive that was launched in the post-Soweto-uprising era to glorify the military and its objectives:

In the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the profile of the military. Soldiers are seen in uniform travelling to and from army camps, radio stations are saturated with military request programmes for "the boys on the border", the press is full of articles and photographs glorifying troops, hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren participate in para-military cadet programmes,

and images of militarism are prevalent in all walks of life (Cawthra, 1986, p. 41).

But clearly, as with other ideological constructs, responses to military training were not uniform:

By no means do all men acquiesce or revel in this process: some desert, some remain persistently insubordinate, while others become bored and frustrated by what is felt as a waste of time. Some commit suicide. Combat, that ultimate test of manliness for which soldiers have been prepared, may be experienced as frightening, chaotic and noisy rather than noble and heroic. Killing others becomes the stuff of nightmares to be repeated again and again in sweats and flashbacks. (Vetten, 1998)

A dramatic form of resistance to conscription into the SADF was refusal to report for military service. Young men who did this were forced to leave South Africa or serve a prison sentence. Thousands fled to Europe and beyond. In the SADF, others deserted, walked out en masse, mutinied, and went Absent Without Leave (AWOL), usually in response to ill treatment. In December 1984, "over 90 percent of army detentions were the result of individuals attempting to get out of military duties. The figures for other years tell a similar story" (Cawthra, 1986, p. 45).

Many of those drawn into the SADF, by consent or coercion, presumably did adopt the particular machismo endorsed through training. But as Vetten emphasises (above), the ideology of militarised masculinity does not necessarily succeed in effectively or indefinitely containing the experiences of war or training for war.

Regarding the longer term consequences for those subjected to this type of training, two key interrelated questions arise. Firstly, how do ex-combatants negotiate their militarised identities in 'post-conflict' situations and outside of the military environment that so intensely fed a particular notion of self and manhood? Secondly, what are the future implications of the traumatic experiences of combat and training on the individual, those around him and society in general?

If these concerns are not addressed, argues Vetten (1998), wars will be "carried from battlefields (wherever they might be) into the home" precisely because "militarised masculinities and combat experience do not conveniently disappear with the signing of a peace accord". This fact has been neglected in South Africa, "which may explain why combatants' violence towards their wives, children and other family members remains one of the undocumented and untold experiences of South Africa's war" (Vetten, 1998).

Masculinity, militarism and the liberation fighters

As far as the non-statutory forces are concerned, the gendered construction of militarised identities has received little research attention (Cock, 1991). Cock's study (1991) begins to interrogate some of these issues in relation to MK and the "young lions", but acknowledges that, "links between militarism and masculinity in traditional African society" require further investigation (Cock, 1991, p. 235).

A central distinction between the SADF and MK was the contrasting official positions regarding women in their respective ranks. MK, following in the footsteps of many revolutionary movements, provided a space for women to perform military roles, and to receive the same training as their male counterparts. Although this was reinforced by the political education of cadres that put the emancipation of women firmly on the agenda, "most of the guys didn't take it very seriously" (in Cock, 1991, p. 168). Indeed, despite MK's officially progressive stance towards women, the importance, for male cadres, of notions of manliness has been perpetuated. The exclusion of women from combat roles is likely related to these notions, with combat remaining an important ingredient of the soldier's prestige (Cock, 1991, p. 211).

The situation for women within guerrilla formations is not uniform. While non-conventional formations are typically more progressive in their attitude to women, and the presence of women in the ranks has been understood to deter the sexual humiliation or mistreatment of other women during war (Arnett in Brownmiller, 1975, p. 91),¹²⁷ the issue of intra-organisational sexual violence is raised. El Salvador's liberation army, the FMLN provided an example of this, where female cadres were reportedly raped by their colleagues:

Although rape within the ranks of the FMLN required the death penalty, which in some ways was revolutionary, it was a catch-22. If your commander rapes you, it is this man who is this amazing revolutionary and who is your hero, and you wonder "How can you tell somebody if you know he will be given the death penalty?" Therefore women again found themselves caught in this cycle of guilt and isolation. There were also mothers who sent their little girls, combatants of 13, and 14 and 15, into the ranks of the FMLN, knowing they could be raped, but thinking that a rape by an FMLN member certainly is better than a rape by the military. In some ways women were almost caught between these two opposing forces ... (El Salvador speaker cited in [Dewhirst, 1998](#)).

MK cadres found guilty of raping Angolan women were (according to the ANC) beaten "before being sentenced to death by the (military) tribunal" (TRC, Vol. 2, Ch. 4, ¶ 162). Despite this harsh official line, rape and other forms of sexual abuse of women cadres within MK ranks certainly occurred and, according to some, was rife:

We faced a lot of problems, traumatic problems, as you know, women ... are abused ... [there was] rife harassment, sexual abuse, rife emotional abuse of women. Women were always sort of run over by men. Trying to find identity, that was the most traumatic experience I had in my life. Because you had to battle with the majority, which were men and in power. Women had no say, although we were a liberation movement. But women still had no say. In any given structure there was no women's voice (in Skinner, 1998, p. 81).¹²⁸

The TRC also received statements from women who alleged they had been raped in the course of violent clashes between the IFP and ANC/UDF. The nature and prevalence of these violations and the extent to which they were perpetrated by combatants is not clear. Indeed, the subject is one around which there is widespread silence (TRC, Vol. 4, Ch. 10, ¶ 44-51).¹²⁹

Masculinity and militarised youth

For South Africa's militarised youth, violence and masculinity have been closely intertwined (Cambell, 1992; Cock, 1991; Nina, 1999). Many of these young men were "socialised into violence through a particularly militarist conception of masculinity" (Cock, 1991, p. 224). The Amabuthu groups, for example, "brought with them a lexicon and set of symbols that glorified the armed struggle and Umkhonto we Sizwe. The toyi-toyi, the commonly worn black beret, the petrol bomb and wooden AK47s, were all manifestations of a militaristic subculture that became part of township life and political meeting. To be an Amabuthu amongst township youth involved a raw masculine pride." (Swilling in Cock, 1991, p. 224).

Much of the violence involving youth during the pre-1990 era occurred in the KwaZulu homeland and province of Natal. Interviews conducted there in the early 1990s found that, "violence was characterised as the prototypical male activity both in terms of male personality traits and physical prowess. Several respondents referred to the uncontrollable tempers of men and portrayed violence as deeply etched into the male psyche" (Campbell, 1992, 624).¹³⁰ For young men who did not have the thorough political education provided to their ANC counterparts in exile, it is possible that the linking of manhood and violence was even more intense.

Concerning the perpetration of sexual violence by youth formations, there is some evidence from the early 1990s that members of more "out-of-control" SDUs committed rapes in their communities. "SDUs easily degenerated into bands of armed young men using their guns to control territory, women and resources" (TRC, Vol. 3, Ch. 6, ¶ 713). Several SDU members from Katorus area submitted applications for amnesty to the TRC that included details of rape. Some withdrew their applications before the hearings, presumably under advisement that they could not secure amnesty for this crime.¹³¹ Whether rape was also perpetrated by members of the more disciplined SDUs, for whom the definition of 'combatant' may be more applicable, has not been revealed. Several reports of youths raping members from the political opposition suggest that the possibility should not be dismissed. Vogelmann and Eagle (1991) writing on the "Natal War", for example tell how, "a comrade justified a rape by his side because it was done in revenge for a rape committed by the other side" (Cited in [Simpson, 1992](#)). In another incident, a woman, also from KwaZulu-Natal, testified at the TRC that she was gang raped by youths from an opposing political organisation (TRC, Vol. 4, Ch. 10, ¶ 64).

Such abuses on the part of some SDUs continued beyond 1994. A former SDU member from Sebokeng stated to Zwane, his own part in gang rapes since this time, and explained it as a result of a set of relations that emerged precisely because of the cessation of the political conflict,

I was a comrade before joining this organisation. I joined it because we were no longer given political tasks. Most of the tasks were given to senior people. I felt that we have been used by these senior comrades because I do not understand why they dumped us like this. Myself and six other guys decided to form our own organisation that will keep these senior comrades busy all the time. That is why we formed South African Rapist Association. We rape women who need to be disciplined (those women who behave like snobs), they just do

not want to talk to most people, they think they know better than most of us and when we struggle, they simply do not want to join us (Interview by Zwane, cited in [Vetten, 1998](#); Goldblatt & Meintjies, 1997).

His words point to the perpetration of rape as a means of gaining power and dominance in the face of impotence. Women in his view, are worthy of punishment for their role in undermining him. The justification for rape is also firmly rooted in perceptions and attitudes that developed during the conflict period. Combined with a fundamental misogyny, he articulates the act as a way of getting back at former seniors who are perceived as responsible for effectively deserting the SDUs. In this respect his justification bears a close resemblance to the motives behind perpetrations reported by some American soldiers in Vietnam:

In actual combat, men could not live up to the myth of the super-aggressive, all powerful soldier without being picked off by a Vietcong sniper. The enemy refused to engage and adopted passive, 'run and hide' tactics: booby-traps, snipers and ambushes meant aggressive behaviour did not ensure victory or survival. So passivity, totally antithetical to their training, was forced on American soldiers. Soldiers must also be subservient ... and quietly accept humiliation from their officers. Enloe suggests that US soldiers in Vietnam vented their anger against their own commanders and Asian men by degrading Asian women (Jochelson, 1987, p. 12).

Zwane's study links rape in South Africa's townships to the decline of political organisations, in combination with unemployment and other factors (in Goldblatt & Meintjies, 1997). Whether the Sebokeng SDU structure became involved in rape only after they were "dumped" by senior structures is unclear. However, violence against women, both in and out of the home, is frequently explained as an expression of impotence and rage in response to a state of an embattled manhood. "As men lose their power base in the family and in the broader society, they struggle to regain this lost esteem through the subjugation of women" (Segal & Labe, 1990, p 257).

Zwane's analysis of the South African Rapists' Association clearly falls within these parameters. The transitional status of recently demobilised combatants could therefore be considered a microcosm of feelings of emasculation that apparently pervade South African society. The temporal point at which the soldier is no longer a soldier, but a former soldier, is invariably a turning point, and is often characterised by stress and loss which might well include a sense of emasculation. But such a distinction between soldier and ex-combatant may be misleading if it suggests that these violent expressions can manifest only for ex-combatants. People within security forces may for similar reasons (stress, danger, lack of control over their environment) and arguably more-so in periods of national and institutional transition, release their stresses, violently, in their homes.

Chapter Six: War Trauma as Potential for Violence

The experience of trauma in the aftermath of violence is something many South Africans are facing in the wake of the country's troubled past. This trauma is influenced by a myriad of dynamics and factors that have fed South African experiences and contributed to a blurring of the traditional polarities of war. Large sections of the civilian population have

been affected by the militarisation of society and the consequences of state-sanctioned violence, repression and discrimination.

Increasing evidence (arising from the work of the TRC and NGOs working with victims and survivors of violence) suggests that many of South Africa's former combatants continue to suffer as a result of their militarised histories and involvement in violent conflict. The sources of trauma may differ substantially and are wide-ranging. Amongst these are the brutalisation of SADF conscripts in training; the conditions under which MK members lived in exile; the accompanying culture of infiltration-paranoia; government security-force harassment of liberation fighters' families; the torture or "turning processes" to which enemies of the state, particularly local militarised youth, were subjected; and the frequent witnessing of, or participation in, violent acts. Certainly, the communities to which combatants return are also often traumatised.

Various dimensions of trauma became a focus of attention following the Vietnam War when the term "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" was coined to explain the paradoxical symptoms presenting in numerous veterans. These include the intrusion of distressing recollections (in nightmares, hallucinations and flashbacks), and a psychological numbing - an avoidance of anything associated with or resembling the traumatic event (Sandler, 1989; Hajiyanis & Vienings, 1999). Sufferers also experience hyper-arousal or hyper-vigilance, characterised by, for example, sleep disturbance, exaggerated startle responses, fear, concentration difficulties and increased aggressiveness. These symptoms are frequently accompanied by other disorders, most notably anxiety, depression and substance dependence (Hajiyanis & Vienings, 1999). Substance abuse and depression, as well as higher rates of divorce, suicide, unemployment, and manifestations of violence are all problems that have plagued Vietnam's war veterans in the United States (Sandler, 1989).

War-related trauma is a factor in potential future violence, which may be directed at self and/or others, and an issue which overlaps with that of war-generated identities discussed above.

Importantly, it is not only direct action, but also military training (i.e. preparation for war) that generates trauma in combatants. In some situations, trauma may arise as a result of unrealised expectations, or experiences that contradict these expectations. For example, Eisenhart's analysis (1975) of the potential for future violence amongst Vietnam veterans outlines what he terms an "impacted sexuality". An "impacted sexuality", he argues, is the result of a disjuncture between actual war experiences and the construction of the soldier's identity. He suggests that war experiences do not in fact allow the male identity and sexuality (predicated upon dominance and aggression) that are constructed and brutally instilled during training, to be expressed. As a result, these soldiers have no viable means of expressing their masculinity. This, and the frustration it creates affects a sexuality linked to violence and aggression (Eisenhart, 1975, pp 21-22).

One young veteran I have worked with became completely impotent three years after discharge At this time he purchased a weapon, a pistol, and began brandishing and discharging it. His sexuality was blocked by a frustrated idealized male role which could not tolerate intimacy. The means to affirm manhood was through face to face combat, aggressive behaviour and the seeking of dominance (Eisenhart, 1975, p. 22).

These feelings of emasculation, although not necessarily acted out, are frequently compounded by paranoia:

This is a constant fear of being harmed by someone and a constant elimination of real or fantasized adversaries in order to maintain a feeling of adequacy and security (Eisenhart, 1975, p. 22).

Primarily, it is the "habit of violence" inculcated through military training, in which violence is legitimated as an effective response to conflict, that Eisenhart links to the veterans' potential for violence. Moreover, this potential lies in "the feeling of being 'fucked over' by being asked to fight in such an ambiguous situation as Vietnam and by the nature of the treatment received upon return at the hands of the society that sent them to war" (Lifton in Eisenhart, 1975, p. 21). Conditions are further exacerbated by their reaction to the inability of society, peers and family to understand, or their indifference towards the ex-combatant's experience: "It is a rage at being rebuffed in the attempt to explain your experiences, or at sharing your world experiences and then being cruelly rebuked" (Eisenhart, 1975, p. 21).

The deployment of South African conscripts, particularly in Namibia, has been paralleled by some to that of American soldiers in Vietnam, in relation to the ambiguity of the war.

The stories of South African men who fought in South West Africa and in Angola are much like the tales of America's Vietnam generation. They found themselves far from home, fighting for an uncertain cause, being lied to by their officers, fighting battles that, in the official version, did not happen (Eprile, 1992, p. 59).

Like the American GI, the South African conscripts are fighting in a war with no clear or immediate objectives, such as the gaining of terrain. There is (mostly) no clearly defined or identifiable enemy; they are part of an unwanted foreign army of occupation which is technologically superior to the enemy's; drafted often against their will; often in their teens; and may return to situations or places where their participation in the Namibian conflict may be seen as inhumane, immoral and unjustified (Davey, 1988 cited in Cock, 1991, p. 65).

It is one thing returning from a war for which there is widespread support; it is quite another if the war has been shrouded in secrecy, misinformation, or is not broadly sanctioned. As a former South African conscript explained, "I was in Angola when on television (they claimed) that we had no intention of going into Angola. It was incredible: I had friends who'd been killed there, and (they were) saying we'd never been there in the first place" (Eprile, 1992, p. 60).

In situations such as Vietnam, returning soldiers are customarily blamed for their participation in a 'dirty war'. But the oft-cited expressions of alienation and distance from civilians by the fighters of wars which society and history has defined as 'just' make it clear that feelings of being "fucked over" are not exclusive to the soldiers of 'unjust' battles. Perhaps it is a question of the intensity of feeling or rage, or the play of other factors in the reintegration environment.

Although the white South African public was (unlike in Vietnam) relatively enthusiastic in its support of government policy, it was fundamentally ignorant of what this translated into. Indeed, a combination of government propaganda and censorship ensured that most details of the war remained hidden from the public. So while the fight against the "godless Marxist onslaught" was for many politically and morally correct, the alienation felt by soldiers returning from combat was immense.

For the predominantly black South Africans who left the country to fight apartheid, socio-economic conditions have played a significant role in dashing their expectations since their return. Many also battle with the apparent indifference of community members towards issues that motivated them to fight in the first place. An ex-MK soldier explains,

You come back from combat and you realise that life has gone on. We have our new democracy yet not that much has changed. But you realise that you have changed, that you will never have your old life back. I can never be what I was You think to yourself, 'What did we do? What were we fighting for? "We live in an era of forgetfulness . . . I see my nieces and nephews dying their hair red or blond, and I get so angry. I am weird to them. I am weird to many people There are many people like me who were in this war and who cannot go on with their lives. They feel forgotten Many of us live with a frustration that hasn't boiled over yet. But the despondency is widespread. People who have come back from exile find they struggle to survive economically and are stuck in a negative social environment, with no hope or dreams anymore. It is difficult to explain what this does to people (Former MK cadre, Yazir Henry cited in Tham, *SA City Life*, pp. 7-8).

An increased use of violence by veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Post-Traumatic Stress Reactions has been associated with the psychological numbing and detachment from others that are typical of the avoidance symptoms. This dissociation happens when the sufferer is faced with a situation that he or she associates with the traumatic experience(s) in some way. The reduction in empathy that goes with the dissociation from others means that sufferers can more easily harm others when in this state. A policeman who was forced to retire from the South African Police when he was diagnosed with PTSD, refers to the "monster" inside him which he fears could hurt his family,

My wife told the children that although their father looks healthy from the outside, he is in fact a very sick man. When I feel this monster building up inside me, I have to warn them to get away. I'm still scared I'm going to hurt them (in [Vetten, 1998](#)).

Other veterans have described how their outbursts of violent behaviour have taken them as much by surprise as it has their victims (Solomon, 1993, p. 90). Psychological numbing is not something which only emerges after the war, but also manifests during the war itself, effectively 'protecting' the soldier from facing the horrors of combat and the threat of death (Solomon, 1993, p. 77). "Soldiers often utilize an automated, automatic, detached response set. It is during those moments, literally minutes of combat, that the soldier will tell you that there was sound going on all around him, but it seemed distant, the event took place as if on a video screen. It is this very ability to dissociate (and utilize a previously internalised

set of cognitive and behavioural responses, drilled in to them) which can keep soldiers alive" (Perry *et al.* 1995, p. 7). This experience has been described as "a trained inability to feel" (Egendorf *et al.* in Solomon, 1993, p. 77). Even in these circumstances though, psychological numbing may become a dysfunctional reaction, and hinder the soldier's performance (Solomon, 1993). The effects of dissociation in response to trauma resonate with the feelings typically experienced by former combatants (discussed in [Chapter 2](#)) in that it usually entails a sense of estrangement from others, as well as a lack of purpose. As an Israeli veteran of the Lebanon war explains,

I don't care about anything, I don't feel anything about anything. As if the feeling I had dried up or evaporated. Now I simply exist until I die (in Solomon, 1993, p. 82).

Violence may also be used to serve a particular purpose. The confession of another former Israeli soldier illustrates the manipulative use of violence. At the same time, his story suggests both feelings of emasculation and the conflation of aggression with sexuality:

If I were talking with you and you didn't answer the way I wanted you to, I could grab you and break your arm. I knew I was strong and took advantage of it ... I exploited my strength in order to shut people up. For example, right after the war, I slept with my wife's sister in order to prove to myself that I could perform She was the easiest prey, and she was nearby and I had a lot of influence on her Afterward I threatened her. I slapped her, sent her flying onto the bed, and warned her that worse would happen if she ever told. I flex my muscles a lot (Israeli former soldier in Solomon, 1993, p. 90).

Available literature that focuses on the stresses experienced in policing institutions points to another source of potential violence among those who have repeatedly encountered dangerous or traumatic situations. The term "action junkies" was coined to refer to police officers who are drawn, and even addicted, to high-risk situations, in which the "body is at a heightened state along with the pride and feelings of power, control and dominance" (Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 80). While there are extensive similarities between policing and military experiences (especially in contexts of civil conflict) Williams (1987) argues that it is the often unrelenting trauma experienced by "cops" that differentiates them from war veterans: "for cops, the 'war' never ends – they are out there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week ..." (Williams (1987) cited in Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 181).

Action "addicts" usually have a history of multiple experiences of traumatic events. Paton & Violanti (1996) draw a link between risk addiction and other "excitatory" experiences, which include the seeking of physical confrontation (violence) and the "compulsive need for the presence of readied weapons" (in Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 80). Adding to this is the learned tendency for officers to approach all situations with suspicion, defensiveness and hyper-vigilance, and not only those situations that pose dangers. People who have been severely traumatised therefore "have difficulty in making calm and rational decisions and tend to rely on instant action rather than thought" (Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 81, after Gilmartin, 1986).

Psychological problems may emerge only months or years after the initiating trauma, and may also intensify with time (Sandler, 1989; Shepard, 1999). However, not everyone has

similar psychological responses to traumatic events, "While rates of PTSD are uniformly high after certain stressors such as rape, they are much more variable after combat, and comparatively low in workers in the emergency services" (Shepard, 1999, p. 5). International studies drawn from a cross-cultural spectrum have pointed out that child activists display fewer symptoms of PTSD than non-activists in the wake of similar traumatic experiences. Concerning torture, this has been attributed to their greater psychological preparedness for the experience relative to non-activists (TRC, Vol. 5, Ch. 4, ¶ 10-46).

In other traumatic situations, "action is more rewarding than inaction, particularly when action is associated with a 'cause'. Under these circumstances participation, even in horrendous events, can reduce children's feelings of helplessness and give them a sense of power and purpose" (Apteker and Stocklin, 1995, p. 8).¹³² However, while the events may be experienced as less traumatic, the loss of this sense of power and purpose and the identities that often accompany it, have their own far-reaching implications.

Increasingly, it is also clear that socio-cultural factors influence the manifestations of trauma. This can be seen in the differences displayed between veterans of different wars, the impact of the nature of the conflict, society's perception of the conflict, as well as its reception of soldiers.¹³³ Despite definite trends, there is no blueprint accounting for exactly who is and who isn't vulnerable to PTSD. Rather, vulnerability has been described as "a complicated process of interaction between the degree of trauma and numerous other variables – family and genetic background, 'homecoming experience' and social support" (Shepard, 1999 reviewing O'Brien, 1999).

The usefulness or applicability of PTSD for understanding trauma in non-Western contexts has been challenged. For instance, Straker's research (1988) with child victims of violence in South African townships, defined PTSD as a misnomer in that these children's exposure to trauma was not exclusively the result of past experiences, but rather continuous in nature. Furthermore, the very notion of a "talking cure" was regarded as "foreign" to most black youths (Straker, 1988).

Research findings based on work with child ex-combatants in Angola and Mozambique make a similar point: "PTSD ... was conceived as an instrument to deal with psychological distress in people who went from a situation of relative 'normality' into a traumatic experience (the war), and then returned to 'normality' – hence the prefix 'post'. What happens in Mozambique and Angola, however, and in other conflict zones - especially in Africa - is the vast majority of children we are dealing with today were born during the war ... [and] in the aftermath of the war [these children] in Angola are still living under violent and potentially traumatic circumstances" (Honwana, 1999, p. 32).

Another key criticism of PTSD analysis is the applicability of a treatment that is located at the level of the individual. Such a treatment ignores the role of families, communities and socio-cultural networks that draw heavily on spirit ancestors, which are so integral to psycho-social relations in many cultures (Honwana, 1999; McKay, 1997). Furthermore, the Cartesian dichotomy of the body and mind is wholly foreign to many cultures where, "individuals are seen as a whole body/mind composite and as part and parcel of a collective body (their wrongdoings can affect their families as well)" (Honwana, 1999, p. 33).

Several researchers of demobilisation in Mozambique highlight the invaluable psychological and social impact of traditional healing methods for both ex-combatants and the communities into which they are integrating (Mausse, 1999; Taju, 1998; Chachiua, 1999, Honwana, 1999). The healing process, performed by the receiving community is imperative for the collective as well as the individual ex-combatant, because it is understood to protect the community from pollution. In contrast to Western methods of treatment, healing is achieved through non-verbal symbolic procedures and not through verbal exteriorisation of the experience (Honwana, 1999). In Mozambique, and most often in rural localities, traditional rituals of welcoming and cleansing have arguably played the most important role in connecting both severely brutalised former child soldiers and their older former colleagues with civil society.

Typically though, in developing countries attempting to recover from war situations, psycho-social care for ex-combatants and others is not afforded high priority: "Where the demands of survival are so high and take up most of the attention of any poor person, addressing psycho-social issues may seem something of a luxury However, for the many who will be able to push the experience and the damage to the back of their minds, there will be a minority for whom the effort will be overwhelming and who will need assistance" (NGO Networking Services, 1996, p. 82). In its study of reintegration in the Horn of Africa, the NGO Networking Service identified psycho-social care as one of the most neglected and pressing issues in that region.

The lack of systems of support and care is a problem in numerous Southern African countries as well (Cock, 1993; Mashike, 1999; Motumi & McKenzie, 1998). Hamber's evaluation (1998) of psychological-support services offered to victims through South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission examines the issues further (Hamber, 1998). Focusing on the symptoms of stress, the research explores the extent to which current socio-economic problems complicate the identification and treatment of conflict-related traumatic stress:

On the whole, most individuals have presented with a mixture of issues related to social, psychological and medical problems. Uncomplicated, post-traumatic stress has not been a common feature mainly because, in most cases, individual traumas (eg. Being tortured, abuses by the police etc) have been overshadowed by present psychological and social problems Dire social circumstances have made it difficult for individuals to deal with or prioritise past psychological traumas. At times, so-called present difficulties (i.e. occupational problems, substance abuse, relationship breakdowns, etc) are symptoms of long-term traumatisation which has been compounded by impoverished living conditions. However, at other times, the impoverished living conditions (eg, over-crowding, hunger, being forced to work away from home, etc) have heightened the primary trauma and have also in themselves caused a range of new psychological difficulties and problems (Hamber, 1998, p. 13).

Additionally, for militarised people, the instilled notion of hardiness and invulnerability, so integral to the construction of militarised identities, may have severe consequences for their attempts to deal with trauma. While machismos which forbid the acknowledgement of emotional vulnerability are more often than not dominant in societies generally, the problem is intensified in militarised organisations.

Although available research has focused on the conventional militarised structures of defence and policing (i.e. Kopel & Friedman, 1997, p. 313; Paton *et al.* 1999), there is an increasing body of research that examines this challenge in relation to a wide range of other militarised groups (i.e. Cock, 1993 on MK; McKay, UMAC on militarised youth). Research on youth combatants in KwaZulu-Natal, for example, has found that a range of hardships inherent to their marginalisation, in combination with experiences of violence, have fed an "attitude of stoic survival, in which it is not permissible to talk about fear and vulnerability and not coping" (McKay, 1997, p. 300 after Straker and Moosa, 1988). Similarly, dealing with issues of emotion is hindered by their self-perception as "strong and invulnerable youth leaders, at the forefront of community struggles" (McKay, 1997, pp. 300-301).

Problems arising from trauma work in the policing field are informative, and underscore the importance of addressing the impact of socialisation into formal and informal policing sub-cultures. "Police professionals often work within clearly defined and psychologically influential subcultures defined by a sense of strong cohesion, a code of silence and secrecy, and dependence upon one another for survival" (Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 82). These sub-cultures may alleviate the stress of individuals in the service, but their *modus operandi* only serves to intensify trauma-related problems when they leave the service. Indeed, separation from the group often feels "as if someone had removed an integral part of their personality" (Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 83), and yet there is nothing to replace it. One American police officer committed suicide as soon as he retired, reportedly because he was, "a 100 percent pure police-man and nothing else" (cited in Danieli, 1999).

In South Africa rates of suicide among serving SAPS members are exceedingly high (Kopel & Friedman, 1997, p. 315), indicating that traumatic stress does not only materialise upon the termination of the job. Trauma and stress impact negatively on the inter-personal relations of many serving officers, as the demands and culture of policing have led to an exaggerated detachment from other roles: "When off duty ... they have difficulty turning their emotions back on As a result, the personal relationships of police officers are not personal at all; they are more like a transaction on the street" (Paton *et al.* 1999, p. 91). The result is a deep sense of isolation and the absence of close ties, which can increase the former combatants' vulnerability to traumatic stress disorders (Ottenberg, 1987; Young & Erickson, 1988 in Paton *et al.* 1999).

In South Africa, the forced recruitment methods of the SADF by way of a two-year conscription of all white males followed by periodic "camps" spread over twelve-years, meant that many white soldiers were engaged in cycles of mobilisation and demobilisation. They were required to drop, and then pick up their civilian lives on a regular basis. The term "Citizen Force", which described those compelled to render service suggests the problem. Despite the growing international awareness of traumatic stress and its particular focus on soldiers and veterans, the 'schizophrenic' nature of these soldiers' lives received no attention from the military structures. Soldiers were not provided with assistance (psychological or otherwise) in reintegrating into civilian life. As one former national serviceman described in his testimony before the TRC:

We went to see the local psychiatrist who was resident in Oshakati and the major in charge of the South African Medical Services up there, and we were basically told to grow up and carry on; there was nothing wrong with us There was no debriefing. There was no "what happened to you?" There was no "this is what you can expect when you go home.

This is how you should try and integrate yourself back into society." (Sean Callaghan, quoted in TRC Report, Vol. 5, Ch. 4, ¶ 53).

And as another former conscript put his experience,

I can basically blame the army for seeing to it that I had a very unhappy marriage Imagine that for four years in a row, every December and January you go and make war . . . and then you come back and you have to stroke the cat lightly and you have to be, like, the kind man. Then in August you get your call-up papers and you have to prepare for war again (Ryk Hattingh, in *Details*, Sept, 1992, p. 60).

Colonel Eugene De Kock, perhaps one of South Africa's best known former combatants, left the notorious police counter-insurgency unit, Koevoet, in the early 1980s suffering from what he now believes was post-traumatic stress. Indeed, this was "a condition which went unrecognised by his superiors". According to De Kock, "there was no such thing as counselling . . . they wanted kill rates." De Kock claims he was involved in 350 contacts with the enemy during the four years he spent in Koevoet (in Ellis, 1998, p. 268).

War trauma has far-reaching consequences. It affects the entire world of individuals and their relationships with their families and society at large (Hajiyiannis and Vienings, 1999). Furthermore, reintegration is hindered in the presence of traumatic stress. If employment is found, it is frequently lost,¹³⁴ and the stress can result in a lack of initiative, and an inability to concentrate on or even care about the future. It may manifest in "episodes of severe rage and violent impulses towards what may be indiscriminate targets" (Sandler, 1989, p. 81).

Violence in the Domestic Sphere

Available research suggests that that violence perpetrated by former soldiers has most often been located in the domestic arena. Although there has been little investigation into the link between personal militarisation and the perpetration of domestic violence, studies from the United States have shown that the military and prison populations are 'high-risk' wife-abusers (Segel and Labe, 1990, p. 254).

Psychologists working with Vietnam veterans estimated that approximately 50% of their clients batter their wives (Williams, 1987; Matsakis, 1988 in Danieli, 1999). Although Israeli veterans of the Lebanon war were less prone than Vietnam veterans to use physical violence, in the isolated instances where it did occur, wives and children were most often the victims (Solomon, 1993, p. 89).

Post-traumatic stress seems to increase the likelihood of domestic violence. In addition, research into demobilisation in Southern Africa suggests that the stresses of the reintegration experience might well see violence materialising in the home: "Domestic violence within the household, as a result of stress related to reintegration and adjustment problems, might (or is likely to) be a very common and important phenomenon in most of the countries concerned" (Kingma¹³⁵).

Indeed, family problems are often reported from ex-combatant populations (see, for

example Preston on Namibia, 1997, p. 469), and domestic abuse is sometimes specifically noted. In the case of Uganda, it has been suggested that "the most negative impact of veterans, however, was on the conjugal relationship of veterans. In each of the districts visited, family instability, in the form of separation of spouses and departure of wives, was reported to be high. In cases where wives had stayed, they were reported to be in a critical state of dependency as well as physical and mental abuse". (Muzaale, 1995, p. 10)

In South Africa, no studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of a combatant history on the family lives of ex-combatants. Instead, there are isolated references to family violence. The TRC's findings on the Bontehuwal Military Wing (BMW) provide one example.

The consequences of participating in the violent activities of the BMW – prolonged detention, brutal torture and imprisonment with common criminals – will be felt by the individual concerned, their families and friends and the community of Bontehuwal for decades. Those BMW members who came to the Commission all displayed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. They reported similar symptoms in comrades who chose not to approach the Commission. Most had to discontinue their education and many had not been able to resume it. Because of this, they are unemployed or have low-skill, low-wage jobs. Some have turned to drugs and alcohol to obliterate their painful memories. Other have transferred their 'skills' of violence and armed conflict to gangsterism. Violence against family members is not uncommon, and many find long-term trusting relationship impossible to sustain (TRC Report Vol. 4, Ch. 9 Appendix, ¶ 11).

Conclusion

South Africa has a vast and heterogenous ex-combatant population. They derive from a multitude of armed structures that were drawn upon or mobilized to fight in South Africa's conflict. Since the transition to formal democracy, many of these ex-fighters' situations are unknown. Indeed, these are probably as varied as their histories.

South African studies that explicitly explore 'ex-combatant' issues tend to be focused on the formal process of armed force integration and the related process of demobilising former non-statutory force members who did not qualify for integration in the SANDF, or did not wish to continue with a life in the military. Understandings of these processes are crucial both for insight into the context affecting many ex-fighters in their transition from 'combatant' to 'ex-combatant', as well as for informing the development of appropriate strategies to support them in making the transition. But, not least because of the nature of these formal processes that run for relatively short periods of time, are limited in their reach, and tend to be narrowly focused on 'hard' issues, insights into what has happened to the fighters of South Africa's recent past, are sketchy and uneven.

Similarly, while fears are fuelled about ex-combatants' danger potential in the region, and the "MK factor" has been detected "on the flimsiest of evidence" (Laurence, 1998) when cash heists take place, investigations into the actual involvement of ex-combatants in violence and the question of whether they are more prone than others to violence, have not been conducted. This review is a starting point for looking at these issues and as such it

raises a number of questions. It outlines some of the key factors informing the 'violence potential' that have been identified within literature drawn from a range of sources. It also considers manifestations when this potential has materialised. In doing so, the necessity to genuinely engage with the numerous and complex stresses and challenges faced by ex-combatants as they attempt to move into a new 'civilian' life, usually in hostile environments, is highlighted. Certainly, these differ amongst differently situated ex-combatants and further research with particular constituencies of the broad 'ex-combatant' population is required. Nevertheless, a number of apparently cross-cutting issues are revealed. These include:

- The ongoing need to address the root issues that initially fuelled the past conflict, such as the inability to meet basic needs and political and economic inequality. Many people continue to face social, material and physical insecurity.
- Conflicts generate alternative social and economic systems: new identities, ways of acting, relating and securing income. These 'war-orders' do not disappear with the cessation of the conflict. Processes intended to demilitarise society, such as disarmament and demobilisation, may have far-reaching implications for different groupings affected by, and with interests in, the social and economic order of the conflict.
- 'Combatants' are socialised into 'soldier' status, and this remains the prime identity for many. 'Ex-combatant' identities are situated both in conflict and transition. How ex-combatants negotiate various war-generated identities when they depart from militarized structures is a much neglected area. The expectation, it frequently seems, is that ex-combatants will simply leave war-generated identities behind. Unsurprisingly, this does not easily happen, especially when there are few opportunities through which alternative identities can be built.
- War-generated trauma also continues to have a fundamental impact on the lives of many ex-combatants with consequences for those around them and society at large.
- The psychosocial challenges facing ex-combatants in their transition require attention. All too often these are sidelined from reintegration support initiatives. The learnings drawn from the few that have engaged with these issues are valuable, and require further development. Questions of identity and trauma, as well as the interaction of these with transitional environments and the individual stress of transition, are key potential sources of conflict and violence.

This review has focused on ex-combatants who are not currently situated in the South African state structures of policing and defence. This is because these ex-combatants are commonly regarded as a particularly vulnerable constituency. They are required to find alternative means of income generation and insert themselves into the structures and systems of civil society, leaving their militarized pasts behind. For these reasons they are considered to represent a threat to peace and security in 'post-conflict' societies. However, many of the issues raised here are more broadly experienced by less marginalised ex-combatants, many of whom are employed by the South African Police Service and the South African National Defence Force. Moreover, the impact of militarization and violent conflict resides on in South African society as a whole.

Notes:

¹ "The term 'total onslaught' actually contains two sub-terms: 'total war' and 'revolutionary war' and this is actually in my opinion, the essence of the conflict of the past" said General Viljoen, Armed Forces Hearings, 8 October 1997.

<http://www.truth.org.za/special/forces/sadf.htm>

² Davies (1989) refers to the war in Mozambique as one "waged by South African Defence Force through surrogate forces". Presented as such South Africa is the initiator rather than entering the war through support of other forces. He refers to the parallel use of surrogate forces within SA in the form of vigilante squads, "In both cases the ultimate controlling role of the apartheid state is concealed." (Davies, 1989, p. 103).

³ Non-aggression pacts were made with Swaziland (1982) and Mozambique (1989) and there was an agreement to withdraw all foreign troops in Angola (1989).

⁴ See IFP Submission to the TRC. (This is not currently available on the TRC's website)

⁵ ANC Submission to the TRC, August 1996; <http://www.truth.org.za/submit/anctruth.htm>

⁶ De Klerk particularly, distanced himself from covert operations, probably not wishing to know all, Ellis supposes, and in so doing missed numerous opportunities to "assert control over the 'murkier recesses' of the security forces" (Ellis, 1998, p. 282).

⁷ This was portrayed by many commentators and the 'mainstream' media as "black-on-black" violence, an epithet that was firmly rejected by the ANC.

⁸ Gauteng is the current name for the area previously known as the PWV (Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging) which was the industrial heartland of the Transvaal Province. The Witwatersrand area was also known as 'the Reef'. The East Rand and Vaal Triangle both fall with this area and are situated in what is now Gauteng. (The previous Transvaal covered parts of the current provinces of the North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.)

⁹ For in-depth analyses of the various dynamics that fuelled the violence in the East Rand see, for example, Steinberg, 1994 & [Segal, 1991](#).

¹⁰ In this way, the state's policy of conscripted National Service can be considered to have formed a similar function in relation to white males, which according to Seegers "constitute(d) a very important mechanism of racial solidarity By its very nature, National Service moderates intra-white cleavages, creates bonds that override social and other distinctions, and circumvents the problem of self-selection among volunteers." (in Phillips, 1989, p. 18).

¹¹ APLA Submission to TRC, 7 October 1997. <http://www.truth.org.za/submit/apla.htm>.

¹² This register was drawn up and submitted by the ANC, listing members of its armed wing that would be taken through the integration and demobilisation processes of the SANDF. The compilation of the register also served to further blur distinctions between the various non-statutory armed formations. Categories were restricted to MK and APLA, leading a number of SDUs to be subsumed under 'MK' and others being completely left outside of the process.

¹³ As Cock (1991) points out, the roles of the SADF and SAP were also blurred discursively in the term 'state-security forces' which was used when referring to their actions inside the country.

¹⁴ Colonel Eugene De Kock, served with the police counter-insurgency unit Koevoet in Namibia during the late 1970s before joining and eventually becoming the operational commander of the Security Police counter-insurgency unit based at Vlakplaas. He is currently serving a life sentence for several murders, and was granted amnesty by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission for many others.

¹⁵ For example, following the unbanning of the ANC, De Kock sold weapons to pro-Inkatha hostel dwellers in the East Rand. He did this, he claims, sometimes on direct orders and other times on his own initiative (Ellis, 1998, p. 285).

¹⁶ Despite their name, the special constables were at the bottom rung of the police hierarchy and operated in poor labour conditions (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 183).

¹⁷ Two former police officers told the TRC, "The special constables were the biggest nonsense introduced by the state. They caused even more problems. They shot people unnecessarily. They were drunk on duty and rude most of the time. The problem was that they did not receive enough training They were wild. The problem was that they were uneducated, but given guns and a high position" (TRC Report Vol. 2, p. 184).

¹⁸ Also falling under the ambit of the "full time" force were "service volunteers" (White women and Coloured and Indian men) and civilian employees (Phillips, 1989, p. 17).

¹⁹ The role of the Commandos as described in the 1983 Defence White Paper was "to act immediately in support of the SAP ... to defend the territorial area allocated to them against insurgency and to assist the force deployed within those areas in a conventional battle." (cited in Cawthra, 1986, p. 19)

²⁰ In 1982 General Constand Viljoen, analysing the revolutionary "onslaught", said, "They apparently do not have a border war in mind, they are going to fight an area war If we had to deal with this using the full-time force the demands on the system would be too great. But we are going to deal with it by using Area Defence ... people living in an area must be organised to defend themselves" (in Phillips, 1989, p. 21).

²¹ Revelations before the TRC were limited to specific disclosures by Special Forces members that were linked to investigations conducted by the office of the Transvaal Attorney General. This included two incidents, in July and December 1986, involving joint

operations with a police hit squad from the Northern Transvaal and several incidents involving members of the military's Civil Cooperation Bureau. Amnesty applications were received from several military personnel, including Brigadier Joep Joubert, the former commanding officer of SADF's Special Forces.

²² "Shocks from the Steyn Report ", *Mail & Guardian*, 31 January 1997.

²³ SADF Submission to the TRC, Armed Forces hearings, 8 October 1997
<http://www.truth.org.za/special/forces/sadf.htm>.

²⁴ Verster stated in his amnesty application to the TRC, "Because the above-mentioned special forces did not want to speak about the covert operations around the conference table, the name Civil Co-operation Bureau was adopted" (Translation of Afrikaans original in TRC. Vol. 2, p. 136).

²⁵ In addition, the Homeland defence forces were ultimately established to serve the interests of the South African State (see below).

²⁶ See Grundy, 1983 and TRC Report, Vol. 2. for a more comprehensive overview of the various 'ethnic' SADF units.

²⁷ This submission was made by the *!XU & Khwe Vereeniging vir Gemeenskaplike Eiendom* (the !XU and Khwe Union for Common Property/Ownership) (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 23)

²⁸ They had previously been employed by the Portuguese armed forces as combatants and trackers.

²⁹ Virtually no information about external operations by the SADF was disclosed before the TRC, reflecting a general unwillingness of former military operatives to co-operate with the process. Although some recent publications, such as *The Silent War: South African Recce Operations 1969-1994* by Peter Stiff, have shed considerable light on a number of operations and incidents involving SADF's elite counter-insurgency units, it is unlikely that full disclosure has been made, especially regarding operations within South Africa. No mention is made, for example, of Special Forces involvement in internal assassinations in 1986 that were confessed to at the TRC.

³⁰ For an explanation of what 'vigilante' meant in the 1980s, see Harris, *Violence & Transition Series*, No 5.

³¹ For more detailed information on the various surrogate forces, as well as others not mentioned here, see TRC Report, Vol. 2 & 3 and "Mabangala – The Rise of Right-wing vigilantes in South Africa" by Nicholas Haysom, *Occasional Paper No. 10, Centre for Applied Legal Studies*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1986.

³² "In terms of this plan South Africa is divided into 10 territorial regions, each bantustan force falling within one of these regions" (Cooper, 1989, p. 179)

³³ Cooper (1989) outlines the key contradictions of the bantustans. While they were designed to reinforce the power of the apartheid state, the division of the country into these subsections firstly brought with it security problems as borders were multiplied, many of which were adjacent to the neighbouring states. Secondly, bantustan leaders were not always as compliant to South African as they would have wanted.

³⁴ <http://www.ifp.org.za/journal.htm>.

³⁵ In reaction to the term "amabutho", a local leader told City Press in 1986 that Inkatha called these groups "abavikeli" or "protectors" (Jeffrey, 1997, p. 57).

³⁶ Jeffrey's analysis (1997, p. 105) of the war stories from the ANC perspective and the IFP perspective places this commentator, Kentridge (1990) in the ANC camp.

³⁷ 'Buthelezi: The BOSS connection', *Mail & Guardian*, 27 November 1998.

³⁸ The ANC states in its 2nd submission to the TRC that Inkatha members were never targeted because they were Inkatha members but that, "possibly at times MK cadres based in these areas participated in counter or pre-emptive attacks. Such attacks were almost invariably motivated by the need for self-defence or to protect communities under threat". Furthermore, "allegations to the effect that MK has been engaged in 'serial mass murder' of hundreds of Inkatha officials are part of a long-running STRATKOM operation with the objectives of creating confusion with regard to the true perpetrators of violence ... [and] whipping up maximum levels of enmity and fear at grassroots level" (ANC 2nd submission to TRC, p. 13). Further evidence before the TRC however led the Commission to conclude that, "The ANC had ... engaged in propaganda which encouraged its supporters to see Inkatha as 'the enemy'. While the plan to assassinate Buthelezi was halted, many lower profile Inkatha officials were killed (TRC Report, Vol. 2, p. 341).

³⁹ The Transitional Executive Council was established to facilitate the transition of executive power from the last minority government to the first democratic government.

⁴⁰ According to Segal's 1991 research, in the East Rand, young people were the primary organisers of violence amongst hostel dwellers. Although drawing on interviews with older hostel dwellers, Segal's work depicts complex and diverse motivations for participation in the conflict. She argues that these grew in a context of extreme marginalisation, alienation from the broader township population and impoverishment, and were fed by threats to the continued existence of the hostels ([Segal, 1991](#)).

⁴¹ At this stage neighbouring countries, Rhodesia, Mozambique, Bechuanaland and Angola, were still under colonial rule.

⁴² See Motumi (1995) on the development of MK structures.

⁴³ According to Barrel, there were 67 instances of reported hand-grenade attacks in 1985 as against only 5 the previous year.

⁴⁴ In late 1987 Tambo expressed concern to MK leadership regarding the number of unnecessary civilian deaths which the campaign had claimed, and stressed that the understanding of what constituted a legitimate target should be communicated and emphasised at all levels (ANC 2nd submission to TRC).

⁴⁵ There was dwindling attention to the goings-on in the camps from overstretched national (based in Lusaka) and regional leadership; many of the experienced cadres were deployed leaving less experienced cadres to take their places; and some members of camp administrations abused their positions and became intolerant of valid criticism. Particularly members of the Security Department, Mbokodo, performed tasks which were not supposed to be theirs, becoming something of a "military police" force. The distances between cadres and leadership increased breeding antagonistic relations (ANC, 2nd submission to TRC).

⁴⁶ The Pango mutiny took place in 1984, and the Viana mutiny in 1985 (ANC 2nd submission to TRC)

⁴⁷ <http://www.truth.org.za/submit/anctruth.htm>.

⁴⁸ For more detail on the decision to establish SDUs, see: ANC, 1st submission to TRC, Section 5.3, <http://www.truth.org.za/submit/anctruth.htm>.

⁴⁹ The Thokoza SDUs in the Katorus area, for example, were relatively well organised and beholden to a central command structure that included senior local political leaders. This situation did not necessarily avert abuses, as evidenced in the detail contained in amnesty applications from the SDUs in the area. This situation was, however, qualitatively different from Sharpeville in the Vaal triangle, where internecine conflict between different SDU structures over several years demonstrated a fundamental lack of accountability to both local and regional political leadership.

⁵⁰ See [Rakgoadi \(1995\)](#) on the problem of assuming that self defence structures could be accountable to "the community" as if it was a homogenous entity.

⁵¹ 'Submission of the United Democratic Front to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission', 5 May 1998, p. 2

⁵² 'African National Congress Party Political Recall to TRC in Cape Town' - 12-13 May 1997, <http://www.truth.org.za/special/party2/anc2.htm>

⁵³ Little literature is available on APLA. Most of the information used for this profile is drawn from Lodge (1995) who has written a rare history of the armed wing of the PAC.

⁵⁴ Members of the British Military Advisory and Technical Training Team (BMATT) who were directly involved in the SANDF integration process, described APLA cadres as "smarter, better disciplined and more politically orientated" than MK counterparts (Frankel, 2000, p. 76).

⁵⁵ See APLA submission , 7 October 1997, "It would therefore be a fallacy in the context of white South Africa to talk about innocent civilians. Military trained and armed civilians defy the definition of civilians. To us an attack on a trained and armed individual was a military operation. It is in this context therefore that the Azanian People's Liberation Army did not have the burden or problem of the so-called 'soft or hard target'. In all honesty, the terms 'soft or hard' targets did not exist in our vocabulary. All that mattered was the political and psychological benefit that the organisation would derive from such military operations." <http://www.truth.org.za/submit/apla.htm>

⁵⁶ See Lodge (1995) for detail of leadership struggles.

⁵⁷ APLA provided limited information about internal abuses - see APLA submission to TRC, <http://www.truth.org.za/submit/apla.htm> and at the Armed Forces hearings, 7 October 2001, <http://www.truth.org.za/special/forces/apla.htm>.

⁵⁸ Enumeration conducted by CSVR's 'Amnesty Project'.

⁵⁹ The actual level of ex-combatant involvement in the recent farm seizures and violence that has gripped Zimbabwe is not clear, as many of those involved are patently too young to have fought in the war for liberation.

⁶⁰ "At demobilisation it was assumed that integration would be unproblematic and no programmed development was envisaged: people would return to their places of origin and resume the lives they had led before the war. If this position seems unrealistic for anyone whose home had been elsewhere for ten or twenty years, or who was born abroad, it implies an outright lack of understanding of the seriousness of the disruption that might be caused by people who had been fighters over that period. It meant that when planning of fighter integration programmes did begin, they were responding to threats of civil disorder and the knowledge that ex-fighters of either faction had access to caches of arms in different parts of the country As a result, whatever their stated intentions, subsequent measures taken to integrate fighters in post-war Namibia became exercises in containment to prevent disruption" (Preston, 1997, p. 463).

⁶¹ Mokolabe's research relied on in-depth interviews with former APLA and MK soldiers, whilst Mashike relied on in-depth interviews with former MK combatants. While neither study claims to be representative of the experiences of former liberation movement fighters, the issues raised support the findings of Cock's study and are indicative of the types of problems faced by this genre of ex-combatant.

⁶² 'Ex-SADF fighters live in dire poverty', Thami Nkwanyane, *City Press*, 24 March 2002.

⁶³ Interestingly, the South African demobilisation effort (or more aptly, absence of effort) following the First World War saw similar grievances expressed by former soldiers. "Unemployment together with a lack of housing and an economic depression, led many ex-servicemen to feel that they had been let down by the government" (Gibbs cited in [Cock, 1998](#), p. 207). In addition to strong anti-government feelings, and echoing the voices of our contemporary ex-combatants, "there was a considerable amount of ill-feeling between

returned soldiers and their fellow employees who had not 'joined up'" (Gibbs cited in [Cock, 1998](#), p. 207).

⁶⁴ This was long before the manipulation by government of war-veterans closely aligned to the ruling ZANU-PF.

⁶⁵ The failure of former SADF members to disclose their involvement in covert operations to the Truth Commission has had repercussions for institutional transformation in South Africa's military (see CSVR, 'Politics & Promises', p. 13).

⁶⁶ Taju's study on the Mozambican situation makes the additional point that at the time soldiers were entering the military, the state was perceived as the "deliverer of well-being", a "great father". Schooling and medical treatment was free, fees only being introduced in the mid 1980s. The military experience intensified a sense of dependency of soldiers on their superiors (Taju, 1998, p. 54).

⁶⁷ For further detail, see the Stuart, Motseunyane and Skweyiya Commission reports. Accounts of exile vary considerably in available studies. Cock's and Skinner's respondents emphasized the hardships they experienced. In Mashike's (1999)(much smaller) study however, respondents deviated from this trend and tended to romanticize the period as "the best time of our lives" (p. 12). One possible explanation of these differences is the time factor. Mashike's research is more recent and ex-combatants interviewed have therefore battled for longer to build their new lives. Perhaps when compared with the hardships they currently face, their lives in exile do constitute a pleasant memory.

⁶⁸ "Justifications for this approach from the Government include that the resources required to support the demobilized fighters in informal sector activities (i.e. credit) would be enormous; the fighters want to return to Tigray so they need to be accommodated there without increasing population pressure; the programme will provide effective and rapid support for the ex-fighters while developing the economic activities in the region and, finally, the communal living experience of the fighters in the field means they will be able to form a close knit community themselves." (NGO Networking Service, in Cilliers, 1996, p. 87).

⁶⁹ Initially, because of the PACs absence from the negotiation process, it was not envisaged that APLA cadres would be integrated into the SANDF. The Interim Constitution was later amended, however, to provide for APLA to be included in the process following the PAC's official suspension of their armed struggle in January 1994.

⁷⁰ Figures supplied by Department of Defence, Directorate Reserves and Veterans Policy, July 2002.

⁷¹ See for example the findings of the Setai Commission, which produced its report, *An Analysis of Progress with Transformation in the Defence Force: Findings and recommendations of the Ministerial Committee*. In addition, an analysis of ethnicity, racial violence and affirmative action in the SANDF can be found in the CSVR report, *From the South African Defence Force to the South African National Defence Force: Safeguarding*

South Africa for a Better Life for All, Noel Stott, 2002. Violence & Transition Series.

⁷² Obviously former statutory forces members now in the SANDF also have a lot of adjusting to do, but the integration and demobilisation processes did not target them. It was only the non-statutory members who had to undergo the testing procedure and were demobilised.

⁷³ Interesting to note is that according to this information, over a third of these demobilised cadres served as members of MK and APLA between January 1990 and December 1994 only, following the suspension of the ANC's armed struggle. These comprised former fighters that were either taken out of the country for training in Ugandan and Tanzanian bases during the negotiation period, as well as others that received internal training in the Transkei and elsewhere in South Africa.

⁷⁴ Interview with Service Corps official, 17 September 1999.

⁷⁵ 'Scorpions arrest SANDF colonels', *The Citizen*, 21 November 2001.

⁷⁶ 'Figures on Attrition per Former Force: April 1994-March 2000', provided to CSVr by the SANDF, May 2000.

⁷⁷ For further detail see Thulare, 1997.

⁷⁸ During the research process former community constables who had been required to take retrenchment packages, conducted protests to express their discontent with this situation and their resultant unemployment.

⁷⁹ An additional 2000 SPU members joined the SANDF.

⁸⁰ UMAC's militarised youth project is unusual not only in nature but also in the fact that an evaluation was conducted and documented in a publicly available report.

⁸¹ With reference to KwaZulu Natal, please see Taylor, R (2002), 'Justice Denied: Political Violence in KwaZulu Natal after 1994'. Also see an unpublished report, 'Ex-combatants in KwaZulu Natal' compiled in 2000 for VTP as background research.

⁸² For example, Oupa Seane and Tom Nhlapo were convicted for a R17 million CIT heist at Bronkhorstspuit. Both were ex-MK members (Interview with former member of the National Priority Crimes Unit, 9/8/2000). See also, "Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi has acknowledged that renegade former MK members are behind at least some of the heists" in *MK and the Party*, The Star newspaper, 28 January 1998; Political storm over *MK links to bank heists*, Cape Argus, 23 January, 1998.

⁸³ See for example, (a) *Conviction of seven men for the Peddie Pension Heist in November 1998*, including three SAPS sergeants, Cape Times, 10 November 1998 (http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=79&art_id=arch93983be70d697d99b),

(b) *A growing list of arrested officers* – Mail & Guardian, 30 August 1996, (c) *Arms heist linked to Unita*, Mail & Guardian, 3 July 1998 (d) *5 policemen appear in court over R31 million robbery*, The Star, 22 October 1998, (d) *Police linked to R7,2 million armoured car heist in Durban*, Cape Argus 9 May 1998 (e) *3 Sergeants held over heist*, The Star, 27 March 1998 (f) *SAPS pair held for cash-heist bid*, The Star, 6 March 1998 (g) *Inspector held over R10m robbery*, The Star, 12 January 1998.

⁸⁴ Heist: cop MK man, Cape Argus, 20 January 1998.

⁸⁵ *Old enemies unite to pull off heists*, Saturday Star 7 February 2002.

⁸⁶ *Heist gangs forced onto softer targets*, The Star, 6 April 1998; *Heists in South Africa*, Saturday Star, 23 January 1999.

⁸⁷ *Are cash-in-transit heists funding the ANC?* The Star, 20 February 1998.

⁸⁸ Laurence (1998, p. 8) also makes the point that the heists are not homogenous, "some bear the hallmarks of military know-how but some appear to be the work of amateurs". Furthermore the *modus operandi* characterised by "military precision" may have more to do with tightened security measures for example, than with the backgrounds of the perpetrators. Changes in criminal strategy accompany changes in security technology.

⁸⁹ The Ugandan study ran for only 12 months. The longer term trends have not been examined and may diverge from the initial experience.

⁹⁰ *Taximen paid for bus killings, says ex-MK man*, Cape Argus, 17 August 2000.

⁹¹ *Cops nab MK 'killer': 'Dangerous' suspect faces 8 murder raps*, Mpikeleni Duma, Sowetan Sunday world, 17 March 2002.

⁹² *Retrenched troopies 'a threat to SA security'*, Cape Argus, 16 August 2000, *'40,000 former soldiers a pool for crime'*, Cape Argus, 28 August 2000.

⁹³ *Farm Killings: Enough is enough*, Mail & Guardian, 21 August 1998.

⁹⁴ *Boland farmers put on alert for 'Apla'*, Mail & Guardian. 16 January 1998.

⁹⁵ <http://www.crimeinstitute.ac.za> - Research results: Farm Offender Profile. See also Human rights Watch Publication (Aug, 2001), *Unequal Protection: the State response to violent crime on south African Farms*, and in particular the chapter subsection dealing with *The motives for attacks on farms and smallholdings*, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/safrica2/Safarms7.htm#_1_34.

⁹⁶ *Perpetrators of Farm Attacks: An Offender Profile* (2001), pp. 43-44.

⁹⁷ The war in Angola continues in 2002, although some analysts are cautiously optimistic

that prospects for sustained peace may be closer than ever before. See, *Tentative hopes grow for renewal of peace process as UN prepares to talk to Unita*, Southscan, Vol. 17, No. 1, 11 January 2002.

⁹⁸ *Zimbabwe Cabinet loot's pensions*, Mail & Guardian, 25 April 1997.

⁹⁹ *Fighting rebels at home and abroad*, Africa Confidential, 4 December 1998, Vol. 39, No. 24.

¹⁰⁰ An 1998 editorial in The Namibian stated, "While one sympathises with the plight of the ex-fighters, it is also true to say that the majority of them appear to have developed a dependency syndrome, looking to Government or the party for the answers to all their problems. But again this problem has to be placed squarely at the door of the ruling party, because life in exile appears to have bred this very dependency, the consequences of which Government now has to deal with".

¹⁰¹ *Hundred's at veteran leader's fraud trial*, SAPA, 2 May 2002.

¹⁰² *Millions for MK veterans go astray*, Mail & Guardian, 2 March 2001.

¹⁰³ *In search of military's millions*, Mail & Guardian, 8 September 2000.

¹⁰⁴ The SA Legion focuses primarily on the welfare interests of former SADF conscripts.

¹⁰⁵ *Violence mars RENAMO's congress*, SAPA, 31 October 2001.

¹⁰⁶ *Liberian war vets beat up former president*, SAPA, 28 November 2000.

¹⁰⁷ *War vets threaten to stir up chaos in Durban*, The Independent on Saturday, 12 January 2001.

¹⁰⁸ *Jobless ex-soldiers leave border post after protest*, The Star, 21 November 2001.

¹⁰⁹ But plans to set up the pension plan have been criticised by senior ANC members in the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence. Thousands of former fighters will not be eligible because the plan will only benefit former guerrillas who secured an employment contract with the Department of Defence. The many ex MK and APLA cadres demobilised from SANDF with packages averaging R40 000 would then not benefit from the scheme. Critics of the proposed scheme claim that these cadres have been short-changed and that the payments received by these fighters represent only a "fraction of the millions paid out to senior white officers in the SADF". (*ANC leaders slam state plan for MK pensions*, The Sunday Independent, 10 March 2001).

¹¹⁰ *Brutal justice takes hold in Khayalitsha*, Cape Argus, 21 January 2002.

¹¹¹ *Old soldiers at war with young cadres*, Mail & Guardian, 13 June 1997.

¹¹² See also unpublished CSVr paper, 'Report on Ex-combatants in KwaZulu Natal', December 2000.

¹¹³ The discussion here deals with war-economies at the level of the individual soldier; however these are directly related to war-economies at the level of the armed formation and their political leadership – the macro level. For example, fighting re-erupted in Angola in 1995 because of threats to UNITAs diamond operations (Berdal, 1996). Indeed struggles over resources are implicated almost inevitably in most conflict situations.

¹¹⁴ This section leans heavily on the research of Stephen Ellis who is regarded as one of the primary authorities on the subject.

¹¹⁵ For more on the state's involvement in criminal activities, see the TRC's 'Findings on the State', contained in its Final Report', Vol. 5, Ch. 1, ¶ 77-105). Although the TRC focused on criminal activities within the parameters of gross human rights violations, these were often supplemented by other criminal acts which had important social and economic ramifications. <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/commissions/1998/trc/volume5.htm>.

¹¹⁶ For further information on SADF involvement in illegal activities, see Contraband by De Wet Potgeiter; the 1996, Kumleben Commission report on ivory smuggling. <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/commissions/index.html>.

¹¹⁷ See for example, *The face of the counter-revolution*, Mail & Guardian, 25 September 1998.

¹¹⁸ In South Africa, Cock maintains the notion of citizenship, growing out of the apartheid era, "when citizenship involved national military service for white males and blacks were denied access to weaponry – a denial which was articulated by Z.K. Matthews to involve a denial of African manhood as well as citizenship" (Hellman, 1943 in [Cock, 1998](#), p. 134), has continued to be militarised.

¹¹⁹ *Truckloads of arms missing*, Mail & Guardian, 23 April 1999.

¹²⁰ Indeed, some of those interviewed in the process of the Violence & Transition Project indicated that these sources sold weapons to both sides of the conflict.

¹²¹ See [Segal, 1991](#) on the "kaleidoscope" of elements feeding and transmuting the identities of hostel residents during this period.

¹²² Berdal (1996) writes of the "military culture" problem as related to the longevity of the conflict following which demobilisation is occurring – intensified through time. It is only one aspect of the far-reaching alternative social and economic order which may have been generated through the experience of war.

¹²³ Many countries undergoing such processes are faced with severe and debilitating economic conditions. Even if demobilisation processes provided relevant skills and

training, the socio-economic context to which combatants return offers few opportunities, rendering much of their training redundant. The provision of adequate skills to those demobilising was recognised as critical in the South African context, and a fundamental component in the preparation of military personnel for civilian life. The SANDF's Service Corps was launched in 1995 and tasked with "assisting former combatants to integrate into civil society, via career-profiling and skills conversion for civilian employment" ([Institute for Security Studies I, 2001](#)). But while envisaged as the "centrepiece" of the demobilisation and rationalisation processes, the Service Corps has not been successful to date, was inadequately funded, financially mismanaged and is viewed by many as a "dumping ground" for unwanted combatants (Frankel, 2000, p. 156-7).

¹²⁴ *SA Spy Agency on Trial*, Mail & Guardian, 24 July 1998, *SA Dogs of war in the Congo*, Mail & Guardian, 28 August 1998, *Right –wing leader probed for illicit gem trade*, Mail & Guardian, 7 December 2001.

¹²⁵ Militarised youth, especially in the South African literature, tend to be considered separately from other combatants, the latter (specifically MK and APLA ex-combatants) being the primary subjects of the general demobilisation literature.

¹²⁶ A recently released report on Sierra Leone from Physicians for Human Rights, for example, claims that 53 percent of displaced women and girls who had "face to face" contact with Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels experienced some form of sexual violence. See 'War-Related Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone: A Population-Based Assessment'- http://www.phrusa.org/research/sierra_leone/report.html.

¹²⁷ Arnett's analysis deals with the Vietcong experience. In addition he explains this force's not raping in terms of the fact that a guerrilla force relies on "the goodwill of the people, men and women alike" (in Brownmiller, 1975, p. 91).

¹²⁸ See also TRC, Vol.4, Ch. 10, ¶ 50, 106.

¹²⁹ See Goldlatt & Meinties (1997) on both the ANC's glossing over of these abuses in the TRC process, and reasons preventing women from exposing them.

¹³⁰ Campbell (1992), argues that a crisis of African masculinity has seen increased levels of violence which is one mechanism through which they seek to reassert their masculinity. Furthermore, she shows, that it is within the family sphere that violence is learnt. The study is especially useful in illustrating the intertwining factors at play in male violence. These are indeed fed, but not reducible to militarised identities.

¹³¹ Personal communication with TRC official, Amnesty Committee.

¹³² This relates to the linking of the particularly ambiguous nature of the Vietnam War with high levels of trauma amongst veterans, which, in turn, may increase their chances of being involved in future violence.

¹³³ See Solomon, 1993 on the differences in the manifestations of traumatic stress in

soldiers of the Lebanon war relative to soldiers of the Vietnam War. These differences are attributed to the nature of the war, societal perceptions of the war, and the cultural norms of the receiving communities.

¹³⁴ Vietnam veterans received preferential treatment in the U.S. civil service labour market, and many consequently entered policing. In one veteran study, all those fitting this profile subsequently lost their jobs due to alcohol or drug abuse (Danieli, 1999, p. 180).

¹³⁵ Personal Communication, October 1999.

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