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From Duty, to Torture, to the Highest Bidder:
Habitus and the Evolution of South Africa's Security Forces

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Abstract

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South Africa's security apparatus was a full and active force in the story of apartheid. Mid-ranking Afrikaner police officers and soldiers had surprising amounts of influence on their respective institutions. As the forces on the ground during unrest in the townships and in guerrilla fights abroad, these mid-ranking officers' daily experiences shaped the reality of South African national security policies. An examination of the formative cultural and experiential factors, or habitus, that shaped the security forces can explain both the actions of the security forces during apartheid, and also the ascendancy of the private security industry in present-day South Africa. The influence of the private security sector today is a testament to the habitus developed amongst the security forces. This habitus had great impact upon the story of apartheid. Its legacy is continued in the proliferation of private security companies, which maintain many of the dividing facets of South African society. The provision of private security services link South Africa's security sector to its apartheid past, and prove that the legacy of apartheid security forces reverberates in modern South Africa.

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Introduction

South Africa's modern security concerns, primarily centered around petty rather than political crime, seem far removed from the dark days of apartheid's government-mandated repression. However, in major South African cities, the racially-correlated contrast between wealth and poverty is a stark reminder of what the new government has yet to achieve. In wealthy communities, electric fences section off property and private security guards slowly cruise the streets, while in poverty-stricken neighborhoods the ill-trusted South African Police Service is the most visible form of security provision. This divide between private and public security provision appears to be a modern-day creation, but it is, in fact, closely linked to the security apparatus of the apartheid era itself. The institutional culture that allowed apartheid's worst offenses precipitated the post-apartheid flight of mid-ranking, white public security forces into the private security sector. The participation of these apartheid-era police and military officers in post-apartheid private security has left an indelible mark on South Africa today.

In exploring South Africa's changing security situation, this thesis will ultimately center on the relationships formed between members of the security forces. This thesis aims to uncover the factors that shaped these relationships and to explore how these formative factors in turn influenced the actions of the security forces. Mid-ranking Afrikaner police officers and soldiers had surprising amounts of influence on their respective institutions. As the forces on the ground during unrest in the townships and in guerrilla fights abroad, these mid-ranking officers' daily experiences shaped the reality of South African national security policies. It is important to examine how these soldiers and police officers came to function in the ways they did, both to explain the actions of the security forces during apartheid, and also to explain the ascendancy of the private security industry in present-day South Africa.

The life influences of the individuals who served in South Africa's security forces had a tremendous effect on the nation's security experience during and after apartheid. These influences came from individuals' upbringing, daily on-duty experiences, and a common exposure to South African national policy. Through the examination of all of these factors, this thesis attempts to show how security force members developed a militarized institutional culture, and, further that the socio-political identities adopted by security force members led to self-reliance within the forces, which in turn had implications for the development of private security companies. This institutional culture is the basic foundation for a clear understanding of the historic and present-day functioning of South Africa's security sector.

The first two chapters of this thesis explain how the common life influences of the security forces shaped the officers' and soldiers' frames of reference and encouraged the formation of strong institutional cultures. The first chapter does this through a focus on the intersection of national policy and the police and military mindset. It demonstrates how a common exposure to South Africa's national policy shaped the security forces' understanding of daily events, and thereby their actions. In the 1980s, indoctrination in a combined Cold War and racial ideology created a sense of urgency amongst security force members. This urgency and intensity led to a greater militarization of the forces. The 1980s were a formative time for South Africa's security sector. Under President Pieter Willem Botha, both the police and the military were expanded and tasked with a proliferating number of duties.[1] From border patrol to protest suppression, security forces' tasks became ever more militant. This increased militancy laid the background for the formation of a militarized institutional culture.

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[1] See Baynham, Simon, "Security Strategies for a Future South Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 28, No. 3 (1990): 401-30 for a complete discussion of placement and actions of SADF forces throughout the 1980s.

The second chapter of this thesis focuses explicitly on the common experiences and institutional culture within the police force and military in the 1980s. Shared experiences amongst security force members laid the foundation for strong interpersonal relations amongst the security forces, particularly in the middle and low ranks. This esprit de corps can be described as social capital, particularly as members of the security forces used their personal relations for career enhancement even upon leaving the forces. This social capital, forged in the unique climate of 1980s South Africa, continued to influence public and private security for the next two decades.

The term "social capital" has a rich historiography. Some argue that the idea of social capital originated with Tocqueville's description of civic life in America. A more scientific use of the term originated with Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam in the 1980s. An examination of South Africa's security forces relies most heavily on Bourdieu's classical definition that social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition."[2] A variation of this, described by Alejandro Portes as "the ability to secure benefits through membership in networks and other social structures,"[3] helps to capture precisely how ties formed through memberships in South Africa's security forces gave support to, and allowed cooperation between, veterans and remaining forces over the course of two decades. Habitus is the other key concept encapsulated in discussions of social capital amongst South Africa's security forces. Bourdieu argues that habitus is the result of opinions and

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[2] P. Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education,* ed. J.G. Richardson, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

[3] Alejandro Portes, quoted in Frane, Adam and Borut Roncevic, "Social Capital: Recent Debates and Research Trends," *Social Science Information* Vol 42, No 2, (2003): 156-183.

attitudes shaped during daily experiences. Although social and political circumstances may change, habitus means that individuals will have "durable, transposable dispositions" that dictate how these individuals interpret the world around them.[4] Understanding habitus in South African security forces is key to understanding why security forces continued to see the events of the early 1990s through the paradigm of their experiences in the 1980s.

The third chapter of this thesis examines how social capital amongst security forces enabled the rise of the private security industry in South Africa. Looking at two subsections of the private security sector, private military companies and private security companies, this chapter shows that social capital was foundational to the formation of these companies, and remained important as government regulation of the private security sector became more stringent. An examination of Executive Outcomes, a private military company made up of former South African soldiers, explores an example of the global influence of South Africa's private security industry. Executive Outcomes' close ties with global financial backers made it arguably the first modern private military company, and it would be followed by American companies, such as Blackwater. Troops trained within the structures of apartheid would thus come to influence the global security sector.

The formation of social capital amongst security workers and the growth of private security companies are both deeply rooted in identities formed during apartheid. This thesis focuses on the 1980s and 1990s in South Africa, because these twenty years marked a unique set of political and social circumstances that encouraged the development of a heavily militarized institutional culture within both the South African Police (SAP) and South African Defense

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[4] Bourdieu, Pierre, *Pascalian Meditations,* (Stanford University Press, California: 1997), 140.

Force (SADF). This culture of impunity, secrecy, and internal loyalty was also strongly

influenced during these years by the political messages coming from the National Party.

The militarization of security force work had its roots in earlier eras, particularly with

South African involvement in border wars in the 1970s. Involvement in these wars, and police

experience with ultra-violent township uprisings, beginning with the infamous 1976 Soweto

uprisings, changed the rules of war in ways that were readily assimilated by members of the

security forces. In highly dangerous situations, many security force members, like the infamous

death-squad member Colonel Eugene de Kock, wondered, "Why keep to the Queensberry rules

and fight one boxer when you can kick them in the balls and kill three?"[5] Attitudes like these

might have been kept in check, however, and institutional culture may not have been so strongly

affected had it not been for changes in national policy in the 1980s.

In the 1980s, newly-elected Prime Minister Botha announced that South Africa faced a

"total onslaught" against it on the part of communists, frontline states, and most importantly, the

African National Congress (ANC) and other dissenting political groups.[6] Believing the only way

to combat the "total onslaught" was to fully mobilize the South African economy and

government on a war footing, Botha created a command economy and the government invested

exorbitant amounts to make South Africa's armaments production autonomous.[7]

The concept of "total onslaught" is an important marker in South African historiography

because it highlights a moment when the justification for apartheid was changing. As Hermann

Giliomee notes, "There was an inherent weakness in the NP's 'culture of domination' and a

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[5] Eugene de Kock, quoted in, Ellis, Stephen. "The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, No. 2 (1998): 265.

[6] Murphy, Carlyle, "South African Military Exerts Greater Influence," *The Washington Post,* May 30 1980, A20.

[7] Batchelor, Peter, and Susan Willett, *Disarmament and Defence: Industrial Adjustment in South Africa* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1998).

singular lack of moral authority."[8]   Stanley Greenberg furthers this analysis, showing that

Afrikaner civil society and government had by the 1980s begun to "confront a social order built

on vast racial inequalities, a massive state presence, and growing African disaffection."[9]

Greenberg argues that Afrikaners dealt with their loss of moral legitimacy by attempting to cast

the nation in the light of free-market ideology and by downplaying in name, but not in practice,

the role of the state in private enterprise. This free-market emphasis fit well with Botha's fervent

anti-communism and helped the National Party to explain its racist policies in terms of

economics and the Cold War.

This changing justification for apartheid allowed for a dramatic, top-down change in

security practices. A man with close military ties, Botha strengthened the SADF by encouraging

the development of military intelligence, which created parallel chains of command in the

intelligence world. Botha also brought the SAP and the SADF closer together. The SAP began

to adopt tactics learned from the SADF. Most noticeably, the *Koevoet* units, formed in Namibia

to violently coerce Namibian rebels to provide intelligence, were duplicated inside South Africa

as the apartheid state equated ANC armed groups with foreign insurgents.[10] The SAP also

created special squads of white handlers to lead former political enemies, who had often been

"turned" with torture. Termed *Askari* units, these men fought against the ANC's armed wing,

MK, by using terror on black populations. They carried out assassinations, bombings, arbitrary

arrests, and torture against members of opposition groups. Throughout the 1980s, the SAP also

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[8]Giliomee, Hermann, "Surrender Without Defeat: Afrikaners and the South African "Miracle"," *Daedalus* Vol. 126, No. 2, (Spring, 1997): 113-146.

[9] Greenberg, Stanley B., "Ideological Struggles Within the South African State," in *The Politics of Race, Class & Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa,* ed. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, (London, Longman Group: 1987).

[10] See Pauw, Jacques, *In the Heart of the Whore*, (Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers Ltd:1991) for a lengthy discussion of *Koevoet* tactics and *Askari* units.

reacted violently to township uprisings. By the late 1980s, the ANC compiled numerous internal documents complaining of SAP incitement of violence.[11]

1989 marked a moment of transition, as PW Botha was replaced by FW de Klerk, a politician without formal ties to security forces. De Klerk was quick to attempt to rein in the actions of the military and police forces, yet despite his efforts, attacks and intimidation continued. It was clear that de Klerk did not have the legitimacy to overcome the strong militant institutional culture within the security forces. While reform efforts were made, the effect of those efforts was negligible because of the entrenched resistance mounted by security force members.

Throughout the 1990s, as it became clear that political change was coming, the strong institutional culture within the security forces did not fade. Instead, it continued and spread beyond the boundaries of the official security forces, as SAP and SADF members left their posts during ANC-led reform efforts and began instead to form private security organizations and private military companies. Social capital built through shared experiences meant that SAP and SADF members could more easily leave the service to organize private military companies because they could rely on cooperation with colleagues still in the service to support their private efforts. Private companies often acted with direct support from their former colleagues still in the security forces. Although this cooperation faded as new officers came to the force, the private security industry, which so dominates South Africa today, was founded on the relationships formed through the enforcement of apartheid. Innovations such as private military companies with close ties to global finance, were created through the social capital built amongst

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[11] "ANC Violence Monitoring Manual" (February 2, 1990) Barbara Hogan Collection 10.1, South African Historical Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

apartheid's soldiers. Far from being a spent force, former security officers changed the face of the security industry both within South Africa and worldwide.

An understanding of today's South Africa is not possible without an understanding of the history of its security forces. The police and military were important shapers of South African internal and international events. By understanding the habitus formed within the police and military throughout the 1980s, a full understanding of the continuing role of these institutions is possible. It is only by noting the complex cultural and social ties of the individuals in security organizations that we are able to understand the true effects of South African security policy in the 1980s. It is deeply significant, and was often unclear at the time, that security forces were encouraged to react violently and militantly toward protestors and foreign enemies alike. These experiences shaped members of the security forces and drew them more closely together. In the uncertain negotiation period, security force members' migration en masse to the private sector changed South African security. This change is still visible today. The private security guard lazily circling the streets of Johannesburg's gated communities is a lasting legacy of the enforcers of apartheid.

Chapter 1: National Politics and the Security Forces

The intersection of security force activities and an increasingly militarized government strategy defined 1980s South Africa. This intersection was made obvious by the centrality of the police and military to the most brutal episodes of apartheid. It was security force members who fired on schoolchildren in the Soweto uprising and killed activists like Matthew Goniwe and Griffiths Mxenge. In the day-to-day maintenance of apartheid, it was security forces who were responsible for enforcing the structure of apartheid, arresting hundreds of thousands of pass-law violators annually. In these actions, the work of the security forces can be viewed as a physical manifestation of the national political sentiment and the grand strategy of the South African state. Because of their centrality to apartheid, the security forces' "strategy must be understood as a derivation of national strategy."[12] The symbiotic relationship between the security forces and the national government in the 1980s encouraged the South African state to reach the apex of militarization. This relationship between government and the security sector at this key moment in South African history is vital in explaining security force actions both during the 1980s and in the period after.

The South African Police (SAP) is particularly important in its connection to the apartheid state. Tracking the training, organization, and actions of the SAP across the eighty-four years of its existence shows patterns of militarization, with the police in South Africa increasingly compelled to take on military and political functions on top of their routine duties. The slow expansion of these routine duties made SAP members more receptive to the militarized policies of the 1980s and more reluctant to give up these powers in the subsequent era of reform.

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[12] Cawthra, Gavin, *Policing South Africa* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1993), 7.

The official South African Police organization was created in 1910. However, even before its creation, loosely-structured police forces were already participating in highly-militarized patrols. "Frontier-style policing," in which police would be mounted, armed, and tasked with maintaining order and subjugating black populations, was used by British and Afrikaner communities in the 19th and early 20th centuries. British forces, such as the Cape Mounted Police or the Natal Mounted Rifles, were highly-mobile units tasked with subduing black populations along the coast, while "rudimentary police units in the Boer [Afrikaner] republics were extensions of military commandos."[13] Although Afrikaner and British colonists had separate police services, the duties of police in "the monitoring and control of race relations … made policing in the Boer Republics very similar to that in the British-controlled colonies of the Cape and Natal."[14] From their inception, South African police forces were tasked with militarized control of race relations.

The official formation of the South African Police, under of the reconciliatory Act of Union of 1910, attempted to bring together Boer and British police forces. Tensions between the two groups made this task difficult and so the consolidation proceeded on an ad-hoc basis. The first SAP commissioner, Colonel T.G. Truter, wrote letters complaining of the disadvantages this ad-hoc formation caused, saying, "A more complex system can hardly be imagined... There is no uniform policy regarding the organization and control of the police."[15] Tension resulting from combining Afrikaner and British were common in the early years of the force. Despite bilingual requirements, the passing grade for the SAP Promotional Exam had to be lowered from 60 percent to 40 percent because "the Afrikaners in the ranks had not yet affected the social

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[13] Cawthra, *Policing South Africa* 8.

[14] T.G. Truter, quoted in Brewer, John D., *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa,* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1994), 16.

[15] T. G. Truter, quoted in Cawthra, *Policing South Africa,* 8.

composition of the officer class, which was still predominantly English-speaking."[16] Afrikaners were typically recruited into the middling ranks of the forces. Poor economic conditions for Afrikaners nationwide meant that "most recruits were drawn from impoverished Afrikaner rural communities" and that "pay and conditions were bad and the force was often undermanned."[17] Although Afrikaners did not initially control the highest ranks of the SAP, over time, the steady induction of Afrikaners into the police force slowly turned the institution into an Afrikaner-dominated force.[18]

Poor opportunities for Afrikaners nationwide drove many Afrikaners into the SAP throughout the early 1900s. By 1927, 90 percent of the annual intake of the SAP was Afrikaner.[19] This trend of Afrikaner induction drove a vicious cycle that carried implications for police culture throughout the twentieth century. Because the majority of whites joining the SAP were poor Afrikaners, the government did not need to pay high salaries to encourage membership, and because no high salaries were paid, the less-educated members of society became policemen. This resulted in a force that was ill-equipped, underpaid, and nationally marginalized.

Race relations within the SAP also became fixed early in its history. At its creation, the SAP was one-fifth black because black Africans had been incorporated into colonial police forces. Opportunities for blacks were limited, however. Until 1981, black policemen could rise only to the rank of sergeant, and black and white policemen were trained separately. Small

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[16] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 81.

[17] Cawthra, *Policing South Africa,* 9.

[18] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 211. John Brewer dates this trend to 1955, a year which marked the formation of the Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniging van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie (AKPOL), an "Afrikaans cultural association." In Brewer's estimation, its influence was so strong that "the occupational culture of the force was thoroughly Afrikanerized, marginalizing the few remaining English-speakers in the force."

[19] Cawthra, *Policing South Africa,* 10.

indignities were common. For example, "If black policemen who were married wished to live with their families when accommodation was available for them in barracks as single persons, they had to build this accommodation at their own expense, a ruling which did not apply to white married policemen."[20] Racism within the force was endemic, yet because the alternatives for black employment were so slim, there was no shortage of hopeful black inductees until the late 1980s when "considerable reprobation in the black community" became a stronger concern than the promise of a paycheck.[21]

Because racism was so prevalent in the SAP, black officers had relatively little influence over the actions of the force. The lack of black leadership positions within the SAP precluded the consideration of black preferences in the formation of SAP policy. While minority groups formed a sizable portion of the force, they had fewer opportunities for representation and expression. Therefore, the SAP overwhelmingly followed its Afrikaner leaders and mid-ranking officers. It was the relationship between Afrikaner police officers and the Afrikaner National Party that would come to define the South African security state.

The path toward a noticeable increase in military influence in South Africa began when Balthazar Johannes Vorster came to power as Prime Minister in 1966. Vorster's tenure lasted until 1978, and in this time, the National Party faced changing internal and regional events that led the government to progress toward more centralized rule and more intense reliance on the security sector. When Vorster came to power he inherited a decentralized system of government. In its first twenty years of power, the National Party had found decentralization to be an advantage and "the government functioned naturally as an assemblage of personalized and well-

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[20] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 123.

[21] Frankel, Phillip H., "South Africa: The Politics of Police Control" *Comparative Politics* Vol. 12, No. 4 (Jul., 1980): 489.

demarcated fiefdoms."[22] Regional support from colonial powers for white-controlled

government systems provided the space and security for this system of decentralized patronage

to function. As regional security became less assured, Vorster's government responded by

tightening the control of military officials over South African strategy.

South Africa's strategic regional strategy was predicated on the security provided by the

existence of its "buffer states," the surrounding colonized nations conducive to white minority

rule. In the 1970s, this sense of security began to unravel. Two of these "buffer states,"

Portugal's colonies Angola and Mozambique, had been host to anti-colonial guerrilla warfare

since 1961 and 1964 respectively, but the face of the conflict changed dramatically in April 1974

when Portugal's fascist government was overthrown. The new government wanted to cut itself

free from costly colonial wars, and thus Mozambique officially gained its independence in June

of 1975 and Angola in November of 1975.

South Africa sensed that the overthrow of Portugal's Caetano regime and the

independence of its colonies was changing the regional political tide. Vorster attempted to meet

these changing circumstances by launching a new initiative, termed "détente," a policy "vaguely

defined as drawing the states of Southern Africa in a 'constellation of completely independent

states' which would form a 'strong bloc' and 'present a united front against common enemies.'"[23]

Concurrently with this diplomatic approach, however, South Africa attempted to throw

its military might into regional politics. Fear of losing Angola as a buffer zone had led South

Africa to give support, in the form of weapons and money, to rival revolutionary groups during

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[22] Rotberg, Robert I., Bienen, Henry S., Legvold, Robert, Maasdorp, Gavin G., *South Africa and Its Neighbors: Regional Security and Self-Interest* (The World Peace Foundation: 1985).

[23] Davies, Robert and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, No. 2 (1985), 186.

Angola's War for Independence. In 1966, South Africa began military involvement in Angola

under the pretext of hunting down members of Namibia's revolutionary militia, the South West

People's Organization, or SWAPO. Alarmed by the ascension of a communist party to power in

Angola following its decolonization, South Africa launched a full-scale attack on Angola in

1975. Aimed at providing assistance to the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) and the

National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), South African plans to

overthrow the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) failed miserably.

By March 1976, South African forces had been forced out of the country.

Regional failure was amplified by internal crises. In Soweto, the South West Township

of Johannesburg, on the 16th of June, 1976, thousands of secondary students staged a march to

protest a new requirement that Afrikaans be taught in all schools. This peaceful protest was met

with brutal force by the SAP, and 176 people were killed, mostly shot in the back while trying to

run away. This shocking bloodshed led to massive uprisings in the townships. In the coming

months, there was a series of standoffs between security forces and protesters, and by the close

of 1976, an estimated six hundred people had died.[24] International reaction was strong, and by

October of 1977, the United Nations had voted in favor of an arms embargo against South

Africa.

In this atmosphere, Vorster began to realize the necessity of a strong response to police

failings. The government was prepared to modify tactics "in the search for a solution to John

Vorster's failing 'police state.'"[25] The perceived solution to this failing was a tightening of the

formerly decentralized state. Literature from a conference examining the state of the security

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[24] "S Africa marking Soweto uprising" *BBC,* June 16, 2006.

[25] Sanders, James, *Apartheid's Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Secret Service* (Great Britain, John Murray: 2006), 149.

forces stated that a "vital link is obvious- the continuing close communication … between management and the military."[26] Across the country, "bureaucrats and politicians often claimed that the military produced superior and timely ideas, that military men were leaders, and that the South African Defence Force best knew how to do things."[27] The ascendency of military-government cooperation was in vogue, and the recognition and support for this cooperation was arguably "the 'take off point' of the local-military-industrial complex" that would come to dominate South African security.[28]

By the time Vorster was beginning to recognize the need to centralize the state, however, his tenure was abruptly interrupted. A 1978 scandal over Vorster's sign-off on the misappropriation of defense funds forced his retirement, and Minister of Defense Pieter Willem Botha assumed office as the Prime Minister in October of 1978. Botha's arrival as Prime Minister was accompanied by quickly-changing ideology and state structure. Botha's position as the former Minister of Defense gave him comfort with military leadership. He incorporated this leadership into the state apparatus, and reformed state institutions so that "new decision-making structures appeared, in which the military now plays a key institutionalized role."[29] Botha's reorganization of state powers "wedded the most powerful military machine south of the Sahara to the administration, strategic planning and policy making of a regime that by its own admission was fighting for survival against the internal challenge of its disenfranchised black majority and the military threat of its black neighbors."[30] Institutionalizing the military within state decision

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[26] Preamble to December 1977 RAU Conference, quoted in James Sanders, *Apartheid's Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Secret Service*, 149.

[27] Seegers, Annette. "South Africa's National Security Management System, 1972-90." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 29, No. 2 (1991): 253-73.

[28] James Sanders, *Apartheid's Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Secret Service*, 149.

[29] Robert Davies, and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," 185.

[30] Murphy, Carlyle. "South African Military Exerts Greater Influence." *The Washington Post*, May 30 1980, A20.

making processes was an acknowledgement of insecurity amongst entrenched white power. The ascendency of the security sector was paramount in redoubling government control.

The institutionalization of the military during these years is best shown in the changing role of the State Security Council. Created in 1972, the State Security Council, or SSC, was originally an advisory body that met only occasionally. The impetus for its growth in power first came from General Magnus Malan, who believed that South Africa's failure in Angola in 1975 "focused attention on the urgent necessity for the State Security Council to play a much fuller role in the national security of the republic than hitherto."[31] Under PW Botha, this advice was followed, and the SSC became a different institution entirely. Botha established within the SSC a working committee that included the heads of all government security departments as well as staff from every cabinet committee. With these changes, the SSC became a central institution through which a broad range of decisions were passed. The SSC was also given expanded institutional reach throughout South Africa through the bureaucratic structuring of Joint Management Centers (JMCs). JMCs had influence on security issues throughout the nation, as "a joint management centre (J.MC.) was established to co-ordinate government activities in each of South Africa's 12 official regions, as was a sub-J.M.C. in each of the 60 sub-regions, and a mini-J.M.C. in each of the 450 mini-regions."[32] The reach of the J.M.C.s extended across country lines as "four external Centres cover Namibia and unspecified Southern African

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[31] Magnus Malan, quoted in Robert Davies, and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," 194.

[32] Seegers, "South Africa's National Security Management System, 1972-90," 257.

countries. Thus JMCs were spread over the whole of South Africa and were involved in at least four other countries of the region."[33]

Functioning as a security advisory board, the SSC assumed a broad scope of influence. The SSC's "concerns and its conclusions inevitably influence, inhibit, and overshadow the cabinet committees as well as the entire functioning of the Botha government."[34] While on paper the SSC did not appear to be an institution that formed policy, "in practice, the SSC concerns itself with and manages the total range of policy strategies of the state. Under the Total Strategy, everything deemed to be connected with the security of the state falls under its purview- from foreign policy to the price of bread."[35] The policy that "ministers may only attend SSC meetings if they are statutory or co-opted members, or are specifically invited by the Prime Minister,"[36] hints at the broad range of powers that allowed the SSC to dominate other government bodies.

The structure of the SSC allowed it to inhabit broad parameters of security and governance. The SSC had a highly systematized chain of command, which gave it purview over nearly all other government departments. The SSC's complex chain of command was "designed to implement the Total Strategy in a coordinated fashion in all areas of South and Southern Africa."[37] Because of this goal, the SSC was deeply involved in furthering the application of "Total Strategy" in Southern Africa. The SSC was deeply involved in many processes of war. In Angola it was thought that "the SSC probably has authorized the overall direction of preemptive strikes in Angola, leaving a chain of military command to work out the precise

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[33] Robert Davies, and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," 193.

[34] Robert I. Rotberg, et al., *South Africa and Its Neighbors: Regional Security and Self-Interest*, 20.

[35] Robert Davies, and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," 193.

[36] *ibid*, 194.

[37] *ibid*.

details. It regulates the flow of supplies to UNITA. It sanctioned the cease-fire talks with

Angola. It decides how and when to respond to Western initiatives."[38]

Through the transformation of the SSC into a centralized, decision-making power, Botha

greatly increased the importance of the security forces. Botha's tenure was marked by "a

decisive centralization of power in the hands of the Prime Minister" as well as "a striking

militarization of the decision making and administrative structures of the state."[39] This

militarization was based on ideological trends within the security forces that had led to the

announcement of the need for "Total Strategy" in a 1977 Defence White Paper.

"Total Strategy" is the most famous idea associated with the Botha regime. No other

ideology would lead the government to press so far in the suppression of minority rights. This

ideology led to rapidly-expanding police and military powers, which in turn led to a culture of

impunity among SAP and SADF members. In short, "Total Strategy" cast arguments for

apartheid in an internationalized context. It enabled a more subtle, and more dangerous, strategy

of suppression of minority rights.

"Total Strategy" did not begin with South Africans, but rather with a Frenchman. French

General Andre Beafre first used the phrase 'Total Strategy' when writing about his experiences

in the Algerian war. He spoke of the necessity of political, economic, and military engagement

with the enemy, and, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, "exerted the dominant influence on South

African military thinking."[40] In this period of time, South African military officials were

beginning to realize the necessity of a more sophisticated response to the challenge posed by the

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[38] Robert I. Rotberg, et al., *South Africa and Its Neighbors: Regional Security and Self-Interest*, 20.
[39] *ibid*, 192
[40] James Sanders, *Apartheid's Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Secret Service*, 146.

ANC, and "the generals themselves have repeatedly stressed that the survival of South African apartheid capitalism depends primarily on the development of an adequate *political* response- both internally and in the region- and not mere mindless mobilization of military might."[41] It is logical that Botha, the former Minister of Defense, would find traction in Beafre's ideas.

"Total Strategy" was introduced in the South African context in a 1977 Defence White Paper drafted by Magnus Malan. He stated, "In a mature state the fundamental concepts of conflict entail far more than war. It means the formulation of national objectives in which all the community's resources are mustered and managed on a coordinated level to ensure survival. Every activity of the state must be seen and understood as a function of total war. As long as we are not fighting back we are losing."[42] In practice, this meant the creation of a highly centralized state, which would mobilize "economic, political, and psycho-social as well as military resources necessary to defend and advance the interests of the apartheid state both at the internal and regional levels."[43]

The ideology of state repression was furthered by another outside academic, this time an American. Samuel Huntington of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard visited South Africa in 1981. He would later become famous for his "Clash of Civilizations" thesis that guided American politicians in the wake of 9/11;[44] however in South Africa in the 1980s Huntington's ideas were recognized for providing justification for "Dirty War." The thesis of "Dirty War" stated that, "A governing power can defeat any revolutionary movement if it adapts

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[41] Robert Davies, and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," 185.

[42] Magnus Malan quoted in, Robert I. Rotberg, et al., *South Africa and Its Neighbors: Regional Security and Self-Interest*, 17.

[43] Robert Davies, and Dan O'Meara, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978," 189.

[44] Huntington, Samuel P, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*; (Summer 1993).

the revolutionary strategy and principles and applies them in reverse to defeat the revolutionaries with their own weapons on their own battlefield."[45] This definition found great traction within the SAP and SADF. It justified the use of aggressive counter-intelligence tactics abroad and domestically.

The combination of reasoning for "Total Strategy" and "Dirty War" led to an increased militarization of South African society. The implementation of "Total Strategy" and "Dirty War" tactics gained traction in the South African state apparatus at a political, economic, and ideological level. "Total Strategy" ideology was responsible for the "increasing political influence of the military within the state and within executive decision-making" and it encouraged "the establishment of a domestic arms industry and the emergence of a local military-industrial complex based on the convergence of interests between the state, the military and private capital in defending white minority rule."[46] Most importantly, "Total Strategy" provided an ideological defense for apartheid and "legitimation of violence as a solution to conflict both within South Africa and the region."[47]

Rotberg best sums up the institutional changes wrought by the introduction of "Total Strategy." He says, "Two elements epitomize the striking difference between South African decision making before and after 1980: (1) There now is a formal mechanism intended to apply to the entire system of national government; (2) the military fuels and lubricates this mechanism, and is largely responsible for its momentum and direction."[48] If the SSC created and sanctioned the use of "Total Strategy," it was the SAP who carried out the application on the ground. The

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[45] Samuel Huntington, quoted in James Sanders, *Apartheid's Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Secret Service*, 148.

[46] Batchelor, and Willett, *Disarmament and Defence: Industrial Adjustment in South Africa*, 7.

[47] *ibid*

[48] Robert I. Rotberg, et al., *South Africa and Its Neighbors: Regional Security and Self-Interest*, 14.

1980s were the beginning of a resurgence of protest within South Africa. Under the banner of the United Democratic Front (UDF), myriad civil society and protest movements applied greater and greater pressure to the South African state. Police responded with arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial assassinations.

Sometimes the orders for these assassinations could be traced back to the state. The Civil Cooperation Bureau, a series of front organizations, was created by Defense Minister Magnus Malan to hide assassinations of leading apartheid activists. A wider-reaching trend emerged during the 1980s, however, of the SAP creating its own institutions to carry out decidedly illegal attacks. The most egregious example of this illegal activity was the Vlaakplaas Death Squad Unit, which was created solely as an assassination unit and killed notable activists such as Griffiths Mxenge. As tragic as the existence of Vlaakplaas was, though, it was on the whole an aberration. Of infinitely more concern for South Africa was the impunity with which SAP members acted in the townships, where no efforts for secrecy were made.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, violence in the townships reached an all-time high. Beginning in the 1990s, newspapers in both South Africa and abroad screamed with headlines about "Black on Black" violence within South African townships. The violence created anarchic areas in some townships and, for the National Party government, in the midst of negotiations with the ANC, the violence seemed to confirm the need for continued NP guidance to the country. Although the NP pointed to this violence to strengthen their negotiating positions, in reality, security forces were reading cues from NP leaders and providing active and tacit support to one group in order to unsettle the ANC.

The South African State was actually itself to blame for much of the township violence because of its active and tacit support of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), a Zulu-based nationalist party that stood aligned against the ANC. The IFP had evolved from a Zulu-power group and was identified as a Zulu political group. Its ideology clashed with that of the ANC, which had taken up the mantle of protest from UDF-aligned groups and was in negotiations with the NP government. The ANC was self-consciously colorblind, where the IFP had evolved from a Zulu-power group and was identified as a Zulu political group.

The conflict took on a geographical nature within the townships, as certain streets would become no-go zones and violence became an increasingly normalized part of life. Hostels, which had architecture suggestive of military barracks, had been built for single black workers who traveled away from their homelands to live in the townships and provide labor for white industries. Hostels that were home to groups of IFP supporters became zones of violence. Often weapons were stored in the hostels, and militant youth would act as snipers, taking shots out the windows toward people in the streets. ANC support tended to be localized within the single-family homes in townships, and in each township, some streets surrounding these areas would also become no-go zones.

Both groups were eager to arm themselves, and AK-47s, often smuggled from abroad through Swaziland, were the weapons of choice. It was also fairly common for members of either side to loot weapons that had been dropped during a firefight. The IFP was adamant about its right for members to carry "cultural weapons" such as spears or pangas. It was legal for the IFP to carry these weapons during marches, and they were often used for looting and attacks that followed the marches, a fact often cited by ANC members as justification for the formation of the paramilitary Self Defense Units.

Government support for the IFP was most evident in NP efforts to legalize the use of

Zulu "cultural weapons." Less evident, but more ominous, was the support of the SAP and the

SADF for IFP members. The support security forces gave the IFP was not specifically

sanctioned by government leadership, but rather came about because of years of government

classification of the ANC as "terrorists" and the enemy. Thus policemen, most of whom had

fought black liberation movements with military tactics on tours of duty in the frontline states,

brought similar mindsets and tactics with them to the townships. The government implicitly

condoned these actions through its refusal to actively investigate reports of police brutality. Not

surprisingly, examples of brutality became increasingly common.

Alarmingly, it was regularly alleged that SAP members actually accompanied IFP

members on raids and took part in the violence. Many ANC members recorded these

recollections when applying for amnesty through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Jajnguxolo Wiseman Mulenzana wrote in his amnesty application that, "The IFP had the support

of the police and when they attacked they were accompanied by the police."[49] Jabulani Josias

Yende, an SDU member in Thukoza, agreed with this statement, saying, "We could not rely on

the SAP to protect us because they supported the IFP and often were part and parcel of the

attacks."[50] An ANC media report from September 1991 records that in Soweto, "on Sunday the

8th the IFP... proceeded to the Dobsonville Stadium. On their way they were breaking windows

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[49] Testimony by Jajnguxolo Wiseman Mulenzana, Thukoza, (1990-1993), Sally Sealy, Collection C22-45, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
[50] Testimony by Jabulani Josias Yende, Thukoza, (1990-1993), Sally Sealy, Collection C22-45, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

and intimidating people … The police arrived but just escorted them. Property that was looted was seen loaded onto police casspirs [armored vehicles]."[51]

The police also gained a reputation for a refusal to arrest IFP members or take action in areas controlled by the IFP. A statement jointly submitted by several amnesty applicants claimed, "When we were attacked by the IFP the police would never be around to protect us.… They never seemed to arrest or open fire on the SPUs of Inkatha, but they arrested, tortured and killed many SDU members."[52] These complaints garnered little traction with government officials. Instead, the actions of the security forces were defended in the highest levels of government. In a letter responding to ANC complaints of SAP violence, Adrian Vlok, the Minister of Law and Order, responded, "I have been assured by the Regional Commissioner of Police in Soweto that all officers and men have the strictest orders to act decisively and impartially towards everyone. I can therefore assure you of decisive and impartial policing in Soweto."[53]

The presence of such a wide group of security forces providing such blatant support for the IFP marked the culmination of reactionary, racist national policy. The government did not specifically mandate the security forces' preference for the IFP, yet the security forces had been trained to repress the ANC. Because the government was not technically condoning these actions, many attributed the violence to a "Third Force" of disgruntled security workers willing to lash out.

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[51] Mameoepa, Ronnie, "September Media Report," ANC PWV Media Office, Sally Sealy, Collection C22-45, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
[52] "Joint ANC Statement" (1996), Sally Sealy, Collection C71, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
[53] Vlok, Adrian, "Letter to Barbara Hogan," (May 16, 1991), Barbara Hogan Collection, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

This denial, typical of regular government refusal to investigate violence in the security forces, was highly offensive to the ANC and human rights activists alike. Notables such as Nelson Mandela accused the government of being "responsible for the culture of violence" and used the term "Third Force" to explain what was happening.[54] Brian Currin, the head of Lawyers for Human Rights, best summed up the destructive capacity of the "Third Force" in a letter to FW de Klerk. He wrote, "However, that does not mean that there are not individual policemen who have right-wing tendencies and who have their own political agenda, namely to destabilize the black community. The violence in the townships undeniably has the effect of making white South Africans uneasy about your bold reform measures and would tend to result in greater support for the Conservative Party and similar right-wing political organizations. When we talk about a third-force we are referring to dissident members of the Security Forces who have their own political agenda."[55] When a 1989 study showed that "75 per cent of Afrikaner student respondents indicated that they would resist physically an ANC government or emigrate for political reasons," it is little wonder that members of the SAP, who had been raised in a culture of racism and reaction, were willing to act violently against the SDUs, despite the signs that South African politics were soon to change.

Although the civilian white population grew more acclimated to the idea of majority rule in the course of the 1990s, for many in the security forces, the transition was not so easy. Police and military reform were contentious issues in 1994 and beyond. Much of the frustration the security forces felt with government willingness to negotiate itself out of power was based on the

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[54] Mandela, Nelson, quoted in Hogan, Barbara, "Breach of Paragraph 2.4 of the National Peace Accord" ANC Internal Papers, Barbara Hogan Collection, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

[55] Currin, Brian, "Letter to FW de Klerk," (May 12, 1991), Brian Currin Collection, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

militarized frame of reference acquired through the close cooperation of government policymakers and security forces throughout the 1980s. The covert instances of security forces' involvement in attacks and terrorism rose throughout the early 1990s, culminating in Mandela's warnings that "Third Force" actions could reset the status of negotiations. Security force involvement in "Third Force" actions showed the independence of the forces. With the totality of their professional experiences supporting the idea that security forces and government had a symbiotic relationship, it is little wonder that when the government tried to pull back from its militarized path, security forces did not acquiesce to the new path of reconciliation.

This refusal, on the part of security forces, to accept a devolution of power, caused tension between the security forces and policymakers. Throughout the 1990s, a shockingly large number of policemen dropped out of the force and joined private security companies that operated either within South Africa or abroad. The same forces that led to the SAP's stubborn refusal to see the ANC as anything but terrorists even into the 1990s, led members of the SAP to struggle in adopting to the new post-apartheid South Africa. These relationships between the South African government and apartheid-era security forces shaped security policy in the 1980s and 1990s, and former security forces have continued to influence post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 2: Habitus and the Security Forces

Through years of experience, white security force personnel within the South African

Police (SAP) and the South African Defense Force (SADF) together built a strong esprit de

corps. Common upbringing, shared language, and familiar daily experiences helped police

officers and soldiers form a common habitus that condoned reactionary violence, racism, and

chauvinism in the daily work of security forces. The use of excessive force in protest

suppression drew derision from the outside world, which in turn encouraged security force

personnel to turn to one another for support. By the 1990s, intense loyalty tied together many

security force members, and created an environment in which security forces used social capital

to build private firms in the post-apartheid era. The social capital that helped private security

companies to thrive was predicated on a common identity formed among security forces in the

1980s. In this period, ethnicity, shared experience, and shared beliefs came together in the

members of the apartheid-era security forces to encourage a heavily politicized and militarized

security apparatus that supported the inequities of apartheid in tragically violent ways.

The formation of a common habitus within the security forces began prior to the

members' inductions into their units. The police, especially, drew from a small ethnic and

economic group. The SAP did not pay particularly well, especially for new recruits. As a result

members tended to come from "the lesser-skilled and lower-class sectors" of the Afrikaner

community.[56] The force quickly reached a critical mass of Afrikaners, particularly at the rank of

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[56] Cawthra, Gavin, *Policing South Africa* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1993), 3

sergeant and below.[57] The shared background of recruits, and the use of Afrikaans as a common language, helped to keep the force overwhelmingly Afrikaner.

Recruits' shared background was frequently one with religious and political overtones. Many SAP officers were raised in households that were deeply supportive of the government. A 1997 edition of the *Eastern Province Herald* highlights the connection between the background of SAP members and their support of the government. A profile of former police officer Gerrit Erasmus reads, "Erasmus grew up in a religious household which firmly believed in the National Party's apartheid policy … There were strong political and religious influences in his home in Fraserburg, where his father was a farmer."[58] For many Afrikaners, religion helped to justify apartheid. The Dutch Reformed Church was an overwhelmingly Afrikaner institution, and it actively supported apartheid efforts. The Reverend Neels de Plooy of the Dutch Reformed Church remembers that in the late 1970s, "Almost every synod of the DRC during this time supported the military efforts in their prayers."[59]

Religion was a factor in SAP Officer Eric Taylor's background as well. Taylor, a life-long police officer who headed up a death squad that brutally murdered anti-apartheid activists, including Matthew Goniwe, pointed to his upbringing when trying to explain his actions. Taylor was born into an Afrikaner family, raised in the Dutch Reformed Church, and spent his childhood moving from town to town in the Eastern Cape.[60] A report of his testimony reads,

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[57] Brewer, John, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa* (Clarendon Press: Oxford. 1994), 211. John Brewer dates this trend to 1955, a year which marked the formation of the Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniging van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie (AKPOL), an "Afrikaans cultural association." In Brewer's estimation, its influence was so strong that "the occupational culture of the force was thoroughly Afrikanerized, marginalizing the few remaining English-speakers in the force."

[58] Cooper, Beth, "Raised to Believe in Apartheid," *Eastern Province Herald,* September 23, 1997.

[59] Neels de Plooy, quoted in "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report", Volume V, South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission, (October 29, 1998): 290.

[60] Maykuth, Andrew, "In regret, a policeman seeks amnesty- and absolution" *Inquirer,* October 28, 1998.

"He [Taylor] said he had joined the force straight from school and had done 'township duty' while still a student. This was followed by bush training and in 1976 stints in Cape Town and Soweto. In 1977 he did Border duty and in 1978 was approached to join the Secuity [sic] branch."[61] Not only does Taylor's testimony highlight the young age at which many joined the SAP, but it is also an important example of the frequency of relocation demanded of SAP members. Frequent movement could be a regular, and lonely, part of police life. Captain Johan Burger recalled that fresh out of high school, he was relocated from his home in the Eastern Cape to Johannesburg, to be a part of an urban policing force there.[62] In an unfamiliar environment, with little outside opportunity for socializing, ties of friendship between SAP members became all the more important. The shared language of Afrikaans and the shared experience of training and daily work cemented relationships with mutual respect and cultural understanding.

For members of the police and military, reinforcement of the status quo became one of the main tenets of security-force life. This was traceable to an unclear delegation of tasks within the chain of command. Upper levels of the SAP lacked a functioning chain of command, while many branches of the police were highly fragmented, so that "at critical junctures the force spoke with many voices, often pursuing a series of changing micro-strategies."[63] At the ground level this translated into little guidance for individuals. Frequently, the most successful policemen were those who kept their heads down and built connections within the ranks. The SAP's status quo was reinforced through promotions because "its officer corps is made up mostly of men who worked their way to the top and whose whole life is the SAP. Its distinctive 'cop culture' thus

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[61] "Meeting at N.G. Kerk Van Der Stel Street Kabega of Members of the Families of the 'Cradock Four' and One of the Perpetrators: Eric Taylor," (April 21, 1997), Janet Cherry Collection A, South African History Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

[62] Johan Burger (former SAP Captain), in a discussion with the author, January 31, 2012.

[63] Cawthra, *Policing Apartheid*, 8

reproduces itself year after year with little external input."[64] These men who rose through the ranks had spent their lives absorbing SAP reasoning and National Party political doctrine, and were thus less likely to think in terms of challenging the status quo.

In all security forces, lower-ranking members are expected to obey orders. Obedience is a standard facet of military and police life worldwide. South African Armed Defense Force leaders were adamant that this culture of obedience was very much ingrained within the SADF. In their submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, SADF leaders explained, "A natural element of an army's culture is that it easily accepts authority (it is an authoritarian organization). That is why it serves consecutive 'governments of the day' remarkably well. This element coupled with an army's general apolitical behaviour make it an organization that is quite adaptable. An army works on orders from the top. You can change the top men but the army culture remains much the same."[65] This willingness to follow chain of command is a central trait of police and military structure, yet the successful application of obedience is premised upon the army or police being "apolitical." The SADF was tasked with the enforcement of apartheid policies within South Africa and destabilization of regional regimes. Given these political tasks, the structure of obedience enabled the institutionalization of human rights abuses.

The culture of obedience was present in the SAP as well. Former police officer John Deegan describes how the training provided to SAP members inculcated obedience: "Individualistic behaviour was punishable not only by the system of instructors, trainers and officers, but by your peers as well- fellow trainees eventually through fear of punishment would punish fellow students before infringements came to the notice of superiors … I learnt early on

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[64] Cawthra, *Policing Apartheid,* 3
[65] "SADF Contact Bureau TRC Submission" (February, 1998), Collection AL3098F, South African History Archive, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 16.

in my training that individualism was out."[66] The inculcation of such obedience deeply affected SAP officers' ability to think independently about the consequences of their actions, a state of mind that allowed for human rights abuses to be committed with little forethought.

It is hard to imagine how any security force can remain apolitical while supporting an inherently political and racist system. In other words, when security policies created by government officials are politicized, and there is pressure from peers and superiors alike to maintain and uphold racist laws, it can easily become unclear to individuals within the security forces where the responsibility for moral action lies or even what the moral action is. In South Africa, often the easiest course of action, simply obeying orders, was the one taken.

Members of the security forces felt social pressure not to ask uncomfortable questions. Within the police force, decentralization made it possible to concentrate on tasks within one's unit and to ignore potentially worrisome actions of other units. Eric Taylor explained how units such as his managed to operate without the awareness of the rest of the branch. Following Taylor's conversation with the family of murdered activist Matthew Goniwe, it was reported that "the response to whether it was automatic that if you were a member of the Sec B you were automatically part of a hit squad was 'No.' In fact he had not even known of their existence although he had heard rumours about the PEBCO 3 and was not so stupid as to not recognize a pattern. But it was not discussed."[67] The propensity to ignore such blatant signs of illegal behavior can only be explained by an entrenched culture of maintenance of the status quo and loyalty to goals believed to be desired by one's superiors.

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[66] Deegan, John, quoted in "Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report," Volume V, South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission, (October 29, 1998), 287.

[67] Taylor, Interview.

Security forces were willing to ignore these signs because they believed that in the event that they were found culpable, their superiors who understood what they were doing would protect them from censure. Simultaneously, superiors knew that by giving very vague cues for action, they themselves could not be held accountable. Amnesty applicant Johan Van Eyck was a Branch Commander in Witfontein in 1976, where he allowed his men to use aggressive interrogation methods, believing signals interpreted from his higher-ups gave him a green light to continue to torture detainees. In his application for amnesty, he stated, "I did not receive instructions from officers to make use of interrogation methods, but I believed that they approved of these methods, since in the time that I was there certain charges of assault were made against me and I could refute the complainants' cases … It was clear to me that these officers were well-aware of my action and my conduct."[68] His statement highlights the vagaries of the system of command within the police. With unclear orders, individuals were left with their training in obedience and a mandate to follow pro-government policies. These tendencies were often carried to extremes.

The South African Police were the main bulwark in the defense of apartheid. Policemen were aware of this, and, when criticized, were quick to point out that they believed it was their duty to physically defend the political laws and guidelines set out by the National Party. Eric Taylor tried to explain to Matthew Goniwe's family why he came to believe in the necessity of murder. A report of the conversation shows that Taylor was careful to highlight his introduction into national political trends within the SAP: "He was slowly inducted in the ideologies of the system. There were two main themes to this: total onslaught of the communists, revolution from

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[68] "Van Eyck Amnesty Application," Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Application, (July 1996).

the ANC."[69] One of Taylor's partners affirmed his own belief that national politics had been a

strong motivating factor in SAP excesses, saying in his testimony, "I'm indeed sorry for what

happened. The job [with the SAP] compelled us to do this and we really believed in the National

Party struggle."[70] Among policemen, the links between national security threats and the ANC

were considered obvious.

Another former policeman, Gideon Niewoudt, "said the National Party government

played a leading role in conditioning and influencing members of the security forces and this

influenced him to be loyal to the government."[71] This indoctrination was so strong that as late as

November 1991, an Independent Board of Inquiry reported that, "There are indications that

members of the South African Police are still operating with a 'total onslaught' philosophy."[72]

It was not only the SAP that was influenced by political discourse. Leaders of the SADF

maintain that "some people were genuinely concerned about a planned attempt to introduce

Communism," and are offended that "this perception is presently mocked, as an anxious reaction

from people who 'looked for a communist behind every bush.'"[73]

These anti-communist beliefs blended with a sense of duty for the government and for the

nation of South Africa. Former policeman Major Herman du Plessis remembers the patriotism

of his superior, Head of Eastern Cape Security Branch Colonel Harold Snyman: "Colonel

Snyman- who I always regarded as a soft-hearted person- said we must do what was in the

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[69] Taylor, Interview.

[70] Niewoudt, Gideon, quoted in, "Ex-co-'s plea for 'mercy' at TRC hearing" *Eastern Province Herald,* June 2, 1998.

[71] Niewoudt, Gideon, quoted in, Salisu, Mnecidisi, "Loyal Servant of NP Government" *Eastern Province Herald*, September 9, 1997.

[72] "Report of the Independent Board of Inquiry for the Period December 1992 to January 1993," (January 1993) Brian Currin Collection, South African History Archive, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Board Members included: Dr. Alex Boraine, Mrs. Judy Chalmers, Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, Dr. Max coleman, Mr. Brian Currin, Professor Dugard, Mrs. Sheena Duncan, Mr. Peter Harris, Mr. Peter Kerchoff, Ms. Lydia Kompe, Mrs. Emma Mashini, Br. Jude Pieterse, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

[73] "SADF Contact Bureau TRC Submission," 5.

interests of our country."[74] The "soft-hearted" Snyman's willingness to authorize an

assassination by a hit squad for his country was not a rare example among the police or the

military. The response to calls for patriotic defense of South Africa against the "total onslaught"

of the ANC and Communist Party frequently manifested itself in unthinking demonstrations of

force. The presence of "Total Strategy" seemed to pave a clear path for police. When asked

why he carried out elimination orders, Police officer Van Zyl answered, "I have asked myself

that question. I think at the time I was just so motivated that I was prepared to do anything for

this country. I have no other real explanation other than that."[75] Van Zyl made it clear he

believed assassination "was the only way to stabilize the political unrest."[76]

Other police officers not only characterized their actions as supportive of their country,

but also identified national political policy to be a direct driver of these actions. A former death

squad member described how he believed that because of the volatile situation in the country at

the time with the "impending threat of the ANC and communism," he acted in the interests of the

country. He did not regard his actions as being criminal. He identified another motivating factor

to be the repeated warnings from State President PW Botha and Defense Minister Magnus Malan

of "the total onslaught" and "the threat of communism."[77]

Indeed, the threat of communism weighed heavily on the minds of security-force

personnel, and many believed that they needed to do whatever it would take to win a desperate

battle. The sentiment that "I could not fight communism by using the Queensbury rules"[78] was

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[74] Du Plessis, Herman, quoted in, Rademeyer, "TRC told how Goniwe and others butchered" *Eastern Province Herald,* February 24, 1998.
[75] Van Zyle, quoted in, Sherman, Angela, "Hit Squad Leader May Apologise" *Evening Post*, February 25, 1998.
[76] *ibid*.
[77] "Killed for SA", *Evening Post*, February 25, 1998.
[78] Cooper, "Raised to believe in apartheid."

common amongst military and police alike. This thinking served as a justification for violence and intimidation, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

It is striking that fear of communism continued to play such a large part in security-force rationale at the end of the apartheid era. The fear of communism was so infectious among security forces that it continued even past the fall of the Soviet Union. In his October 1997 testimony, former Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok said, "I believed and still believe that if the forces of Communism and Marxism since the 1950s were allowed to take over South Africa, our country would today be destroyed, impoverished and a backward country."[79] It is a sign of the importance the security forces placed on the threat of communism that Vlok felt a need to refer to a communist threat at a time when the South African public was not vocal in expressing concern over communism.

National Party officials and security-force leaders saw clear links between communism and the ANC because of the ANC's close ties with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and because of the help the ANC received from communists abroad. While the reality of the relations between the ANC and the Communist Party remains up for debate,[80] it is clear that the SAP strongly believed the ANC to be a communist threat. In the era of "Total Onslaught," this perception meant that members of the ANC, like communists abroad, were seen as military targets. The danger posed by the ANC was perceived, then, as international and regional as well as domestic within South African townships. This heightened sense of danger brought with it a heightened awareness of the potential for destruction at the hands of "the enemy."

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[79] Vlok, Adriaan, quoted in Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume V, 278
[80] Ellis, Stephen. "The ANC in Exile." African Affairs 90, No. 360 (1991): 439-47, and Lodge, Tom. "Resistance and Reform, 1973-1994." 2012, for a discussion of interaction between the SACP and the ANC. Both conclude that, although there was significant overlap between ANC members and SACP members, the ANC was always independent of international communist strategy.

Frequently highlighted was the danger posed directly to the security forces and their families by violence within the townships and terrorist acts committed by the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). High-ranking police officers submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that, "Members of the South African Police and their families were murdered and maimed, in some cases in the most gruesome way, and were further isolated and rejected by certain communities as a result of the actions by the ANC/SACP alliance and the PAC [Pan African Congress]."[81]

These claims are not disputed; indeed, risks to policemen were real. A December 1992 report to the Independent Board of Inquiry found that, "More than 200 policemen were killed in the line of duty in 1992 … Police Commissioner General Johan van der Merwe said 80 of the 88 members killed on duty from January to October had died of gunshot wounds. In 28 cases AK-47s had been used."[82] Policing the townships ranked as one of the most dangerous jobs available to South Africans in the late 1980s and early 1990s. To minimize casualties, "policemen, particularly during periods of heightened conflict, only entered townships if they were heavily armed, and travelled in armoured vehicles."[83] This statement does not take into account the suffering of black police officers who resided in the townships and were driven out of their homes by their neighbors because they were employed by the SAP. If policing was dangerous for whites, it was even more dangerous for blacks. While the danger to policemen was undeniable, police reaction to this danger encouraged the disturbing trend of militarization of civilian policing.

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[81] Foundation for Equality Before the Law , 190

[82] "Report of the Independent Board of Inquiry for the Period December 1992 to January 1993" Board Members included: Dr. Alex Boraine, Mrs. Judy Chalmers, Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, Dr. Max coleman, Mr. Brian Currin, Professor Dugard, Mrs. Sheena Duncan, Mr. Peter Harris, Mr. Peter Kerchoff, Ms. Lydia Kompe, Mrs. Emma Mashini, Br. Jude Pieterse, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

[83] Shaw, Mark. *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Hurst & Co., London: 2002), 12

The situation in the townships in the early 1990s was both complicated and violent. The intersection of political movements with thug-like violence made townships across the country extremely volatile. Urban areas had long been the central points of protest, from the ANC Youth League's 1950s organized pass law violations, to the 1976 Soweto uprisings, to United Democratic Front (UDF) mobilization of hundreds of civil society groups within the townships. The sustained and extreme levels of violence in the early 1990s were, however, a new phenomenon.[84] Violence centered primarily around groups of youth, frequently secondary students, who were nominally allied with the ANC, UDF, PAC, or the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). These youth had become politicized in the 1980s, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the "democratic procedures and debates which had become an article of faith for the majority of youth organizations eroded" as heavy repression meant "student organizations were deprived of their leadership and ties that linked political groups in a loose but coherent organizational network."[85] This repression created a leadership gap in which "increasingly the more daring ones [youth] regarded themselves as leaders of the struggle and took it upon themselves to enforce compliance by brutal means."[86] Adult leadership proved unable, and at times unwilling, to discipline youth who committed violent acts in the name of political mobilization. UDF leadership testimony explained the UDF's tolerance of youth-led violence, saying, "So they [the youth] were undisciplined in some instances. When they did that they were not acting within the UDF policy- but we own them, they are part of us, and they are part of our history and we accept

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[84] There was a dramatic increase in political violence, rising from 661 deaths in 1987 to 1,403 in 1989, and 1,591 in the first 6 months of 1990. The majority of these deaths were a result of township violence. Further statistics can be found in Graeme and Rauch's "Political Violence" *South African Human Rights Yearbook*, Vol. 3, 1992. Between 1990 and 1992, 7,000 individuals were killed ("Security Force Complicity in Torture and Political Killings 1990-1992" *Amnesty International* 1992).

[85] Melkote, Rama S. "'Blacks against Blacks' Violence in South Africa" *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 28, No. 23 (June 5, 1993), 1147.

[86] *ibid*

them as part of our family."[87] Still, while youth claimed the mantle of political protest, they were more closely tied to events within their neighborhoods than to those of international political organizations.

Youth in the ANC and UDF formed Self Defense Units (SDUs), ostensibly to "defend their areas against the Security Forces," but in practice, these SDUs were also used to promote the aims of their favored political party.[88] In practice, this political promotion consisted of "brutal enforcement of labour, consumer and student boycotts that involved gross violations of human rights."[89] Attacks against members of other political groups were common as well. "Necklacing," the practice of entrapping people in car tires set alight with petrol, was among the more distinctively gruesome forms of violence used toward this end. These violent crimes were committed with the intent of furthering the anti-apartheid movement, even though they were not condoned by movement leadership. The UDF's submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission addressed this gap between youth and leadership by arguing that "many activists interpreted statements by the UDF and its allies making reference to the breaking down of apartheid to mean that this should be done by means of violence… [but] the acts were committed by youths acting on their own, even though some may have believed that this was being done in the interests of the struggle."[90]

This issue of violence was further confused by the ANC's influence in the townships. While the ANC had few members within the townships and thus little urban organizational power in the mid-1980s, its confrontational call to "make townships ungovernable" was

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[87] Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume V, 269.

[88] Motumi, Tsepe, "Self Defence Units: A Brief Examination of their History and a Look at their Future" *African Defence Review* Issue No. 15, (1994).

[89] Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume V, 266.

[90] *ibid*

extremely popular among youth who "took it upon themselves to serve as shock-troops."[91] Unclear signals from national anti-apartheid movements furthered youth-led violence on the ground.

This tension between old and young is powerfully described by Rian Malan in his controversial memoir, *My Traitor's Heart*. A journalist at the time, Malan recalls anarchic conditions on the ground: "Thousands of moderate, middle-aged blacks were herded to funerals and rallies by young comrades shaking boxes of matches- a not-so-subtle warning of what awaited those who approached the struggle with insufficient enthusiasm …Who was really in charge- the reasoned and rational black leaders who sat behind the desks, or the teenagers in the streets?"[92] In an era of extreme instability within township populations, it is painfully obvious that security forces did not understand the decentralized, youthful, and extremist dynamics of the SDUs.

Statements by SAP leaders make clear that the SAP viewed the SDUs as overtly politicized and poised for organized military action. The Foundation for Equality Before the Law writes, "The SA Police had reason to believe that the SDU's could easily be converted and deployed as a private or revolutionary army for individuals in control thereof and specifically for their own political objectives."[93] Police also insisted that the SDUs were trained and disciplined by the ANC, reporting, "Cognizance must be had of the military nature of the training afforded to SDU's and the active involvement of MK cadres in both their training and structures."[94] This misguided understanding of township dynamics ultimately made the violence much worse. The

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[91] Simpson, Thula. "'Umkhonto we Sizwe, We are Waiting for You': The ANC and the Township Uprising, September 1984-September 1985" *South African Historical Journal* 61:1, 2009. 175
[92] Malan, Rian "My Traitor's Heart" pg 271.
[93] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 91.
[94] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 32.

security forces responded to what they perceived as militaristic organizations with a level of force appropriate for a warzone, rather than for a neighborhood.

In this state of insecurity, SAP and SADF forces operated with a political agenda. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission asserted that during this period, "the state provided covert support for homeland leaders and for Inkatha,"[95] while South African media reported that "at least 200 Inkatha members received military training from South African security forces in the Caprivi strip in late 1986 and early 1987."[96] In 1992, Amnesty International reported, "The overwhelming majority [of victims] have been members or perceived sympathizers of the ANC and other formerly banned organizations, members of trade unions and human rights and peace groups, as well as people of unknown affiliation who died during attacks on commuter trains."[97] Operations that were so heavy in civilian casualties would have been tolerated only during a perceived state of war.

Constand Viljoen, former Chief of the SADF, referenced this perceived state of war when he argued that the actions of the anti-apartheid groups changed the situation on the ground: "The liberation struggle used revolutionary methods to coerce. This was a new kind of total war."[98] The perception of total war was used by members of the security forces to justify human rights violations. A 1992 ANC bulletin reports, "The Goldstone Commission conducted an inquiry on the 4th of May 1992 into the conduct of members of the 32 Battalion of the South African Defence Force. It was alleged that a large number of members of the Battalion had attacked the community of Phola Park and been responsible for a number of unlawful actions, including

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[95] Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume V, 275.

[96] Koshy, Ninan, "'Third Force' in South Africa" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 29, No. 15 (April 9, 1994), 48.

[97] "Security Force Complicity in Torture and Political Killings 1990-1992" *Amnesty International, (*1992).

[98] Constand Viljoen, quoted in Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume V, 263

assault and rape. During the evidence of Captain Mark Hermansen of 32 Battalion he justified the use of force by members of his battalion on the grounds that they were involved in a war-type situation."[99]

The legitimization of violent responses against SDUs was also a reflection of the decentralized nature of the SAP.   Unclear chain of command meant that violence "often occurred in the gray area between legitimate orders given, the interpretation of such orders in circumstances where secrecy and other factors made proper communication difficult or impossible, [and] requests which were not always properly expressed … which negatively affected the normal day-to-day functioning of the South African Police."[100] While SAP leadership makes clear how poor communication within the security forces' chain of command exacerbated the blurring of civilian and military targets, its statements do not fully express how this blurred paradigm affected the actions of security forces and civilians alike.

Police were aware of the SDUs' destructive capabilities, writing that, "during certain investigations, various armaments, including AK 47 rifles, hand grenades, limpet mines and explosive devises were seized from SDU members. The very nature of these armaments were [sic] indicative of the offensive capabilities of the SDU members and left little doubt as to their military capabilities."[101] Police were also aware of petty crime perpetrated by SDU members, reporting, "At the outset it must be mentioned that the criminal activities of members of the SDU's were not only restricted to crimes of violence and acts of intimidation, but also extended

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[99] "Annexure 2: Involvement of Security Forces in the Fomenting and Escalation of Violence" ANC Internal Document, (May 19, 1992). Barbara Hogan Collection 10.1, South African Historical Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

[100] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 190.
[101] ibid, 93.

to ordinary common law and statutory crimes, including unlawful economic gain."[102] While

individual indicators of street-level anarchy were duly recorded by SAP members,

misunderstanding of the origins and motivations of the SDUs kept the police unequipped with

the tactics necessary to control the indiscriminate violence.

It was the security forces' training and indoctrination in anti-communism that

predisposed them to exaggerate the SDUs' connections to the national struggle, and to

misunderstand the decentralized tendency of the SDUs to promulgate fracture and terror. One of

the most tragic effects emanating from the security forces' paradigm was their tendency to

dehumanize enemies. This viewpoint is typically applied to military targets; in war, an "us

versus them" mentality is of benefit. However, police work is defined by action to protect

civilians and to apprehend, but not mistreat, lawbreakers. Viewing the ANC and its affiliates as

less-than-human enemy combatants intensified tendencies to overreact with militarized assaults

instead of choosing the measured actions expected of a police force.

Heightened emotion was a hallmark of this dehumanizing trend. Police leaders believed

MK attacks "show in most instances, total disregard for human feeling and emotions."[103] By

characterizing the enemy as having a "total disregard for human feeling," this point of view

legitimized violent approaches to containing violent enemies.

The same police leaders fully grasped the level of discord in the townships: "The

organizing and mobilizing of the masses had reached such unprecedented heights that sheer

unmitigated violence, intimidation, unrest, assault and murder was orchestrated and controlled at

street level to such an extent that scenes of the most inhumane cruelty, involving in many

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[102] *Ibid.*
[103] *ibid.*

instances completely innocent victims, were virtually a daily occurrence throughout the country."[104] This statement is not an exaggeration. Violent and inhumane punishments such as "necklacing" frequently resulted in death. The problem was that police saw these inhumane acts as being performed by extremists who were less than human, rather than by angry youth who had grown up without economic, health, or educational opportunities. This viewpoint, when coupled with the belief that the ANC was orchestrating the street-level violence, led the security forces to act in inhumane ways against the ANC and any perceived collaborators. A basic misunderstanding of the situation created a vicious cycle in which security forces reacted in ways that only intensified the conflict.

Many in the security forces genuinely feared that the ANC had access to methods of fighting that the security forces did not, and that this imbalance put the SAP at a disadvantage. Police leadership explained that "the point, however, which many people lose sight of is the fact that while the perpetrators had no regard for any 'Queensbury Rules' approach, the police had to operate within the ambit and confines of the law."[105] This perceived unfairness, believed to impact life and death situations, motivated police officers on an individual level to ignore their training and to react with excessive force. In their eyes, they were merely leveling the playing field so that they could respond effectively to the threats of the ANC.

On an institution-wide level, fear of a tactical disadvantage caused SAP leaders to lobby hard for laxer policing laws, stating, "It was equally obvious that new legislation, new court procedures and methods would be required to enable the South Africa Police, who were in the firing-line, to mount some kind of counter-offensive to the looming threat."[106] Security forces

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[104] *ibid.*
[105] *ibid.*
[106] *ibid,* 201.

would frequently use such logic to push for less protective laws and, upon the adoption of such a law, stretch the limitations of the law further to treat suspects in increasingly inhumane ways.

One example of this can be found in the history of the South African Terrorism Act. Passed in 1967, the Act allowed "any commissioned officer ... if he has reason to believe that any person who happens to be at any place in the Republic, is a terrorist or is withholding from the South African Police any information relating to terrorists or to offences under this Act, arrest such person or cause him to be arrested, without warrant and detain or cause such person to be detained for interrogation."[107] In short, the Act allowed for arrest and indefinite detention without due process.

Police made logical arguments in support of such powers, pointing out in one argument that "one of the differences [that made an older law inadequate] was that, in terms of Section 22, the police could detain a person for only 14 days … In many a respect this particular section was rather impractical … In terms of logistics and the travelling time involved, by the time a centrally-located interrogation centre was reached, a major part of the 14-day period had already elapsed and an application to the judge had almost immediately have [sic] to be made."[108] This reasoning was flimsy, especially as international standards frown upon prolonged detentions without charges. The most disturbing effect of the Terrorism Act, however, was that, until its 1991 repeal, it was used to excuse repeated torture during prolonged detention. Steve Biko, founder of the Black Consciousness movement, was arrested under the Terrorism Act and beaten

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[107] Terrorism Act 1967, Act No. 83 of 1967, Section 1244, Line 6 (1967).
[108] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 206.

to death in detention. His case is just one of hundreds of similar cases between 1967 and 1991.[109]

Another law favored by the security forces was the Internal Security Act No. 74 of 1982, which gave sweeping powers for arbitrary arrest and detention, banning of publications, gatherings, and organizations. When the law was discussed in Parliament, "the South African Police stated quite unequivocally in its contribution that: The police in particular would require more effective legislative powers to combat the ever-increasing waves of unrest and terrorism."[110] In practice, this translated into an uptick in reported arrests and torture. The use of these aggressive measures only served to aggravate the conflict. From 1986 to 1990, the South African government declared five states of emergency.

One of the reasons the security forces were increasingly likely to see the situation in a militarized way was because the line between police and military had become increasingly blurred during the 1970s and 1980s. As the situation in the border states intensified, SAP members were regularly deployed in combat areas. Ostensibly posted to these positions because of connections between guerrillas abroad and combatants back in South Africa, SAP members gained experience as soldiers. It was from experience in Namibia that SAP members first created the Koevoet Unit, which would provide the basis for the Askari death squad units within South Africa in the 1980s.[111]

Hardship, both physical and mental, helped to define police tours abroad. SAP leaders describe the experience, saying, "Apart from the attrition rate in terms of those killed and/or

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[109] "The former South African Government and Its Security Forces" Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume VI, Chapter 3, Section 1, (March 23, 2003), 186.

[110] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 210.

[111] See Pauw, Jacques. In the Heart of the Whore. Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd, 1991. For a detailed discussion on the *Koevoet* and *Askari* units.

injured as a result of 'enemy action,' the police were faced with and exposed to many other physical dangers, including, natural threats from the environment, illness, death and injury due to a variety of accidents, heat exhaustion and deprivation and many other kinds of threats."[112]

Adding to the hardship, police were not given significant amounts of time off following deployments abroad; the situation within the country was too dire to spare these boots on the ground. Moreover, policemen were not uniformly debriefed and did not have access to basic mental health services. The military experience could be so taxing that mental health disorders, especially post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), were reported, yet there were no arrangements in place for policemen to receive proper care. Ten years on, "former Koevoet member John Deegan related his time fighting in Namibia and southern Angola, saying the experience had left him suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder."[113] Although it was not recognized at the time, it is likely that mental health disorders within the SAP were a significant and untreated problem that negatively affected the functionality of the police.

The presence of PTSD in the military and police did not cause officers to commit violent acts. In fact, usually the reverse was true because "post-traumatic stress disorder, even if diagnosed among perpetrators, is far more likely to be a consequence of appalling actions, not primarily a causal factor."[114] However, the prevalence of untreated mental-health illnesses is an important overall indicator that security force members did not receive significant individual attention. This lack of attention supports evidence that the upper echelons of the security forces did little to monitor mid-level forces' reasoning or thought processes. This is one more example

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[112] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection.
[113] "Conscripts 'had no guilt,'" *Eastern Province Herald*, (July 24, 1997).
[114] Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume V, 284.

of improper oversight, and helps to illustrate the lack of attention that enabled individual members of the security forces to formulate and carry out violent repression without reprimand.

The issues that resulted from SAP military experience were not limited to issues of mental health. The military experience also frequently led police members to change their perceptions of policing duties. The points of view for combat and police work are supposed to be different, yet police tours of duty could cause the two to blur. As SAP officials point out, "in terms of the physical demands necessitated by both the counter-insurgency training and the border-duty itself, policemen found themselves having to adopt a completely different mental approach to their work, namely that of 'kill or be killed.'"[115] Thus, tours of military duty further exacerbated police tendencies to dehumanize "the enemy" and to accept the need for violent tactics in order to win the war.

Compounding this problem, the short length of time between return from combat and resumption of policing duties intensified the difficulty of distinguishing between the two. It was reported that "many members, after having been absent from home for a lengthy period under such arduous conditions, experienced great difficulty in re-adjusting to the normal 'civilian policing duties' expected of him, with this sort of situation worsening the more border tours the person was subjected to."[116]

Throughout the 1980s, in an effort to alleviate the pressure placed upon the police, the SADF was placed within townships to bolster SAP forces. This served to further blur the line between military and police work. The use of the SADF was particularly offensive to civilians, as SADF troops were frequently involved in violent attacks and violations of human rights. The

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[115] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 10.
[116] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 58.

32 Battalion gained so much notoriety for its involvement in a series of attacks in Phola Park, a neighborhood near Thukoza township and Johannesburg, that the Goldstone Commission recommended its removal from any township work whatsoever. The antagonistic response from the SADF that "the Defence Force would deploy 32 Battalion as and where they were needed"[117] intensified the UDF's "Troops out of Townships" campaign, and was accompanied by further rioting and violence. While most SADF battalions in the townships were not as blatantly violent as the 32 Battalion, members of the SADF simply had not received training in how to handle civilians. Thus, they were more likely to panic and use excessive force. When the use of excessive force was not met with reprimand, SADF members stationed in townships continued to respond aggressively.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a time of police involvement in wars abroad and SADF involvement domestically, there was a significant uptick in security force violence. A July 1992 Peace Action report best summarizes the military tactics used by security forces: "More broadly it is clear that the security forces continue to violate the terms of the peace accord signed in September last year. These violations range from verbal abuse, passivity in the face of attacks on communities, destruction and theft of property to physical assault, including beating and shootings causing serious injury or death, arbitrary arrest, reluctance or refusal to divulge the whereabouts of detainees, continuous harassment in the form of early morning raids and restriction of movement through dehumanizing methods such as razor wire enclosures." This report closes by reflecting that, "Overall the attitude of the security forces towards the communities they deal with generally reflects overwhelming indifference, arrogance, and

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[117] "Goldstone Commission of Inquiry in 32 Battalion: Phola Park." (May 4-19, 1992). Barbara Hogan Collection 10.1, South African Historical Archives,   University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

sometimes outright brutality."[118] It is hard to find a better description of the physical and psychological effects of the militarization of South Africa's domestic security forces.

Toward the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, security forces became more inwardly focused and insulated. This was a dual process in which years of reward for decisive protection of the apartheid state built within the forces a comfort with the ideology of "Total Onslaught" theory and militarism, while derisive public scrutiny encouraged the force to close itself off from the outside world and accept little interference. The SAP, especially, was resistant to change. Domestic and international critics alike accused the force of being violent, repressive, and backwards. With nowhere else to turn, members of the security forces, especially members of the SAP, increasingly relied on their own internal ties to one another.

The SAP was aware of its public unpopularity. From its founding, SAP members "complained of long hours, low morale, the poor esteem in which they were held by the white public and the open resentment of blacks- grievances which have persisted throughout the SAP's history."[119] As global anti-apartheid initiatives grew throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the SAP came under further scrutiny. Police complained that "security forces, and in particular the police, were to become more and more the target for criticism by both the local anti-government media, as well as that of the international media."[120]

Playing into "Total Onslaught" fears, policemen saw the negative publicity as a communist tactic, arguing, "The propaganda onslaught has been fierce and very sophisticated, especially that which was waged against the SA Police and members of the intelligence

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[118] "Peace Action Report," (July 1992), Deborah Hogan Collection 10.7, South African Historical Archives, University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
[119] Cawthra, *Policing South Africa*, 9.
[120] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, SAHA, 45.

community."[121] While police were aware they were drawing censure, they did not advocate for changing tactics. Instead, they viewed unpopularity as an unfortunate side-effect of the job, saying, "Most unfortunately, the action necessarily taken by the police over this period was to lead to the reputation of the SA Police being severely and most adversely affected, notably amongst large sections of the black community."[122]

However, it was not only the press and the black communities that rejected the security forces. Frequently they were disrespected by their own families as well. In relating an extreme case, a report of an interview with former death squad member Eric Taylor describes the stress Taylor suffered because of this alienation: "Taylor was sobbing again. His first wife had divorced him because of her suspicions that he was involved in the killings and his second wife was contemplating it because she now knew her predecessor's suspicions were more than that. Taylor's two teenage sons avoided talking to him. His youngest son, in standard six, had shown friends the newspaper report on his amnesty application and talked about the shame he felt."[123] In the face of painful rejection like this, security officers had little choice but to turn to one another.

While security force members relied on one another, many shared a sense of bitterness. There was a feeling that the outside world had betrayed them. Police, especially, felt they had been given an impossible task that invited nothing but censure. SAP members complained that the political climate in South Africa was not of their making. Instead, they noted, "The government developed a total strategy in which all political, economic, diplomatic and military mechanisms were interwoven and utilized to crush the revolutionary onslaught. As a member of

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[121] *Ibid,* 4.

[122] *Ibid,* 33.

[123] Oliver, Guy, "The men walked from death, but its smell clung to their clothes…" Sunday Independent, May 4, 1997.

the State Security Council and the National Management System … the S.A. Police were

required to play a major role in the total strategy and had to perform their duties in the climate

thus created."[124] It was frustrating to leadership and lower-ranking SAP members alike to be

held responsible for a situation in which they did not feel culpable. SAP leadership voiced a

rather testy response on this issue, saying, "Once again, the S.A. Police, as the law-enforcing arm

of the government, was required to take action in an attempt to maintain law and order, despite

the fact that they themselves were not responsible for the political dissatisfaction that existed

amongst the youth and which originally sparked the violence."[125]

This denial of responsibility is interesting, given that the ultra-violent police response to

protests and dissent most likely sparked further protest, which continued to spiral into violence in

the late 1980s. However, in an examination of factors that held security forces together, the

reality is less important than the perception, and the perception was one of betrayal and unfair

scrutiny.

The security forces' perceived betrayal easily evolved to become a sense of anger with

the outside world. Many military and police officers felt that civilians in the outside world did

not appreciate them for what they were, namely, security forces. Part of the ethos of police and

military work is obedience to the laws. Policemen, especially, felt they were unfairly judged by

an outside world that expected them to reject unjust laws. The SAP, as an institution, was

adamant that it was unfair to be expected to act as anything but policemen. It argued, "The

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[124] Foundation for Equality Before the Law Collection, 2.
[125] *Ibid,* 44.

normalizing of conditions in an abnormal society is a political function and it would be both

unfair and unjustified to hold the S.A. Police responsible therefore."[126]

Police were also careful to emphasize that they had been trained to not question authority,

saying, "It is normally the task of the police to combat the enemies of any society by utilizing the

legal powers entrusted to them by law. It is not their task to make a dialectical judgement [sic]

about the correctness of the social system in which they serve."[127] Arguments along this track

were also used to deny culpability in apartheid atrocities. Police leadership maintained that SAP

members "were not responsible for the debatable political issues of the past, nor were they

responsible for the making of laws, but were required to operate within the ambit thereof and

execute that which the laws prescribe."[128]

Because policemen felt such a sense of derision, they were especially eager to promote

the successes of their work. Police leadership maintained, "If it had not been for the alertness

and various anti-terrorist programmes conducted by, among others, the SA Police during this

period, many more people would probably have been killed or maimed in these types of

indiscriminatory [sic] attacks."[129]

Faced with anger from so many outside sources, members of the security forces felt a

sense of isolation that encouraged extreme loyalty within the force, even after 1994. In some

cases, this loyalty inspired security force members to lie to judges in order to protect one another.

Eric Taylor told reporters, "I must be frank. I'll never testify against other members of the

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[126] *Ibid,* 23.
[127] *Ibid,* 23.
[128] *Ibid,* 2.
[129] *Ibid,* 7.

Security Branch."[130] This was not an isolated sense of loyalty. As a Report of the Independent

Board of Inquiry shows, "On December 9, 1992, Warrant Officer Hendrik Steyn was sentenced

to 18 years for the murder and attempted murder of two ANC prisoners in August last year …

However, the court discovered that Steyn's commanding officer, Empangeni Captain Joseph

Erasmus and other members of his unit had tried to ensure that the case against Steyn was

unsuccessful. Justice Page commenting on Erasmus's behaviour said it was deplorable that a

commanding officer of a unit should show such misplaced loyalty towards a member who

committed a crime, that he would act dishonestly and neglect his duty to see that justice is

done."[131]

The motivations for covering up colleagues' crimes were logical only to members of the

security forces themselves. Eric Taylor's further explanation of his refusal to testify against

fellow security force members shows a confused sense of values. In his testimony to the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission, he "said he had felt it would have been 'unethical and disloyal'

to go behind his colleagues' backs."[132] It is particularly striking that Taylor's sense of ethics

precludes exposing his colleagues to prosecution, but allows for acts of torture and murder. Not

only does Taylor's comment speak to the loyalty felt within the SAP, but his definition of the

"unethical" demonstrates a basic difference in values between the South African police officers

and mainstream society. With such a difference, it is little wonder policemen felt isolated.

In a typical military or police force, esprit de corps is paramount to the functionality of

the force. It is an outcome of trust and respect, built through shared experiences and training. In

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[130] Eric Taylor, quoted in Maykuth, "In regret, a policeman seeks amnesty- and absolution."

[131] Justice Page, quoted in "Report of the Independent Board of Inquiry for the Period December 1992 to January 1993." Barbara Hogan, 10.2 SAHA Archives. Board Members included: Dr. Alex Boraine, Mrs. Judy Chalmers, Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane, Dr. Max Coleman, Mr. Brian Currin, Prof. John Dugard, Mrs. Sheena Duncan, Mr. Peter Harris, Mr. Peter Kerchoff, Mrs. Lydia Kompe, Mrs. Emma Mashini, Br. Jude Pieterse, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

[132] Taylor, Eric, quoted in Sherman, Angela, "Former Cop Questioned" *Evening Post*. March 3, 1998.

a heavily-politicized situation, however, esprit de corps takes on another, less desirable, form. In the South African context, members of the military and police alike built trust and respect for one another, but, in the face of outside criticism, these strong internal relationships created an environment in which the security forces were able to avoid thinking critically about moral questions. Instead, the security forces turned inward, simultaneously scorning criticism from the civilian world and seeking insulation from critics by building stronger relationships amongst colleagues.

The inward-looking mentality of the security forces was a formative factor in the forces' decisions to respond to violence with greater violence. The firm belief in a narrative of well-organized communist aggression on the streets of the township led to police officers responding with barrages of bullets to children throwing rocks, and then, ten to twenty years in the future, defending their actions to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

An understanding of the environmental and political factors that encouraged security-force brutality is important in building an historical understanding of the 1980s and 1990s in South Africa. The experience of security force members in the late apartheid era has also shaped the current security sector within South Africa and the region. Well after 1994, the ties formed through years of sharing political viewpoints and military experiences while facing rejection from the outside world, continue to be strong. These connections form the basis for the changing face of South African security in the 21st century.

Chapter 3: Private Security After "The Miracle"

Growing privatization has defined South Africa's security landscape since "the miracle"

of the peaceful end of apartheid. In an era of reform for the police and army, private security

companies began to play a more central role in combating crime within South Africa and

supporting foreign military operations abroad. Much of this growth was fueled by waves of

former South African Police (SAP) and South African Defence Force (SADF) members leaving

the ranks of those organizations in the 1990s. With reform efforts underway for the security

forces, members who chose to leave found economic and social safety nets in forming private

security or military companies. Throughout the 1990s, it became increasingly clear that

members of the security forces were relying on these companies as a way to survive turbulent

political and economic upheaval in the security sector.

The function and character of South Africa's present-day private security infrastructure

traces its roots to the apartheid experiences and eventual reform processes of the South African

Police and military. The SAP arguably went through the most dramatic transformation. As an

institution, it had been responsible for upholding the government's policies on a daily basis, and,

thus, the end of apartheid necessitated structural changes within the organization, which were

often turbulent and confusing for the SAP members themselves as well as for the new political

order.

In all ranks of the SAP, members greeted reform warily. The 1990s were not the first

period in which politicians had attempted to force reform from above. PW Botha "extended the

Black-on-Black policing strategy" and had, in his view, "de-racialized the SAP" by removing

laws that had prevented black officers from rising above the rank of a sergeant.[133] Like Botha's

wider political policies, though, this slight reform of the SAP was insignificant enough to be

offensive to minority groups, yet, it was simultaneously significant enough to anger SAP

officers.

Botha's push to reform the structure of the police was based on the same

misunderstanding of his political opposition that led him to believe the introduction of a tri-

cameral parliament would silence protesters. Botha, and his National Party (NP) strategists,

assumed that improving living conditions for black communities would quiet political protesters.

Thus, in the mid-1980s, a "winning hearts and minds" strategy was announced, with the goal of

winning the support of the black populace, and thus alienating and bringing more pressure to

bear on anti-apartheid activists.[134] The SAP was called upon to support this strategy by

providing services to the general black population while simultaneously intensifying repression

of individual political activists. This dual task meant "policing became wrapped up with the

state's attempt to accommodate as well as suppress Black demands."[135] Unsurprisingly, black

communities felt only the suppressing aspect of this contradictory policy. The United

Democratic Front (UDF) continued to amass support throughout black communities. When

these supporters were subsequently repressed, often violently, any hope of positive reform faded.

Police did not respond well to the increased pressure they felt as a result of Botha's

reforms. Throughout the 1980s, lower-ranking members were unsupportive of pressure to

reform and refused to accept outside criticism of the force. Instead, the internal SAP culture of

machismo and heavy-handed racism continued unabated. The police response to black protest

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[133] Brewer, John D., *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa,* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1994), 297.

[134] Giliomee, Hermann. "Broedertwis: Intra-Afriakner Conflicts in the Transition From Apartheid." *African Affairs* Vol. 91, No. 364 (1992): 339-64.

[135] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 297.

was "intense, widespread, and violent,"[136] and, because the National Party was eager to maintain control over anti-apartheid riots and protests, it refused to discipline police officers for their aggressive tactics. This cycle made clear that the partial reform would result in continued violence.

When de Klerk came to power, there were disagreements between white political parties about the lessons to be learned from Botha's security policies. Liberals "recognized the need for law and order" but did not think that an unreformed SAP could provide it because the institution had been responsible for so much excess violence. Instead, they believed "the SAP was in need of extensive reform,"[137] and were confident that implementing these reforms would make the country more secure. Reactionary politicians in the Conservative Party and the Herstigte Nasionale Party had taken the opposite lesson and believed the SAP had been "undermined by unwarranted criticism."[138] In the conservatives' view, the best course of action was to rescind Botha's reforms and give the police colonial-era powers of overt repression. Conservatives thought that only by giving the SAP free rein would violence be controlled. The National Party fell somewhere between these two views. Members publicly claimed the police "were measured, proportionate, and professional,"[139] but privately "recognized how damaging police over-reactions are, both domestically and internationally."[140] It was to de Klerk's credit that he vocalized these private concerns, and committed himself and the nation to reforming police action.

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[136] *Ibid.*
[137] *ibid*, 315.
[138] *Ibid.*
[139] *ibid.*
[140] Welsh, David, "F.W. De Klerk and Constitutional Change" *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), 7.

For de Klerk, SAP reform became a keystone in his efforts to rein in the powers of the security forces. Perhaps the most notable aspect of de Klerk's reform effort was its apparent sincerity. Former South African leaders had frequently used "the rhetoric of the civil police tradition" even though "the reality of policing remained very much colonial in style and methods."[141] From Verwoed to Botha, politicians gave speeches about the need for fair and just policing, while, in actuality, they encouraged repressive measures. De Klerk was the first Afrikaner politician to genuinely attempt to draw down the power of the police.

Immediate actions offered proof of de Klerk's sincerity. He pressured several SAP generals to retire early and insisted that others simply be fired, albeit while retaining full benefits packages.[142] Two months after de Klerk assumed the presidency, he announced, in a speech at the SAP training college, the abolition of the security committees set up under Botha. His choice of venue was symbolic of his intention that "more civilian authority would be established in security matters."[143] He reaffirmed this goal in a meeting with SAP leadership, announcing, "We will not use you any longer as instruments to attain political goals. This is the responsibility of the politicians."[144] De Klerk also attempted to demilitarize the force, ending border duty in 1990 with the hope "that the policing emphasis would shift from a focus on political activity towards ordinary crime."[145]

De Klerk referenced high crime rates in an attempt to sell his reforms to white civilians. Through several speeches, he voiced concern that "crime had the potential to … undermine the

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[141] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 321.
[142] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 22.
[143] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 322.
[144] FW de Klerk, quoted in, *Sunday Times*, January 28, 1990.
[145] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 322.

progress already made."[146] De Klerk also tried to reward benefits to members of the SAP.

When commissions of inquiry on police death squads were announced, members of the SAP

simultaneously received a 79 percent pay increase.[147] De Klerk was aided in his efforts to push

through his security reform agenda by the fact that increasingly widespread reports of police

brutality in the South African press ensured that "the police were under greater scrutiny than ever

before."[148] Thus, there was great political pressure on SAP leaders to acquiesce to government

reform.

Despite this political pressure, "the perception amongst most outside observers at the

time [when de Klerk came to power] was that the SAP would be resistant to change."[149] This

resistance certainly materialized, although few police officers publicly vocalized their dissent.

Instead, amongst SAP leadership, "there was unanimity that change should be controlled by the

police themselves."[150] The most effective way to do this was to "project the SAP as a

professional force independent of the ruling party."[151] By arguing that police had merely been

following orders when carrying out violent repression, the SAP could present itself as an

institution that would be able to police effectively under a new government and a new political

order.

Police were eager to prove success in changing themselves and thereby avoid change

being forced upon them by a new government. An SAP commission called for the creation of an

Internal Stability Division, established in 1991, which took over responsibility for the most

violent areas of the country, giving other ordinary policemen time to build community relations.

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[146] *ibid,* 323.
[147] *ibid,* 322.
[148] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 24.
[149] *ibid* 22.
[150] *ibid,* 25.
[151] *Ibid.*

Police were at pains to demonstrate that they were able to work with civilians, and in 1993, when the force adopted its annual strategic plan, the SAP repeatedly publicized an announcement that civilian members of the Police Board "had been involved in framing" the plan.[152]

While police leadership was determined to maintain control of SAP reform through self-implementation of reform measures, this philosophy did not extend to the lower-ranking white officers. On the ground, reform measures were seen as a nuisance that distracted from the successful completion of tasks, and there was little incentive for cooperation amongst low-ranking officers. Moreover, because of the SAP's institutional history of a weak chain of command, it was a daunting task to enforce reform at the lower levels. Local officers "retained considerable influence by controlling the amount of information given to the civil authorities," and so were in a position to distort their reports of the effects of police reform.[153] Thus, because the lower echelons of policemen were "slow to implement these changes or act in their spirit," even the SAP-led reforms were "stymied by resistance from below."[154] A failure to convince the lower-ranking members of the importance of reform stalled the entire reform process.

Structural challenges to reform were also present. Even when there was support for a specific reform initiative, the decentralized nature of the police force would make implementation of that reform problematic. Continued ineffectiveness of community policing exposed these structural problems. The SAP tended to enact reforms through the creation of specialized units, which resulted in the creation of "units dealing with everything from taxi conflict to armed robbery."[155] While this specialization created highly effective elite troops, it

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[152] *ibid,* 26.
[153] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa*, 322.
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 134.

denied training in community relations to the broader SAP forces and thus undermined efforts to change attitudes and skills within the entire force.

The obstinacy amongst low-ranking officers and the structural challenges to reform were compounded by mixed signals from government leadership. While de Klerk appeared sincere in his efforts to rein in the security forces, laws that had permitted violent excess were not changed substantially. In June 1991, most of the 1982 Internal Security Act was repealed, but an amendment allowing for fourteen-day detention in solitary confinement without charge remained on the books, giving continued leeway to abusive police action.[156]

The opposition from low-ranking security forces and the lingering unjust laws hurt efforts to mitigate years of repression in the eyes of ANC members. Black communities historically "had been policed more for control than for crime prevention," and "black South Africans regarded the police force as racist, oppressive, and illegitimate."[157] The long history of SAP violence in black communities had soured relations to the point that black communities wanted the police force to be abolished rather than reformed. Years of police injustices "led many citizens to view the police as criminal from the beginning."[158] Because the communities did not accept that the SAP was capable of acting within the bounds of the law, support for the institution's continued existence was slim. This put the ANC in a difficult position throughout the negotiating process.

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[156] 1991 Internal Security and Intimidation Amendment Act No. 138.
[157] Gastrow & Shaw, "In Search of Safety: Police Transformation and Public Responses in South Africa" *Daedalus* Vol. 130, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), 262.
[158] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 25.

The ANC recognized that a police force was needed. Furthermore, the party acknowledged that "there were no ANC police cadres"[159] that could fill the ranks of a new police. Thus, the "the country's existing police forces would, by default, have to play the leading role in reforming themselves."[160] This realization did not make the reform process any easier. Years of the ANC's armed struggle against apartheid forces cast the SAP as the enemy, which had a profound effect on ANC strategy for SAP reform. Critically, the ANC was more focused on ensuring political neutrality than putting in place strong crime-fighting institutions. This focus would have a deep impact on the post-apartheid police force's ability to fight crime, and would encourage large numbers of current and former police to join private security companies.

Crime in South Africa had risen dramatically in the late 1980s because SAP focus on political suppression left little time for police to direct energy toward traditional crime prevention.[161] In the absence of a functional police, crime proliferated. Despite growing crime, once in power, the ANC's primary goal was to de-politicize the force. ANC strategy held that black-perpetrated crime was happening largely because blacks felt no ownership in the political process. The strategists theorized that when there was majority rule, a greater buy-in to national unity and increased economic opportunities would lead to a decline in petty crime. Significant effort was put into encouraging this buy-in, as "leaders of the new government, from President Mandela on down, went out of their way to praise the police and urged citizens to accept them as their new protectors."[162] Focus on citizen support for the force was considered more important than large investments in police capacity for crime response. Under this philosophy, the most

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[159] *ibid,* 27.
[160] Gastrow & Shaw, "In Search of Safety: Police Transformation and Public Responses in South Africa," 262.
[161] Lodge, Tom. "Resistance and Reform, 1973-1994." 2012.
[162] Gastrow & Shaw, "In Search of Safety: Police Transformation and Public Responses in South Africa," 263.

important contribution that police could make to general society was the assurance that they would not attempt to undermine the majority-led government.

To this end, efforts were made to ensure more positive police relations with black communities. The ANC wanted community members to have "strong oversight and co-operative roles" in community-level security.[163] The ANC supported the establishment of Community Police Forums, which would act as advisory watchdog boards, able to report abuses back to the government. The CPFs caused tension between communities and police, however, as police felt that "too many CPFs have seen their role as one of control and direction of the police rather than as one of providing the community link in the chain of police accountability."[164]

There were further attempts at civilian oversight in the 1997 establishment of the Independent Claims Directorate (ICD), a civilian-run government department created "to investigate complaints of brutality, criminality, and misconduct against members of the South African Police Service."[165] However, the ICD remained without an executive director for the first five years of its existence and the "lack of compliance with ICD recommendations" was highlighted by Parliament, a case that "points to deeper systematic issues in the SAPS internal discipline system."[166] Pushback from career officers slowed reform efforts and shut out effective civilian oversight, despite significant pressure for reform from government and upper echelons of the police force.

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[163] Minaar, Anthony, "Partnership policing: A role for the Private Security industry to assist the SAPS in preventing crime?" *African Security Review* Vol. 8 No. 2, (1999), 5.

[164] Malan, Mark, "Police reform in South Africa: Peacebuilding without peacekeepers" African Security Review, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1999.

[165] Section 53(2) of the South African Police Act (Act no 68 of 1995) established the Independent Claims Directorate.

[166] "2012 Southern African Security Review", Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria (2012), 128.

Issues of racial integration within the police force factored heavily into white officers' discomfort with reform. Following the 1994 elections, black members of the forces, who had suffered through years of simultaneous discrimination inside the force and rejection from their communities outside the force, held "an expectation that they could expect more power and responsibility, as well as rapid promotion and better pay."[167]

By 1994, police officers had been influenced by four years of reform-minded pressure from de Klerk's government, and were beginning to face pressure from the newly-inaugurated ANC government to professionalize and build relations with black community members. This same push for reform came simultaneously from the upper echelons of SAP leadership through the establishment of community police units. These concurrent pressures were an alienating factor for many low-ranking police officers who had become accustomed to an institutional culture that focused on suppression of political protest and non-accountability to communities. The growing public visibility of previous police atrocities, highlighted in South African media, put further pressure on police officers to accept reform and learn new skills and duties. These pressures frustrated mid-career officers. In the 1990s, there was "a precipitate decline in police morale"[168] and many officers left the force to sell their skills on the private market.

The private security industry in South Africa had its start well before the end of apartheid. In this industry, most companies can be classified as either private security companies (PSCs) or private military companies (PMCs). PSCs are typically employed internally within South Africa and cover activities such as guarding property, installing electronic security devices, or conducting private investigations that will later be turned over to the police. Private

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[167] Gastrow & Shaw, "In Search of Safety: Police Transformation and Public Responses in South Africa," 264.
[168] *Ibid.*

military companies work as contractors in foreign nations, are typically hired by a government, and perform direct military duties, such as guarding embassies or acting as military advisors or logistics coordinators. Former members of the South African security forces contributed their manpower and experience to both private security companies and private military companies, and in so doing, changed the face of private security on the continent.

PSCs have a complicated relationship with the South African state. They first became a common phenomenon in the 1980s, and from the outset, they maintained a fairly cozy relationship with their public-sector counterparts. In response to rising crime rates throughout the 1980s, private security companies were seen "as a necessary supplement to the increasingly stretched resources of the state."[169] This support was institutionalized in the National Key Points Act of 1980, which allowed the Minister of Defence to force owners of areas deemed national key points to protect those areas using private security. The experience gained in this arrangement3 was highly lucrative for the private security industry, and it also "enhanced its paramilitary nature"[170] by allowing private security companies expanded powers of seizure and arrest.

Throughout the 1980s, SAP forces were overextended in attempting to control political protest and anti-apartheid violence. This left few resources to be invested in non-political crime, creating a gap that private security companies were eager to fill. Thus, the actions of these companies came to be seen by the national government as supplemental to the goals of the SAP, and designed to "free them [the SAP] up to concentrate on keeping the Black population under

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[169] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 110.
[170] *ibid*, 111.

control."[171] This positive view led to the passage of the Security Officers' Act 92 of 1987. This act further institutionalized private security by creating the Security Officers' Board to oversee the regulation of private security personnel.

Positive relations between police and the private security sector gave PSCs access to SAP resources. In May of 1988, former policeman Johan Van Eyck joined Fidelity Guard, a Johannesburg-based private security company.   He noted that his work with Fidelity Guard was made easier because "it was very clear that the co-operation between the investigating officers who were all former policemen and the Police, that this co-operation was very close and good."[172]   Companies that were not as well established as Fidelity Guard were also able to leverage their ties with the SAP to increase working effectiveness.

In the late 1980s, barriers to entry in the private security sector were very low, particularly for white former police officers. A common phrase in the industry at the time was that "all you needed [for entry into private security] was a dog and a wog."[173] This offensive language highlights the inherently racist structure of private security. Until the late 1990s, the vast majority of private security companies were white-owned and managed, but the least desirable guarding jobs went to blacks, with a typical wage being "less than R800 a month."[174] This racist structure was based on the experience of security forces under apartheid. Entry to the industry was facilitated through personal relations developed in the SAP and was open primarily

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[171] Minnaar, Anthony, "Crime Prevention, Partnership Policing and the Growth of Private Security: The South African Experience" *Policing in Central and Eastern Europe: Dilemmas of Contemporary Criminal Justice.* University of Maribor, Slovenia, (December, 2004), 3.

[172] Van Eyck, Johan, "Amnesty Application," (July 1996), South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[173] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 104/

[174] Cock, Jacklyn, "Guards and Guns: Towards Privatised Militarism in Post-Apartheid South Africa" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (Dec., 2005), 799.

to whites.   The emphasis on personal relations meant that the creation of PSCs was relatively easy for former white policemen, but substantially more difficult for former black policemen.

This ease of entry was among the main drivers of the private security industry. The period immediately following the 1994 elections saw "an specifically [sic] significant rise in the size of the [private security] industry" because there was "steady entry of ex-security personnel into the industry."[175] As political circumstances changed, some policemen joined PSCs because they offered a bastion of security for white security forces with extremely conservative views. By 1994, it was noted that "large numbers of former white apartheid police and defence force officers- some regarded as having strong rightwing sympathies- were now operating and, in some cases, owning security companies."[176] In the years following 1994, the concentration of former white policemen in private security companies continued to grow. Demand for guarding and electronic-fence installation jumped, particularly in the predominantly white suburbs. The sheer number of backlogged cases created an inviting entry into private work. Affluent citizens paid high rates to investigative companies which "have largely been staffed by ex-police officers and are dedicated to the investigation of criminal and other cases for the specific aim of building cases that can simply be handed over for prosecution on completion."[177] This type of assistance was welcomed by the new SAPS, and ensured friendly relations between public and private security officers.

Even government relations with the private security companies, at least on the surface, continued smoothly during the transition. A simple lack of police capacity allowed the

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[175] "2010 Southern Africa Security Review" Institute for Security Studies, (2010), 135.

[176] Minnaar, "Crime Prevention, Partnership Policing and the Growth of Private Security: The South African Experience," 3

[177] Minnaar, Anthony. "Oversight and monitoring of non-state private policing: The Private Security Practitioners in South Africa." *Private Security in Africa: Manifestation, Challenges, and Regulation.* Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, (2007), 14.

symbiotic relationship between police and private security to continue, as "the refocusing of the

policing approach of the SAPS in the post-1994 period ... lessened resources available for

policing in residential areas (particularly in the more affluent previously white

neighborhoods)."[178] As a matter of supply and demand, the government recognized that the new

SAPS could not fill the security need, and it was thus willing to allow the continuation of the

private sector. There was a critical mass of former police flocking to the private security sector,

and it was "the need to make optimal use of existing trained police personnel that largely

overcame the reluctance of police management to even consider the use of outsourcing [to

private security companies]."[179] If there had not been such crossover between former police and

newly-formed private security companies, the government and new police would not have been

able to rely on the private security companies as a way to utilize "existing trained police

personnel."

The government institutionalized guidelines for cooperation between former police

employed in private companies and current enlisted police. In 1996, the national Crime

Prevention Strategy Programme on Environmental Design and Maintenance contained language

that suggested enthusiasm for public-private partnerships, even though there was "still no fixed

policy guidelines as to how such partnerships should be formalized."[180]

Support for the continued existence of private security companies also stemmed from the

new ANC-led government's initial instability. After coming to power through a series of

precarious negotiations with entrenched white power, many in the new government realized that

PSCs had a subtle stabilizing influence as they "have employed many who after decades of

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[178] *ibid,* 12.

[179] *ibid,* 6.

[180] Minnaar, "Crime Prevention, Partnership Policing and the Growth of Private Security: The South African Experience," 7.

conflict have few other skills than those required in the security field."[181] It did not escape

government attention that PSCs employed men who might otherwise be putting their energy into

destabilizing the new order.

　　While PSCs in the mid-1990s appeared to be making a remarkable success of continuing

old-order, white-dominated security, underneath this cooperative surface, tension with the

government began to manifest. The continuation of black subjugation within PSCs had created a

serious problem for the companies. While the ANC-led government was outwardly acquiescent

to PSCs, by no means did the new order trust the companies. Managers of PSCs were highly

aware that "many within the ruling party continue to be suspicious of the motives of individuals

who work within [private security companies]."[182] As the new government transitioned to

power, PSCs were eager to show support "not because they were politically close to the new

government, but because it made commercial sense to have government on its side."[183]

Company owners wanted to prove to government and SAPS alike that "while many specialized

companies may be exclusively white, they seek profit, and not an opportunity to disrupt the

system."[184]

　　Despite the PSCs' insistence that private security was a positive development for South

Africa, critics in the new government worried that private security would "reinforce the divisions

and barriers of society that the political transition sought to undo."[185] It was believed that private

security would "harden racial or social barriers" because private companies would only be hired

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[181] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 103.
[182] *ibid,* 111.
[183] *ibid* 112.
[184] Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa,* 114.
[185] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 110.

by the affluent, who were usually white.[186] Security in poor, frequently black, communities, was "characterized by neighbourhood watches and anti-crime associations" rather than professionally-trained guards with the technical capacity for response.[187] This was a significant security concern as these citizen groups did not always have the full support of their communities. While "under apartheid, many black communities had welcomed vigilante groups as legitimate organs of local law and order," following 1994, "groups that engaged in vigilante action in post-apartheid South Africa did so at the risk of being labeled 'bad' by the state, and also by formerly sympathetic members of local communities."[188] This rejection of citizen-led security, while police struggled to provide protection from crime, made poor, often black, communities very insecure. This insecurity created deep divides reminiscent of apartheid's separated communities. This division between professional and informal security reinforces concerns that poor communities continue to suffer the effects of discrimination because of their inability to provide security.

The most cynical critics worry that private security companies like this inequality, arguing that, "as it is, selling security is a contradictory business: crime must continue for the industry to make a profit- yet the aim of the industry is to reduce crime. What better way to establish some permanence than to sell security on the basis that pockets of suburban safety need to be protected from, as one security manager put it, 'Africa outside.'"[189] From a government perspective, even if the private security companies were not actively trying to bring down the government- not an easy dismissal given the history of their employees- the PSCs were still at the forefront of creating unequal security within South Africa. In the short term, the government

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[186] *ibid,* 103.
[187] "2010 Southern Africa Security Review," 136.
[188] Gastrow & Shaw, "In Search of Safety: Police Transformation and Public Responses in South Africa," 267.
[189] Shaw, *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, 116.

could acknowledge the need for their existence, but in the long term, these officials believed South Africa would be better off with only public sector security.

It was not just the government strategists who thought this way. Throughout the second half of the 1990s, the relations between private and public sector security forces became increasingly complicated. Between the police and the private security companies, misunderstandings of expectations frequently caused tension. For a police force struggling to bring national crime rates down, the expansive private security sector offered a tantalizing opportunity for further help. "One senior security manager suggested that the police often requested 'inappropriate assistance' from security companies, presumably not understanding that the primary function of private security is to its paying clients and not the public at large."[190] In these instances, the profit motive was stronger than former professional ties, and frequently private security officers would refuse to offer help to the SAPS. These refusals further strained ties between private and public forces.

The profit motive created more serious friction between PSCs and the SAPS as well. When criminals were apprehended, private security companies were induced to turn in criminals only "if this is in the perceived interest of the client. This implies that the parallel systems of private and public policing may have opposing objectives."[191] Because of these stressors, by the late 1990s, relations between private security officers and SAPS officers were developed on an ad-hoc, rather than institutional, basis. A series of interviews conducted in 1997 with several private security managers indicated that, at that time, relationships between SAPS and PSCs

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[190] *Ibid,* 107.
[191] *Ibid*, 113.

were based "very much on the personalities involved,"[192] rather than on any formal agreements for cooperation.

These types of conflicts of interest were even more effective than concerns over political destabilization in driving a split between private and public security forces in the late 1990s. In 1997, the SAPS themselves commissioned a study to examine potential for cooperation between public and private sectors. The study raised concerns that the SAPS' outsourcing of security tasks to private companies would violate the constitutionally mandated duty of the SAPS to provide security services for all citizens. Subsequently, it was decided that "the SAPS could not abrogate its constitutionally imposed responsibilities" and that "no strictly policing functions... would either be outsourced or privatized."[193] By the time of this 1997 declaration, however, private security companies were so deeply entrenched in South Africa that they would continue to survive without the overt cooperation of the police that had defined security trends in the early and mid-1990s. The boost that private security companies gained from police connections during the early 1990s allowed the PSCs to achieve critical mass so that when circumstances become not so favorable to their existence, they had already established the manpower and contacts to carry on business independent of the government or police. By 1997, private security companies had become an indelible part of South Africa's security landscape.

Like private security companies, private military companies also leveraged security force connections to become highly profitable during South Africa's transition period. Private military companies are defined as "profit-driven organizations that trade in professional services

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[192] *Ibid*, 107.
[193] Minnaar, "Crime Prevention, Partnership Policing and the Growth of Private Security: The South African Experience," 5, 7.

intricately linked to warfare."[194] Just like PSCs, PMCs sought to fill a niche that government

forces could not. PMCs "view conflict as a business opportunity" and work "to improve their

client's military capability, thereby allowing that client to function better in war or deter conflict

more effectively."[195] Because PMCs thrive on foreign conflict, they have attracted more

negative criticism than private security companies do.

South African private military companies have proven particularly controversial because

of their employment of former SADF troops. In 1999, *The Economist* reported, "South Africa's

ex-servicemen, especially from the special forces, have years of experience of combat, tactics

and modern weaponry. They are now to be found wherever warring Africans have the diamonds

or oil to pay them."[196] This use of former troops is fueled in part by the results of a

demobilization strategy that took the military from 110,000 troops in 1994 to 59,000 in 2003.[197]

These demilitarized former SADF members frequently had few skills beyond the security sector

and thus were more likely to take advantage of the opportunities for private military companies

proliferating in Africa in the 1990s.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and the United States' perceived defeat in

Somalia in 1994 marked a large reduction in foreign involvement in African conflicts. While

"the strategic interests of major powers in countries such as Mozambique, Rwanda, and Sierra

Leone have declined with the end of the Cold War," in the 1990s, "the increasing inability of

weak governments to counter internal violence" meant that many African states had politically

volatile existences. Political instability could easily translate into insecurity as governments had

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[194] Singer, PW "Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security" *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter, 2001-2002), 186.
[195] Shearer, David. "Outsourcing War" *Foreign Policy* No. 112, (1998), 70-71.
[196] "Can Anybody Curb Africa's Dogs of War?" *Economist*, January 16, 1999, 41.
[197] Cock, "Guards and Guns: Towards Privatised Militarism in Post-Apartheid South Africa," 795.

"limited resources to maintain armed forces capable to fight a war across borders."[198] Upward

trends of political and military conflict made the African continent a "ready market for private

military forces."[199] With "multilateral interventions … increasingly likely to be limited to

situations where the UN gains the consent of the warring parties," African conflicts in the 1990s

presented a significant opportunity to private military companies.

South African PMCs were among the first in the world, setting a trend in the security

industry that would become highly publicized with the United States' use of PMCs during

Operation Iraqi Freedom. PMCs differ from mercenaries because of their corporate structure,

which allows PMCs to "make use of complex corporate financing- ranging from the sale of stock

shares to intrafirm trade."[200] Critically, PMCs "are hierarchically organized into incorporated

and registered businesses that trade and compete openly on the international market, link to

outside financial holdings, recruit more proficiently than their predecessors, and provide a wider

range of military services to a greater variety and number of clients."[201] Thus, unlike ad-hoc

mercenaries, PMCs are closely tied to global financial markets.

Private military companies are, by definition, "unfettered by political restraints."[202] As

for-profit armies, ethical concerns arise over the use of violence in support of business. This is

particularly complicated in the context of conflict over mineral-rich land. PMCs are incentivized

to build strong relations with mining companies and "are often tied through complex financial

arrangements to other firms."[203] It was not uncommon for South African PMCs to be paid in

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[198] Lock, Peter, "The Withering Military in Sub-Saharan Africa: New Roles for the Private Security Industry?" *Spectrum*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1998).
[199] Shearer, "Outsourcing War," 71.
[200] Singer, "Corporate Warriors," 192.
[201] *ibid*, 191.
[202] Shearer, "Outsourcing War," 71.
[203] Singer, "Corporate Warriors," 192.

land concessions or stock options, the value of both being contingent on the PMCs' success in guarding land.[204]

In an insecure political situation, mineral wealth is a further destabilizing factor because of its uncertainty. The value of land is "dependent on the volatile global market and aggressive investments, often of dubious origin, which move with the speed of electronic communication."[205] It can be difficult to divine whether a private military company is receiving funding from a mining corporation to support the PMC's ventures into areas with minerals. They "easily disguise their activities by purporting to be security companies performing protection services while actually engaging in more coercive military operations."[206]

While concern over business connections was the primary driver of international opposition to the work of private military companies, for the South African government, alarm over the political aims of these groups was just as large of a concern. Just as private security companies faced increasing tension with the South African government in the mid-1990s, so too did the private military companies. Career SADF members, like career SAP officers, tended to be supporters of the National Party or more conservative political groups. The SADF had actively hunted the ANC, and engaged in battle with ANC-allied forces, throughout the 1970s and 1980s. It is, therefore, little surprise that the ANC was distrustful of the SADF upon taking power in 1994. The same strategists who believed it could be positive to have former police distracted from anti-government action by engagement in PSCs believed even more strongly in the benefits of having trained military forces employed outside the country. So in the early and mid-1990s, PMCs were generally not bothered by the South African government. However, the

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[204] "Can Anybody Curb Africa's Dogs of War?" *Economist*, January 16, 1999.
[205] Lock,"The Withering Military in Sub-Saharan Africa: New Roles for the Private Security Industry?," 150.
[206] Shearer, David. "Outsourcing War," 72.

rising notoriety of South Africa's PMCs eventually influenced the government to take action. In 1998, the South African Parliament passed the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Bill.[207] Although this bill effectively ended South African ownership of mercenary ventures, the 1990s remain an example of the culmination of social capital built during the apartheid era.

Of all the private security companies and private military companies, Executive Outcomes (EO) relied most strenuously on relationships built during military service within the SADF. During its official existence from 1993 to 1999, the company courted notoriety as a result of these ties. Selling itself as a cheaper and more effective alternative to multi-national peacekeeping companies, it came under attack because of doubt that former apartheid forces could act as anything other than crude mercenaries. Hemmed in by the international community and the ANC-led South African government, EO chose to disband in 1999. However, in its six official years of existence, it changed the face of the private military industry, and exemplified how PMCs could leverage for financial gain the personal ties built through military service.

From its inception, EO was not shy about its ties to South African security forces. Its founder, Luther Eeben Barlow, "previously a lieutenant-colonel with military intelligence and a senior CCB [Civil Cooperation Bureau] member,"[208] was involved at the highest levels with South African security throughout the 1980s. Before his involvement in the CCB, he "had been second-in-command of the 32 Battalion's reconnaissance unit."[209] EO was originally created as "an intelligence training unit for SADF special forces"[210] and offered services such as "support services for clandestine warfare operations" and "waging of total guerrilla warfare behind

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[207] Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Bill, [B54D-97] www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=71747 .
[208] Pech, Khareen, "Executive Outcomes: A corporate conquest" *Peace, Profit, or Plunder?* Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, (1998), 84.
[209] *ibid,* 310.
[210] *Ibid,* 84.

enemy-lines."[211] As it took the lead in regional military operations, it continued to rely strongly

on its SADF heritage.

In January 1993, Barlow was first introduced to an operation in Angola by "two former

British special service officers with oil interests in Africa."[212] One of these officers, Anthony

(Tony) Buckingham, "a senior board advisor to several North American oil companies and the

founder and chief executive officer of Heritage Oil and Gas in London,"[213] would play an

integral role in supplying EO with business throughout the 1990s. The company's original task,

to "capture and defend valuable oil tanks at Kefekwena and then do the same for the oil town of

Soyo, which had been overrun by the troops of Jonas Savimbi's Uniao Nacional para a

Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA)"[214] was, on the surface, a relatively easy mission.

Many within the SADF knew UNITA intimately, having defended the organization in apartheid-

era deployments to Angola.

To assist in the task, Barlow recruited Lafras Luiting, a man even more closely tied to the

security forces than Barlow. Luiting was "a former CCB cell leader who had been touting for

private security contracts in Luanda in 1992 while he evaded South African authorities who

wanted him for questioning in connection with the murder of anthropologist and ANC activist,

David Webster."[215] Both men's interest in private military operations demonstrated the ease

with which security force members navigated the for-profit world.

For this first Angolan project, Barlow and Luiting recruited heavily from former 32

Battalion members. The operation did not go well at first; "several mercenaries were wounded

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[211] *Ibid.*
[212] *ibid,* 85.
[213] *Ibid.*
[214] *ibid.*
[215] *ibid.*

and three died in action" while "over two dozen chose to terminate their contracts."[216] However, those who remained were paid handsome $3,000 bonuses by Buckingham. More importantly, EO's eventual triumph over UNITA in Soyo helped the company get a foothold in the country, and opened the door for future contracts.

For the next four years, EO maintained a contract with the Angolan government, and provided training and, occasionally, actual engagement in battle, on behalf of People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) forces. Leveraging its success in Angola, EO became involved in Sierra Leone in early 1995, and then Papua New Guinea in 1997. In all three countries, EO was quick to point to its deference for human rights, and its ability to provide security at a fraction of the cost of UN peacekeepers. Despite the company's self-promotion, it remained a source of skepticism and concern internationally. Human rights advocates vocalized concerns about the lack of transparency in EO's dealings with resource companies, while international governments worried about the effects of mercenaries on the African continent.

In 1998, the South African government effectively put an end to EO's actions by passing legislation requiring "any South African or permanent resident or any company registered or incorporated in South Africa that wishes to provide any type of foreign military assistance (including medical, logistical, advice, training, intelligence, support or any other action that has a military benefit) to a party that is involved in armed conflict must obtain authorization from the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC)."[217] This tightly-written law made operating EO nearly impossible, and by January 1999, it had officially closed its doors. After its official announcement of disbandment, however, it was reported that, "EO's headquarters near

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[216] *ibid.*
[217] *ibid,* 94.

Pretoria is still staffed. Former personnel are still available to provide their services

elsewhere."[218] Not only did EO's six years of involvement in foreign conflicts provide the

clearest example of how former security forces could continue to operate in a post-apartheid era,

but the flexibility of its employees when EO was closed demonstrated that apartheid-era forces

could continue to influence security on the continent.

Executive Outcomes was always very clear about recruiting from South African security

forces. Barlow, especially, emphasized that, "We've had an awful lot of calls and letters [from

people interested in joining], but unless they served in the SADF or SAP, we won't take

them."[219] Many of EO's forces have notorious pasts as "most of EO's soldiers have come from

South Africa's former 32 Battalion, the Reconnaissance Commandos, the Parachute Brigade, and

the paramilitary 'Koevoet.'"[220] For the men involved, however, this past was highlighted as a

benefit, as hiring from such specific groups "not only ensured quality control but a preexisting

military hierarchy of highly experienced troops."[221] In other words, "a shared history, including

a common South African upbringing, and experience of training and fighting together, along

with the need to unite within a foreign land, have probably created a strong professionalism

within EO's ranks."[222] Relationships built during national service were a causal factor in the

group's success.

Frequently specific shared experiences were of even greater importance than the pre-

existing esprit de corps. EO's missions held similarities to tasks performed by local or regional

security forces. In Angola, SADF experience in the country meant that EO's soldiers had

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[218] "Can Anybody Curb Africa's Dogs of War?" *Economist*, January 16, 1999, 41.
[219] Eeben Barlow, quoted in Howe, Herbert M. "Private Security Forces and African Stability: The Case of Executive Outcomes," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, No. 2, (1998), 310.
[220] *Ibid.*
[221] Shearer, "Outsourcing War," 73.
[222] Howe, "Private Security Forces and African Stability: The Case of Executive Outcomes," 330.

"gained a thorough knowledge of UNITA's guerrilla capabilities and of the Angolan terrain."[223]

In Sierra Leone, EO employees expropriated tactics from their Namibian experience. "In 1995,

at an early stage of their involvement in Sierra Leone, EO identified the traditional hunters as a

useful alternative to the Bushmen trackers used by the SADF in northern Namibia in the 1970s

and 80s."[224] In Angola, EO's success was due mostly to the prior knowledge that EO workers

had of the region.

EO's employees had caused great damage in regional conflict during their tenure as

South African security forces. There was widespread concern that under the new guise of private

military company employees, these men would continue to destabilize the region. International

organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF, held a negative view of EO's effects, and so

made sure that for Angola and Sierra Leone, EO's presence "presented a problem to

governments wishing to secure financial aid from international bodies."[225]

Not everyone was critical of EO involvement, however. Canadian General Ian Douglas

[Ret.], a UN negotiator, spoke of the complexity in the situation: "In a perfect world, of course,

we wouldn't need an organization like E.O., but I'd be loath to say they have to go just because

they are mercenaries."[226] Even traditional critics acknowledge some success. In Angola,

"William Reno, generally a critic of EO, notes that the force created the stability which attracted

more foreign investors, whose revenue helped lower the foreign debt by 20 per cent in 1995."[227]

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[223] *ibid,* 310.
[224] Pech, "Executive Outcomes: A corporate conquest," 94.
[225] *ibid,* 92.
[226] Ian Doublas [Ret.], quoted in, Howe, "Private Security Forces and African Stability: The Case of Executive Outcomes," 315.
[227] *Ibid.*

For better or for worse, Executive Outcomes had a strong effect on the field of private security. Its promotional material was one significant innovation. In an attempt to cast off the image of destabilizing apartheid forces, EO maintained a complex media campaign. "In 1994, EO began conducting media tours of their operations in Angola, hosting many domestic and international media groups- including CNN, Sky and BBC, as well as foreign correspondents."[228] This media courtship had a direct impact on branding and sales: "News coverage of its activities in Angola, Sierra Leone, and even Papua New Guinea ensured that EO remained highly visible for four years and that it was seen to operate in several war-theatres … In the process, Barlow and Luitingh were established as experts in the private war business and the media attention they received helped to sell EO as a global military brand."[229] EO's promotional success opened the door for a marriage of advertisement and private military operations. Today even international firms, such as America's Triple Canopy, feature glossy branding and advertising campaigns.[230]

Executive Outcome's most important legacy, however, lies in its attempt to move beyond the apartheid past of its employees. There were positive signs. In 1993, even the ANC could recognize that "EO personnel were not noticeably furthering a reprehensible ideology."[231] In fact, in some ways Executive Outcomes helped the post-1994 government. It "earns valuable foreign exchange, and sometime passes on intelligence to the South African government."[232] More subtly, "EO did help the new South African government by employing, and then moving to foreign countries, ex-SADF soldiers who could have threatened the political transition."[233]

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[228] Pech, "Executive Outcomes: A corporate conquest," 89.
[229] *Ibid,* 8.
[230] Triple Canopy operates under the byline "Secure Success." Its brochures, with slogans reading "Experience you can trust" laid atop professional photographs, are available on its website: http://www.triplecanopy.com/company/brochures/
[231] Howe, "Private Security Forces and African Stability: The Case of Executive Outcomes," 325.
[232] *ibid,* 327.
[233] *ibid,* 327.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Bill was not passed until 1998.

Executive Outcomes also had true successes that helped to shape its legacy. It demonstrated "generally good behavior towards African civilians" and ran "minimal civic action programs,"[234] both steps that the SADF was never able or willing to undertake. The motivation behind this may not have been noble: "corporate necessity, and the military need not to antagonize local populations, explain EO's possibly surprising deference to human rights."[235]

Despite its successes, Executive Outcome's eventual disbandment suggests that the company was unable to overcome the legacy of its employees. It had military successes, but by late 1997, it faced more doubt than praise. For most observers, "EO's actions continue to be a racial insult: former apartheid gangsters now claiming savior status for an 'independent' continent that cannot save itself."[236]

The case of Executive Outcomes best demonstrates the use of social capital among former security sector employees during the rise and fall of state tolerance for private security. Today it is undeniable that the private security sector continues to play a large role within South African security. This sector could not exist, however, without the support it gained from trained former members of the security forces. For better or worse, the legacy of apartheid-era police and military continues to leave a mark on the country through the provision of private security

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[234] *ibid,* 316.
[235] *ibid,* 326.
[236] *ibid,* 328.

Conclusion

The South African security sector left an indelible mark on South Africa's landscape. Far from being a perfunctory tool of the South African government, the security forces made decisions on the ground that affected the implementation of national security. Frequently these decisions were made with little regard to specific policies enacted by national leaders, but rather with deference to the habitus that was built up in the day to day experiences of the forces. Though not the political drivers of apartheid, the security forces were responsible for its worst excesses, and in fact, their actions exacerbated the tragic years of the struggle between anti-apartheid forces and the government. So firmly entrenched were the security forces in the attitudes and philosophies of the apartheid era that they impeded change even after the government itself had accepted the need to reform. In fact, many security force members eventually opted to quit their posts rather than adapt to the new security system reforms. From this exodus was born South Africa's flourishing modern private security industry, a lasting legacy of apartheid era tensions.

From whence did the persona of the security forces emanate? Members of the police and army did not see themselves in the negative light that international and, at times, internal watchdogs cast upon them. Instead, shared culture, backgrounds, experiences, and shared philosophies of allegiance to the state encouraged security force members to create their own unique social identity and insular institutional culture. An exploration of this habitus, built throughout the 1980s, helps to illuminate the driving forces behind the attitudes and actions of the security apparatus.

Throughout the turbulence of the 1980s and 1990s, security-force members demonstrated clear agency in circumventing reform efforts and ultimately transferring their skills to the private security industry. These members also demonstrated an inability to make basic judgments of morality, and used a narrative of "Total Onslaught" to justify the perpetration of atrocities. It is overly simplistic to argue that racism caused members of the security forces to protect themselves while continuing to perpetrate human rights violations. While racism was a significant underlying factor in the actions of security force members, it was the complex identity perpetuated through a strongly built habitus that determined security force actions during the 1980s and early 1990s.

The institutional culture within the security forces was paramount to decisions on the functioning of the security forces, both during and after apartheid. Police and military culture was shaped from the top-down through the close relations between security force leadership and the apartheid state throughout the 1980s. Botha's government attempted to loosen some aspects of apartheid, but, in order to maintain ultimate control, called for aggressive and intense repression of protest. The security forces were primarily tasked with control, and increasing reports of brutality, in the form of assassination and torture in detention, dogged the police and military throughout the 1980s.

We cannot conclude, however, that the "Total Strategy" of the 1980s brainwashed security forces into an acceptance of violent repression. Indeed, just years later, these same security force members proved that they were not reflexively beholden to the government of the day. Security force members relied on the decentralized nature of the force to resist reform and they continued to act on the impetus of the militarism in the 1980s. Participation in "Third

Force" activities, with only tacit support from the government, marked a breaking point in the formerly shared goals of policymakers and policy enforcers.

Clearly security force members had individual agency, so why did they choose to use this agency to carry out atrocities that ripped apart a nation they professed to love? Security forces were willing to act against the wishes of their political masters and the public at large because of the strength of social ties built amongst police and military. These social ties insulated police and military against criticism and excused increasingly violent responses to protest. Moreover, they gave police and military members a normalized environment that allowed for the legitimatization of violence and the inculcation of intense loyalty in the place of critical moral thought. In short, when faced with "cleft habitus," security forces followed the impulses from their upbringing, even while explaining their actions in terms of a new South Africa.

The formation of this habitus began with common Afrikaner upbringings, but was strengthened by the shared experiences of township police work and guerrilla warfare abroad. These experiences helped forces to develop a common paradigm that dovetailed with the national policies of anti-communism and anti-ANC action. This paradigm frequently precluded security forces from understanding the true dynamics of political protest on the ground. This was particularly true for township policing during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Police and military failure to see the decentralized nature of Self Defense Units, and other violent protesters, was among the main causes of police overreaction in township violence. Security forces reacted to the enemies they identified, namely a highly-organized ANC movement with training from MK actors abroad. Overly militarized responses to violence in the townships nearly derailed the negotiation process, and became a focus point of critics internally and abroad.

The intensity of criticism of the security forces encouraged rapid reform, particularly of the police, in the 1990s. While SAP leaders attempted to control the reform process by initiating it, mid-ranking police officers fought these reforms using the decentralized, bureaucratic system to ultimately undermine reform efforts. When it became clear that reform would continue, many police officers used the social capital they had built throughout years of service to launch private security companies and private military companies.

No examination of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa is complete without a deep understanding of the backgrounds and motivations, goals and frustrations of South Africa's security apparatus. South Africa's security apparatus was a full and active force in the story of apartheid, in turns impeding and exacerbating the actions of the protesters and the state. The influence of the private security sector today is a testament to the habitus developed amongst the security forces. This habitus, founded upon the common upbringing and shared experiences of the members of the force, had great impact upon the story of apartheid. The proliferation of private security companies maintains many of the dividing facets of South African society. It is one of the ultimate ironies of modern South Africa that today notable black political leaders pay exorbitant fees to be protected by the very men who had been trained to destroy them. Through the provision of private security services, the legacy of apartheid security forces reverberates in modern South Africa.

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