

## Chapter One: Introduction

In the late 1980s everyday life for many African people in Natal, South Africa was marked by the need to cope with a situation of profound and traumatic change. For people in many communities daily life had been turned upside down. What they knew was no more; communities and families were divided; and social customs and ways of doing things had been transformed. This situation was the result of the region being wracked by violent political struggles between supporters of, on the one hand, the United Democratic Front (UDF),<sup>1</sup> and on the other, Inkatha.<sup>2</sup>

As Beinart (1992) suggests, violence was a normalised feature of life in apartheid South Africa. Historically South African society has been structured around violence. Structural violence, repression and coercion were the central features of the apartheid state. Violence embedded itself into every facet of our society (see Cock, 1991; Marks & Andersson, 1990; Campbell, 1992) and in turn shaped the nature of state power. Not only did this violence reflect race and class power, apartheid also sought to entrench gender power. Just as gendered norms and practices shaped the apartheid state, so the state acted to transform gender relations in society.<sup>3</sup> Gender regimes in South Africa did not exist outside of this framework of violence.

While violence (and here I refer to political violence – instigated and structured by political conflict – including violence against women) was not a new phenomenon, what happened in 1987 was different from anything that had preceded it.

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<sup>1</sup> The United Democratic Front was launched in August 1983. It was part of the broader congress movement and was seen to be broadly aligned to the exiled African National Congress (ANC).

<sup>2</sup> Inkatha, (Inkatha Yesizwe) was launched in March 1975 as a cultural organisation of the Zulu people. However, from the beginning it had strong links with the KwaZulu Homeland Government and many have argued (see for example Maré and Hamilton, 1987) that its identity, structures and functions were inseparable from that of the KwaZulu Government.

<sup>3</sup> See Robinson (1998) for a theoretical discussion of this point.

There are five signifiers of this distinctiveness.

Firstly, there was an unprecedented intensity to the violence. Political violence in Natal was about killing, rather than intimidating or silencing political opponents. The 'beginning' of political violence was marked by a dramatic increase in the number of deaths (see Aitchinson, 1989b). For example in January 1987 the Unrest Monitoring Group recorded one person killed as a result of political violence. By July 1987 this had increased to fifteen, and in January 1988 162 deaths were recorded (Aitchison, 1989b:7). In total about 21 000 people (primarily Africans) were killed in the course of this war with even more becoming internal refugees (Independent Projects Trust, cited in Krämer 2002:1). The intensity of the violence also manifested itself in the pace at which it escalated. Very quickly it shifted from being between known political activists to encompassing the entire community. All residents became involved and implicated and nobody could escape the violence or its consequences.

The second marker of its singularity was the modality of the violence. Political violence had a profoundly spatialised form (in combination with gendered and generational forms). There were differences within the province with some areas being more acutely affected than others. Furthermore, there were differences in temporality, with different places being affected at different times. But most distinctive was the form the violence took within these places. This form shifted over time, initially being between individuals and finally being about the pursuit of territory. The spaces of everyday life became reterritorialised. Borders were established marking clear boundaries between territories or areas controlled by one or other political group. The meaning of these spaces changed. They became singular, the only meaning with any significance being who controlled that territory. This had profound implications for residents and even for visitors.

Thirdly, there is the question of who the actors were in the political violence. An

initial reading suggests that the violence was between those who were supporters of, on the one hand, the UDF and, on the other, Inkatha. A second look reveals other, subtler, fault lines. An examination of the statistics of those killed and injured in the violence (see Aitchinson, 1989b) indicates that the majority were young and male. In effect, the political violence concealed a generational rupture. Township politics became the domain of youth organisations, and politics the sphere of young men. Older people, men in particular, were marginalised from local politics. When the young men brought their political stances into the domain of the household it unsettled the practice of *hlonipha*<sup>4</sup> and consequently patriarchal relations.

Fourthly, the technologies of the violence were distinctive. Violence involved killing (first by stabbing and then by shooting), arson and rape. Initial reports indicated that the bodies that were found scattered around Natal's townships had numerous stab wounds. Soon, however, the press were reporting more and more incidents of death as a result of gunshot wounds. With the exception of the few areas known for faction fighting (eg Msinga ) and *uqhwasha* (home-made guns), guns had not been a feature of conflict in the province. Reports of killings were soon accompanied by those of arson. The houses of those believed to support the opposing political group were torched. The inhabitants were often killed as they fled the burning house. This contributed to the spatialised form of the violence as in the wake of arson areas were cleansed of political opponents. The sexualisation of the violence resulted in many women being raped. Rape was a standard practice during many of the attacks on political opponents. Those (whether UDF or Inkatha) who protected their area expected young women to be sexually available on demand. The old ways of

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<sup>4</sup> *Hlonipha*, which means 'respect' is a cultural practice central to Zulu identity/ies. *Ukuhlonipha* refers to the practice of granting respect either linguistically or performatively on the basis of age or status. Children are brought up with a strong emphasis on *ukuhlonipha abadala* (respect for adults), and on non-confrontational ways of disagreeing with adults. It should be noted that in *isiZulu* there is no distinction between the concept of 'elderliness' and that of 'adulthood', thus even somebody one-year older requires 'respect'. Furthermore, status does not only apply to social position but also to gender, all women were required to *hlonipha* all men. (See Dlamini, 1989:483-385.)

‘proposing love’ vanished with the violence.

Fifthly, all African inhabitants of the province were assumed to have a political identity. They were either UDF or Inkatha. It was not possible to be politically neutral. Political violence reterritorialised the geography of the province. In the process these spaces acquired political meaning. Political identities were read off the place of residence of that person or their family. The spatial nature of the political conflict was a crucial element in the formation of political identities, with individual residents, households and entire neighbourhoods firmly identifying ‘the other’ whom they did not simply oppose politically but hated.

Prior to 1987 conflict in the region was not unknown. However, it had never previously reached this order in terms of deaths, arson and rape. Neither was the geography of the countryside politicised in the way that violence reterritorialised the province, turning areas into no-go zones for supporters of one or the other political grouping. Furthermore, before political violence the authority of the patriarch was relatively intact. Young men were not the leading political actors of the day. After 1987 all this was to change. This thesis attempts to account for these changes.

I have identified four questions for investigation.

1. Why and how did the conflict between political organisations in Natal become violent?
2. What forms did the political violence take?
3. Why, as a result of the violence, did ordinary people with little prior history of political activity come to identify with either the UDF or Inkatha?
4. How were these political identities produced?

These questions will be answered through an investigation of political violence in

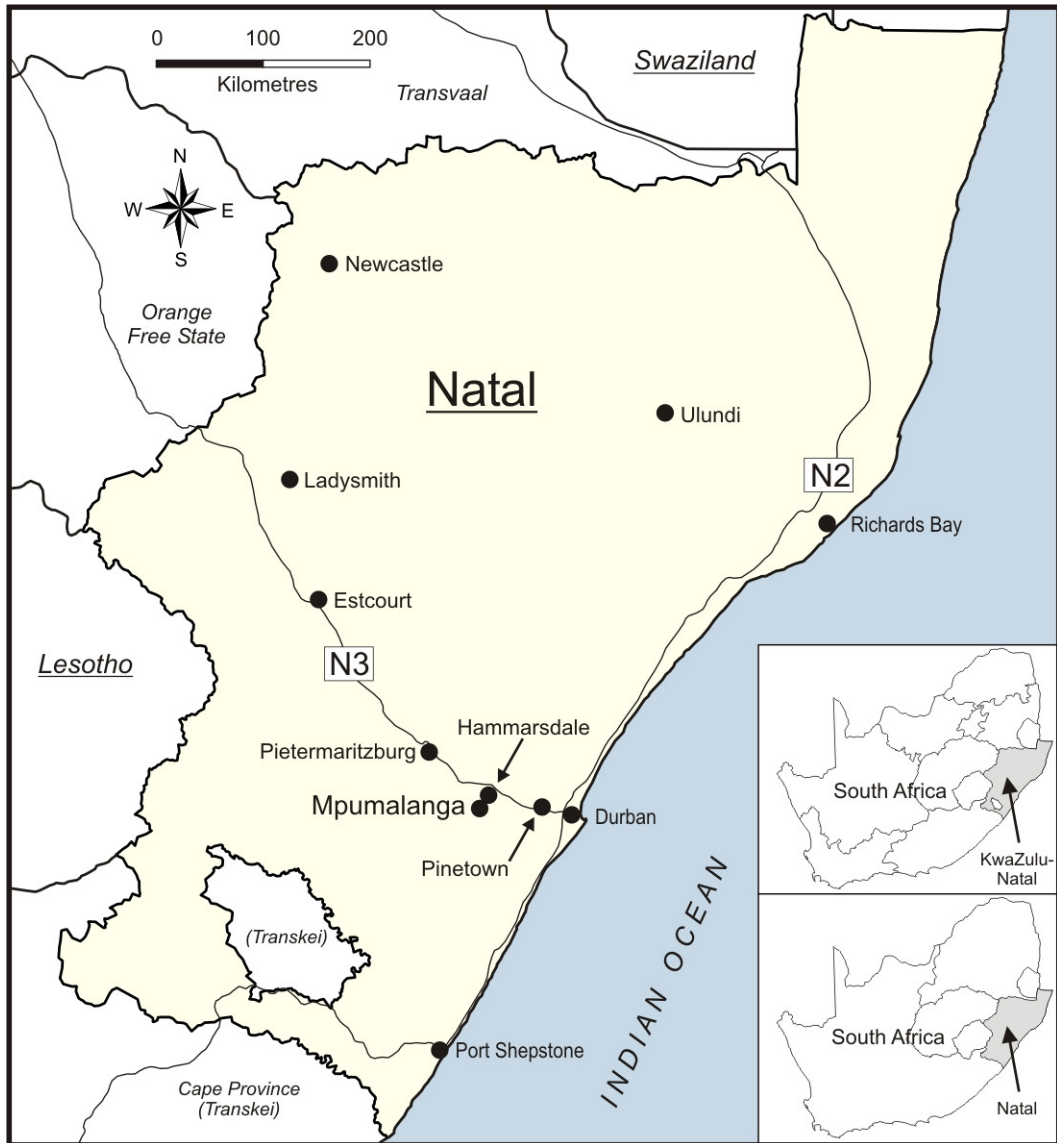
Mpumalanga township, (see Map 1) which was one of the townships in Natal most gravely affected by political violence in the 1980s and early 90s.

### **1.1 Argument of the thesis**

This thesis presents three arguments, which, will allow me to answer the four questions posed above. The first argument addresses itself to the first question. The second argument concerning the spatialised, gendered and generational form of the violence answers the second question. And the third argument will allow me to answer questions three and four.

The primary argument presented in this thesis is that 1987 represents a severe rupture in the politics of Natal. This rupture is captured in the violent form of political conflict that gripped the province. In order to understand how this rupture occurred and its consequences for the province it is necessary to look back at a complex set of processes that interlocked over space and time.

**MAP 1: LOCATIONAL MAP SHOWING MPUMALANGA TOWNSHIP  
(PRE-1994 POLITICAL CONFIGURATIONS)**



I suggest that political violence is the outcome of the intersection of three spheres – political dynamics at the local, regional and national levels. Each of these spheres had its own independent dynamics, but as they intersected over time and space, they shifted larger processes and changed broader political configurations. In order to understand the full complexity of the dynamics that resulted in political violence each of these spheres has to be examined in detail. ‘Violence’, I shall argue, is embedded in the articulation between them. Central to my argument is that the result, in this case violence, is a process. At different points along the way these articulations coalesce and sediment to produce something new which again interacts with the other spheres. The dynamics within each sphere, as well as the way in which their articulation interacts to produce new dynamics, was crucial to answering the question ‘why’. I am suggesting that none of these spheres are determining. They all feed into the violence with each having its part to play.

Firstly, there is the local sphere. I suggest that it is necessary to examine the local sphere in extensive historical detail. An historical examination of the local sphere allows me to demonstrate the severe rupture that occurred in the form of politics after 1987 and the singularity of political violence during the 1980s and early 1990s. Political violence was not simply a state of increased or intensified conflict. Rather it was a different order of conflict. Political violence is a particular form of conflict that was qualitatively and quantitatively different from any conflict that preceded it. Furthermore, an historical examination indicates how authority was established in the area. It traces shifts in the modality of governance in the area and the effect of these on political identity and the politics of generation.

Secondly, an examination of regional dynamics allows me to plot the increasing tensions between the KwaZulu Government, Inkatha, the ANC and the UDF from the late 1970s and into the 1980s. One of the results was increased violence on the ground between supporters of the UDF and Inkatha. Much of the violence was the

outcome of instructions from the regional level, and local level interpretations of the relationship between Inkatha and the UDF/ANC. These fed into and exacerbated local dynamics.

Thirdly, I suggest that the violence could only flourish within a certain sort of state. During this period, a faction that had assumed dominance within an increasingly militarised South African state was able to push the faultlines that were emerging at both the local and regional level, in order to further its agenda. I will demonstrate how this agenda articulated with the demands of the KwaZulu government and facilitated political violence on the ground.

My argument in examining these three spheres is that, political tensions between the organisations' leadership and some violent clashes between its supporters are not sufficient to explain why ordinary people who had been living together in neighbourly co-existence suddenly started killing one another. Similarly, the state's covert activities, while able to bring about violence,<sup>5</sup> are not on their own sufficient to explain the longevity and intensity of the violence as well as the extent of the involvement of ordinary people. Ordinary residents, who had not been politically active, quickly assumed a political identity and on the basis of that identity judged friends to be enemies. The state did not as Haysom (1990) suggests just 'manufacture' the violence; it was able to hook into local networks and exploit local conflicts.

Embedded within, and often giving voice to, this wider regional struggle was a challenge to patriarchal<sup>6</sup> order in the province. Within Zulu society this patriarchal order was premised upon age and gender. Amongst men authority rested upon age,

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<sup>5</sup> See for example Haysom (1990) on vigilante activities in the eastern Cape.

<sup>6</sup> I am using patriarchy to refer to a pattern of social organisation (within the family, household and wider society) whereby men achieve and maintain social, cultural and economic dominance over



while all men had authority over all women. Culturally this was inscribed in the practice of *hlonipha* (see above), and was further entrenched by a political system whereby authority was vested in male traditional authorities viz the *amakhosi*. Dlamini (1998) argues that Inkatha transcribed the practice of *ukuhlonipha* into political culture and thus not only were age and gender to be privileged and respected but so was political leadership. Many authors (Marks, 1989; Carton, 2000; McCLEndon, 2002) have demonstrated that the struggle of youth against the authority of the elders in Natal and Zululand is deeply rooted in the history of the province. My historical examination of the local sphere will demonstrate how in Mpumalanga township the South African state and the KwaZulu government collaborated to return authority to older Zulu men – authority which had been undermined by the unregulated nature of the *kholwa* norms ordering life in the pre-township era. These attempts did not go unchallenged by the youth. I shall argue that these challenges to patriarchal relations articulated with the rise of ‘new’ political organisations (many of them with a predominantly youth membership) and underlies much of the tension at the local level. I shall show how, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, politics increasingly became the domain of young men. In the process organisations that had previously mediated conflict became marginalised, and the organisations of the youth took control of the township. In the early 1990s these youth (and their organisations) were excluded from the peace settlements, and political control once more passed to older men.

The thesis will also demonstrate the double edge of this patriarchal battle. While, on the one hand, the youth challenged the patriarchal control of older men, on the other, they reasserted patriarchal control over women, particularly young women. I shall show that this reassertion was violent and brutal. Masculine public cultures of earlier periods were reinforced by the emergence of the violent politics of the mid-1980s. Rape and sexual violence were part of the everyday repertoire of violence in the

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females and younger males (Jary & Jary (eds) *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), p.478).

township. Young men, whether on the side of Inkatha or the UDF, exerted their gender power over women, and expected them to be sexually available on demand.

A second major argument of the thesis is that an aspect of the distinctiveness of the violence was its profoundly spatialised form in combination with gendered and generational forms. This can be seen at a number of levels. Firstly, there were differences within the province itself, with some areas being more acutely affected by political violence than others (see section 1.2 below). Not only was the violence unevenly spread across the province (both in intensity and in location) but places were affected at different times. Secondly, within the places that were affected by violence I shall identify distinct moments when the form of the violence shifted. The empirical material will show that at first the conflict was between individuals who were clearly identified as being active in either the UDF or Inkatha. The first shift in its spatialised form occurred when instead of only attacking individuals, the household as a physical entity and other members of the household also became targets. The second shift ensued when the violence was no longer about the pursuit of individuals or households but the pursuit of territory. A third characteristic of its distinctly spatial form was the marking of clear boundaries between territories aligned to one or other political group. Political violence reterritorialised the spaces of everyday life. The boundaries identified the political affiliations of those within and all aspects of everyday life became politicised. The boundaries between territories controlled by different political parties became impermeable. Those who crossed them risked accusations of betrayal and possibly death.

As well as a spatialised form, the violence also had a gendered and generational form. These were finely interlinked. A number of writers (see Kentridge, 1990; Sitas, 1992; Hemson, 1996; Waetjen, 2006) have characterised the violence as the *amaqabane* (UDF-supporting, young, modern and male) against *oTheleweni* (Inkatha-supporters, adult, traditionalist and male). The empirical material presented here will show a

more complex picture than these simple binaries suggest. Its spatial character drew the population into the violence according to their age and gender. When ‘the war began’ it was confined to the male youth. In effect, political violence marginalised adult men from local politics. Yet, as the spatial form of the violence shifted, so did its gendered and generational form. Once households and territories became the targets, women were more directly affected by the violence and gender and age were no longer protectors. The articulation of modality, gender and generation illustrates the importance of a spatial analysis of the violence.

The third major argument of this thesis is that there is a strong relationship between space/place<sup>7</sup> and political identity. Prior to the violence political identity was a non-issue. Many people were members of Inkatha, but their membership was linked to a cultural rather than a political identity. An important characteristic of these cultural identities was their heterogeneity. Political violence dislocated these cultural identities. As a result of the violence cultural identities acquired political meaning, and new identities premised upon political affiliation were produced. On the one hand, affiliation to Inkatha was no longer only a cultural positionality but became imbued with political meaning. On the other hand, there was the production of an entirely new political identity grouped around the signifier ‘UDF’.

The re-territorialisation of space during the violence was central to the production of these new identities. Political violence created new spatialities, with space itself acquiring political meaning and identity. Territories were seen as aligned with and thus belonging to one or other political group. The political meanings of these spaces were intense markers of their identity and overrode all other meanings and identities.

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<sup>7</sup> In much of the literature there is a tendency to see space as abstract and place as about meaning. Following Massey (1994) I will not be making this distinction between place as concrete and space as abstract (see below). Rather, she argues that places, which could be anything from a street to a mega-city, are intense nodes in a broader spatial network. Spaces, I will be arguing, are a range of forms of social/material organisations eg territories, nodes, networks, boundaries, connections, places, settings,

Individuals were required to account for ‘who they were’, the answer being read off their residential location. As the spatial form of the violence shifted it forced people to question their political identities. Individuals associated with a particular space, either through residence or employment,<sup>8</sup> were also labelled with that identity. The lived experience of the politicisation of everyday life by the violence shaped the production of political identities.

In many respects these were political identities devoid of politics. The UDF was constituted as a broad front. It was loosely constituted, allowing a range of organisations, including those that were non-political, for example church organisations, to affiliate. Its affiliates were diverse with no common policy, other than adherence to the struggle for a non-racial, unitary state and non-collaborationism, to bind them (see Seekings, 2000:49-51). I suggest that what it meant to be UDF was place specific and closely bound to local politics. In Mpumalanga it was antagonism towards Inkatha that brought people together, and for most the political identity ‘UDF’ was constructed in the heat of war. Rather than representing a finely nuanced exposition of UDF policies, it was an oppositional identity, crafted in relation to what it was not and injected with local subjective meanings.

Finally, the thesis suggests that during this period political violence fixed/closed the meaning of both place and political identity. These political identities emerged in response to the violence. Their form is conjunctural and historically specific; they are not essential identities. However, paradoxically, this process of identity formation produced identities that were rigid in content. Political violence did not allow the content of these political identities to be plural and diverse. They were authoritarian and homogeneous in character and inserted into different relations of power.

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etc, they are not abstract ie prior to the social.

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly the relationship between place of employment and political identity only seemed to hold for schools.

## 1.2 Overview of Political Conflict and Violence in Natal

To allow the reader to situate the political violence in Mpumalanga township within a broader chronology of political violence in the province, I shall provide a brief overview of political violence in Natal. This discussion allows a substantiation of my earlier argument that 1987 was a key marker, signifying violence of a different order from that which had preceded it.

Despite the normalising character of violence in South African society (see Beinart, 1992), the early 1980s saw an increasing number of clashes between Inkatha and 'others'. Initially the opposition to Inkatha came from students, for example KwaMashu Township students during the 1980 schools boycott,<sup>9</sup> but in time opposition to Inkatha widened to include township residents ie adults, opposed to rent increases. With the formation of the UDF in August 1983, student groups and residents associations eg Jorac<sup>10</sup> affiliated, coalescing the nascent opposition to Inkatha under one organisational umbrella. Despite the increasing opposition Inkatha was still able, in the first half of the 1980s, to generate a groundswell of popular adult support as demonstrated in the events surrounding Victoria Mxenge's assassination.<sup>11</sup> Although many adults judged Inkatha's violent opposition to the youth excessive,

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<sup>9</sup> Students had joined a nation-wide school boycott against overcrowding, lack of school equipment and books, lack of student representation and poor teaching conditions. It started in coloured schools in the Cape, spreading to Natal where it moved from coloured and Indian schools to African students in KwaMashu, Durban. Inkatha expressed opposition to the boycotts and urged the students to return to school. When this advice was ignored, Inkatha used intimidation and violence to break the boycott (see Jeffreys, 1997:46-47). It should be noted that this was the first major student protest activity in the province. Natal and Zululand students had not participated in the 1976 student uprisings.

<sup>10</sup> The Joint Rent Action Committee (JORAC) was a committee of residents' associations from the Natal townships of Lamontville, Hambanathi, Chesterville and Clermont (close to Durban). Its initial purpose was to oppose rent increases, but with the proposed incorporation of these townships into the KwaZulu homeland its major purpose switched to opposing incorporation.

<sup>11</sup> Victoria Mxenge was a popular Durban lawyer, she was a member of the Natal regional executive of the UDF and a leader in the Natal Organisation of Women (affiliated to the UDF). She was assassinated outside her house in August 1985. In response the youth took to the streets protesting her murder. Political protest soon involved the burning of premises associated with the state - both the

they were not yet ready to swing their support behind the youth (see Sitas, 1986). The turning point came with the formation, in November 1985, of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). At its launch Cosatu openly condemned Inkatha. Inkatha responded by launching UWUSA (United Workers' Union of South Africa), in opposition to Cosatu. Inkatha's opposition to strikes and stayaways called by Cosatu-affiliated unions became the impetus for violent clashes with Cosatu members as the targets, for example the May 1986 stayaway resulted in attacks on Transport and General Workers' Union affiliated bus-drivers in Pietermaritzburg (Kentridge, 1990).

While these clashes resulted in death, injury and arson during 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986, 1987 is the year that marks the beginning of 'the violence' in the region as something new and different. Firstly, there was a sustained escalation in the number of deaths and arson cases. In most African townships around Pietermaritzburg attacks resulting in deaths increased during 1987 until in September of that year sixty deaths were reported for the month (Aitchison, 1989). This was a dramatic increase from previous months when reported deaths were below twenty per month. Over the next three years, reported deaths from political violence were to drop below fifty per month only six times (Aitchison, 1990). Secondly, at the beginning of 1987 the Caprivi trainees<sup>12</sup> (see chapter six) were deployed in various areas across Natal. They brought a new intensity to the clashes as was illustrated by the January 1997 KwaMakhuta massacre<sup>13</sup> (see Jeffrey, 1997). Thirdly, Operation Marion, which the

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National Party and KwaZulu. In response Inkatha mobilised *impis* of men to restore order.

<sup>12</sup> The Caprivi trainees were a group of 200 Inkatha-aligned men who were selected for covert military training by the South African Defence Force. The training was conducted in the Caprivi strip, hence their name. They were redeployed back into many different areas of the province where they became involved in the violent elimination of opponents to Inkatha, principally those aligned to the UDF.

<sup>13</sup> KwaMakhuta is a township just south of Durban. Armed assailants (later identified as part of the covert military capacity created through the Caprivi trainees) burst into a house in KwaMakhuta in the early hours of the morning. Thirteen people, including seven children, were shot dead. The target of the attack was 21-year-old Victor Ntuli who was a founder member, treasurer and area organiser of the

Caprivi Trainees were part of, introduced firearms into the conflict. Before this the fighting between Inkatha and the UDF was with 'knives and stones' (Hlongwane, TRC amnesty hearing, 21 April 1998, p.59).

The violence began differently in each area and developed dynamics peculiar to the public life of that locale. Over the next six years (and beyond) it spread through the province, surfacing,

like an underground fire ... horribly, and to the outsider unpredictably ...  
in new arenas where power was being contested (Freund 1996:181).

It hooked into local issues and melded with local dynamics. In some places it was primarily generational, in others it appeared to be about land and resources, in yet others it surfed on age-old historic tensions; like an opportunistic virus it appeared to grab what it could and embed itself within the community.

Despite the differences between places, the broad trends were similar. The protagonists were men loyal to Inkatha, and youth aligned to UDF-affiliated youth congresses. The majority of those killed were men, most of them young (Aitchison, 1988). Skirmishing that began amongst the youth soon involved other members of the household as the political affiliation of the male youth transferred to the entire household. Households that were not deemed to have the 'correct' political affiliation or who were seen to be harbouring the enemy were attacked. The occupants were killed or forced to flee. Areas became associated with either Inkatha or the UDF, and they became 'no-go' zones for those associated with the 'other'. The violence reorganised the geography of the Natal countryside and in the process branded political identities onto particular areas.

During most of 1987 Pietermaritzburg and its surrounding peri-urban areas (see Map

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UDF-affiliated KwaMakhutha Youth League. Mourners at the funeral of six of those murdered, were also attacked by a 'mob' armed with guns. They were forced to scatter, but no-one was injured.

2) were the centre of escalating violence. The Pietermaritzburg townships had always been a weak spot for Inkatha (Gwala, 1989) as demonstrated by the support provided, against Inkatha's wishes, to the BTR Sarmcol strikers.<sup>14</sup> The surge in violence was attributed to resistance to Inkatha's recruitment campaign (Gwala, 1989). The conflict appeared generational with youth affiliated to the UDF pitted against elders supporting the chiefs and the KwaZulu authority. By the end of 1987 Inkatha was losing the battle in the Pietermaritzburg area. The security forces stepped in on the side of Inkatha. According to Jac Buchner, head of the security branch in Pietermaritzburg, they had 'restored a certain sense of law and order by February [1988]' (Smith, 1992:244). The UDF-aligned youth soon regrouped and by the end of 1988 the 'war' in the Pietermaritzburg areas was as bloody as before. Just as one area quietened down so another would flare up. It continued this way until the early 1990s (see Aitchison, 1990).

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<sup>14</sup> Workers at the BTR Sarmcol factory in Howick embarked on a strike on the 1 May 1985, demanding management recognise their union MAWU (Metal and Allied Workers Union). They were fired within three days and began a campaign for reinstatement. Part of the campaign involved the mass mobilisation of the Pietermaritzburg community, including a boycott of white shops and a stay-away. Inkatha soon expressed their opposition to the strikers and began to organise the scab workers under the Inkatha-affiliated union UWUSA (United Workers' of South Africa) (see Bonnin, 1988).



[illegible]

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**Table 1: Deaths in Pietermaritzburg and the Natal Midlands, 1987-Oct 1989<sup>15</sup>**

Year	Deaths
1987	397
1988	691
1989 (Oct)	531

Source: Aitchinson, 1989b:7

In the greater Durban area the cleavage seemed to be between those with access to land, housing and resources and those without ie between those living in formal townships and those in informal areas (Louw, 1989; Morris and Hindson, 1992). The 1985 riots following the murder of Victoria Mxenge had underscored the potential for conflict between informal settlements and residents of formal townships. This was exacerbated by the increasing power of shacklords like Thomas Shabalala of Lindelani (an informal settlement near KwaMashu, Durban). Inkatha increasingly used the *amabutho* (age-set regiments) controlled by Shabalala to bring dissident youth under control. They were deployed across the province in support of local Inkatha leaders in areas where the UDF was 'getting out of control'. Another significant source of conflict was dissatisfaction with the education system (Louw, 1989).

During 1988 key flash points in the Durban area were Umlazi and KwaMakhuta (south of Durban), Inanda and KwaMashu (north of Durban), and the Molweni/Ngcolosi area (near Hillcrest, west of the city) (see Map 2). By 1989 the areas affected had expanded to include Umbumbulu further to the south of the city, and Ntuzuma and Ndwedwe stretching north from Inanda (Minnaar, 1992a). In 1989 the Durban area accounted for sixty percent of incidents in the province, indicating a

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<sup>15</sup> These are not official South African Police figures. Monitoring groups collected data under extreme duress. For this reason, and the fact that categories used by different monitoring groups frequently overlapped it is difficult to compare data bases.

shift in focus from Pietermaritzburg to Durban (Louw, 1992).<sup>16</sup> The number of incidents dropped in the early '90s but by 1992 the number of incidents in the informal settlements around Durban - Malukazi, Uganda and Ekuthuleni (all south of Durban on the outskirts of Umlazi) - were escalating (Louw, 1992).

**Table 2: Frequency of Events and Fatalities by Year in Natal**

Year	No. of Events	Fatalities
1989	751	559
1990	1 694	1 685
1991	1 201	1 094
1992 (April)	273	282

**Source:** Louw, 1992:35.

At first the violence was confined to the urban townships of Natal. But in mid-1989 there were reports of the violence having spread to the rural areas (Minnaar, 1992a), these included Swayimane (near Wartburg), Ehlanzeni (near Camperdown) Indaleni and Magoda (near Richmond) and Llalane (near Greytown) (see Map 2). Some of these were urban-style townships located outside small rural towns, others tribal areas under chiefs. This trend escalated in 1990 and into 1992. Just when the conflict seemed to be contained in the Pietermaritzburg and Durban areas, violence engulfed the lower south coast as far down as Gamalakhe near Port Shepstone, as well as the north of the province, eg the township of eSikhawini (near Richard's Bay), and spread inland to the west, for example Bruntville (Mooi River) in 1990 and Wembezi (Escort) by the end of 1991 (see map 2). All these small townships became caught up in their own version of this civil war.

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<sup>16</sup> Mpumalanga township is variously recorded under both the Pietermaritzburg/Midlands area and the Durban area by different monitors. But what everyone agrees is that it was one of the worst affected areas during the late 1980s/ early 1990s. I have not included it in this overview discussion as I will be

In February 1990 the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) were unbanned. Instead of this reducing the violence, new dynamics emerged. Not only was there a greater influx of arms into communities but also the arms themselves were more sophisticated (Minnaar, 1992a). In an attempt to purge whole areas of UDF support Inkatha launched large-scale and well-organised attacks with good logistical support.<sup>17</sup> The largest and most publicised of these was the Seven-Days War in the Vulindlela and Edendale areas, (AHCC, 1990; Aitchison, 1991; Jeffery, 1997) but there were similar attacks in Mpumalanga. Once an area was 'won' by one political group, and by definition became a 'no-go' area for the other group the conflict settled. In some areas this scenario led to a new sort of conflict when 'comrades' threatened criminal elements in the community with organisational discipline (see Collins, 1992). Criminal gangs, often known as *com-tsotsis* emerged eg KwaNqetho (near Hillcrest) and KwaMashu, to provide new torment for residents.

The 1991-'92 period saw increased mobilisation of hostel dwellers in the townships around Durban (Louw, 1992). The launch of the South African Hostel Dwellers Association in Umlazi in May 1991 was linked to their mobilisation and politicisation. Inkatha leaders addressed the gathering urging hostel residents to resist the transformation of the hostels into family units. However, according to Minnaar (1992a:21) by 1992 many communities exhibited a 'general weariness' for violence. The targets shifted from communities to 'the selective elimination of leaders', for example Winnington Sabelo of the IFP in Umlazi, and S'Kumbuzo Ngwenya of the ANC in Imbali. In the run-up to the 1994 elections tensions escalated once again. The violence had ensured the province was divided into no-go areas according to political dominance. This meant little free political activity or campaigning for those

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discussing it in detail below.

<sup>17</sup> It was alleged that this support was provided by the South African security forces.

parties involved in the election.<sup>18</sup> For some time after the elections the incidents of violence remained high. But continuous political efforts at the regional level, coupled with investigations (frequently unsuccessful) into the apartheid state's involvement in the violence, managed to establish lasting peace in many areas. Nevertheless, even by 2000 the SJ Smith Hostel south of Durban and home to thousands of men remained a source of violence between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha. And there are still some areas, like Nongoma, where the situation is tense and open conflict threatens.

### **1.3 The Existing Literature on Political Violence in Natal**

This thesis provides a substantially different contribution to the literature on political violence in Natal. This contribution is three-fold. Firstly, through my argument that political violence is the outcome of the articulation of multiple trajectories operating across different spatialities I move away from the structuralist interpretations that inform much of the existing literature (see below). Secondly, within the existing literature, there is little focus on, or analysis of, the form of the violence. Thirdly, no-one has attempted to understand why ordinary people with little prior history of political activity became identified with the UDF or Inkatha and how these political identities were produced.

Since the mid-1980s political violence in Natal has been fairly well documented. However, much of the existing literature was written with a political rather than an academic purpose. The documentation and descriptions were to alert the public to the horror of what was happening and to shame the state into an impartial intervention to end the violence.

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<sup>18</sup> Initially Inkatha boycotted the election, deciding to participate at the eleventh hour. The 1994 election results reflected the geographical divisions resulting from political violence. Those areas that had, during the violence, been dominated by the UDF returned results in favour of the ANC, while those areas that had been dominated by Inkatha reflected a majority vote in its favour. These patterns were still reflected in the 1999 elections.

The bulk of the Natal literature falls into four different types. Firstly there is what I call 'count the bodies'. A number of monitoring projects recorded the various attacks and incidents: initially John Aitchison (Unrest Monitoring Project, Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg) in the Natal Midlands, Black Sash, the Natal Monitor and the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) in the coastal region and the Christian Ministries in southern Natal. In the 1990s much of this work was taken over by the Human Rights Commission, though the Natal Monitor continued its work including the publication of reports. Indicator Project, based at the University of Natal, Durban, kept a database of incidents. This very necessary and vital monitoring work was concerned with recording events and keeping statistics of deaths and injuries. The records form invaluable raw data for researchers and other interested parties. Much of this work is not written up, and remains unpublished. The exceptions are the Black Sash, which produced and distributed a monthly bulletin of incidents as did the Natal Monitor. John Aitchison, utilising his project's data, wrote a number of papers (1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b, 1991), however, the majority are unpublished. The Indicator database provided the material for a number of foci published in Indicator SA (see Bekker, 1992; Bennett & Quinn, 1988).

Secondly, there are the 'description of events' (Aitchison, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1991; Booth, 1988; Hartley, 1988; Kentridge, 1990; Louw, 1992; Minnaar, 1992b) and within this the sub-group of 'community case-studies' (Minnaar, 1992a; Stavrou & Shongwe, 1989; Ziphakamise, 1991). The 'description of events' pieces provide the reader with an overview chronology of the violence. They try to order, make sense of, and in some cases periodise the violence. For example Aitchison's 'A Story of What Happened' (1990a) presents a detailed chronology of events in Pietermaritzburg. While serving the very necessary function of informing the general reader, these accounts rarely move beyond the descriptive. While I have slotted Kentridge's (1990) book into this category, it is not an easy fit. *An Unofficial War* is

a significant and substantial piece of work, but limited in a sociological context by its journalistic style. The best example of the 'community case-studies' is Anthony Minnaar's (1992a) book *Patterns of Violence*. This is an edited collection of case studies of communities caught up in the violence. Focussing on the 'hot spots', the various articles are descriptive accounts of events in one community. They concentrate on documenting the horror of an accumulation of events. Their strength lies in their focus on the local. For example, in Bruntville (outside Mooi River) conflict centred around existing tensions between hostel dwellers and township residents, while in Richmond the tensions between the youth on the one hand, and traditional leaders and agricultural workers on the other, mirrored historical tensions between areas occupied by formal sector workers and the informal areas that are home to agricultural workers. Yet the limitations are that the local dynamics are not analysed, only described. Connections between the history of the place and the contours of violence are never drawn. There are no attempts to ask questions about the genealogies of political violence in that place or the different trajectories that might have shaped the violence in that locality. However, this literature does draw attention to the spatially differentiated character of the violence between places and hints at its profoundly spatialised form. This suggests that spatiality is a necessary analytical tool if one wishes to understand the transition from political conflict to violence.

Thirdly, there is a literature that looks at the impact of this violence on different sectors, what I call the 'sectorial studies'. For example: Paulus Zulu (1993) focused on hostels, Doug Hindson, Mark Byerley, and Mike Morris (1994), and Cross et al (1988) examined the effect of violence on development, Ari Sitas (1992) and David Hemson (1996) have looked at the youth, Vaughan John (1990) and Wendy Leeb's (1988) work is on refugees (also see Smith & Khumalo (1992)), Gultig & Hart (1990) and Nzimande & Thusi (1991) have investigated children and schooling. These studies illustrate the enormous social ruptures that have resulted from the violence. In

the main they demonstrate the negative effects of violence; the breakdown of community and family life, violence's contribution to increasing poverty, the complete disruption of the education system, and the psychological damage. Nevertheless, Sitas (1992) does suggest that in all of this the youth are not just victims. He takes issue with Woods (1989, 1992) and argues that the comrades are not disaffected youth damaged by poor socio-economic conditions. Rather they formed themselves into a distinct social movement with their own political language, vision and cultural codes. This movement represents itself as in opposition to the existing order signifying legitimate authority.

Fourthly, there are a series of articles (Aitchison 1990b; Booth & Biyela, 1988; Gwala, 1989; Hindson & Morris, 1990; Louw & Bekker, 1992; Minnaar, 1992b; Morris & Hindson, 1992; Taylor & Shaw, 1992; Woods, 1989, 1992) and two books (Jeffery, 1997 and Kentridge, 1990) which try to examine the causes of political violence, the reasons behind the escalation of brutal incidents and counter-incidents. This literature can be further divided into two main subsections; that which sees political factors as the source of the violence (Aitchison (1990b) and Gwala (1989)), and that which provides some variant of a socio-economic explanation for the violence (Booth & Biyela (1988), Hindson & Morris (1990, 1992), Taylor & Shaw (1992) and Woods (1989, 1992)). The political explanations range from the crude eg 'tribal' or 'black-on-black' violence, to the more sophisticated argument of Gwala. He shows how Inkatha's reliance on homeland structures for 'bureaucratic entry points to gain control of areas' put it into automatic opposition with any group that opposed collaboration with the state.

The difficulty with much of this work is the assumption that sufficient political rivalry will produce violence. I take issue with this literature on two accounts. Firstly, implicit in this writing is the idea that political violence is an intensified version of political conflict. And secondly, their failure to recognise that the 'outcome' violence



is the result of a process; there are multiple trajectories that feed into the violence with each having its part to play.<sup>19</sup> The socio-economic explanations also cover diverse views; Hindson & Morris (1990, 1992) centre their argument around the socio-economic conditions arising from the weakening of apartheid, while Taylor & Shaw (1992) suggest that it is the socio-economic conditions arising from apartheid itself which are responsible for the violence. They argue that Hindson & Morris's argument marginalises the political and does not 'probe the linkages between material and political factors' (Taylor & Shaw, 1992:15). Despite their proposal that it's necessary to investigate 'how political consciousness is actively constituted and reconstituted within a changing dynamic' they don't actually do this work or offer any concrete proposals on how it could be done. Woods (1989, 1992) adopts a different approach and argues that there are a number of causal factors and that it is these causal factors that have a socio-economic base. All these explanations operate at the macro-level with the analysis pivoting on structural contradictions. Similarly to the 'political explanations' school the analyses seem to assume that violence is an inevitable outcome of conflict. By ignoring the dynamics and tensions of particular places and localities and the role of local politics and grassroots organisations they also remain silent about the multiple trajectories that produce the violence and its different forms in different places.

One study that deserves special mention is Mhlongo's (2004) unpublished study of political violence in Mandeni. In this masters' dissertation Mhlongo is interested in understanding the 'causes' of the political violence, but unlike some of the other literature in this category, he pays keen attention to the dynamics of place. He provides a very detailed and interesting study of political violence in the Mandeni/Isithebe/Sundumbili area. Unfortunately, the study tends towards the

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<sup>19</sup> However, these criticisms are not entirely fair to Gwala's work. He does provide a more sophisticated account, examining local and provincial dynamics in detail. I find his work very suggestive and it has enabled me to develop my thinking in this arena.

descriptive and ultimately the conclusions tend to be self-evidential rather than analytical.

The major (and only) debate in the literature has been around the causes of the political violence. The 'political causes' position, pointing to police partiality in supporting Inkatha, suggested that the violence was a deliberate destabilisation strategy linked to strengthening the KwaZulu homeland. The 'socio-economic' position argued that the violence had a material base in communities' differential access to resources. Subsequent evidence showing the direct and deliberate complicity of the state in stoking the violence shows these arguments to be fatally flawed (see chapter six). While some of the literature advocating a 'political causes' position does refer to police involvement (Aitchison, 1990b), this work with the exception of Gwala (1989), is limited by its failure to move beyond the descriptive and never fully engages with the role of the state. As my study will demonstrate, the militarised apartheid state was able to hook into local networks and exploit local conflicts. By ignoring the articulation of covert state interventions with local politics their analyses are only able to provide a partial explanation.

A further difficulty with all these explanations is that they skirt too closely the trap outlined by Beinart (1992) whereby African political conflict is explained as a response to conquest, dispossession and the authoritarian nature of colonial rule. Beinart suggests that adopting a contextual approach to understanding violence is not sufficient to explain the forms of violence within African communities. While it is necessary to locate violence in its 'colonial historical context' (Beinart, 1992:469) and so avoid the colonial and racist discourse that sees African societies as intrinsically violent (eg the 'black-on-black' analysis), it is also imperative to 'avoid the ahistorical assumption that African violence was born in the colonial era' (Beinart, 1992:469). Freund (1996:186) recognises this conundrum and argues that it is important to

establish deeper historical and cultural connections ... because these reveal continuities in form in the history of conflict in the region.

Clegg's research (cited in Freund, 1996) on rural faction fighting and Sithole's (1997) research on land disputes in the Umlazi location demonstrate some of these continuities. Nevertheless, none of the literature on contemporary political violence has attempted to probe for historical continuities. While such continuities might be difficult to find in newly constructed urban townships (many of which were the scene of intense conflict) I suggest that it's necessary to locate the political violence of the 1980s in a place where space had already acquired particular meanings.

One study that does require mention is the work of Krämer (2003, 2004).<sup>20</sup> Through an in-depth exploration of one locality, the Inchanga / Fredville area, he investigates the dynamics of political violence in that community. With his desire to establish that political violence is a 'different type of conflict altogether' (Krämer, 2003:4) and to argue that one needs to establish the 'specific local factors' that 'played a crucial role in the onset of violence ... [and] even more in its subsequent course' (Krämer, 2003:4) there are striking similarities in our approach.

A serious weakness of the literature on political violence is the absence of gender as an analytical tool. Furthermore, it is completely silent about women - the effect on them, their participation and roles. It assumes that political violence is about men. Most of the literature, to cite Cockburn (1998:12/13) assumes a 'curious 'present absence' of gender'. It presents a sex-differentiated picture with 'men and women acting out their age-old trans-historic roles' (Cockburn, 1998:12/3). The exceptions are a few short popular pieces, in the feminist journal *Agenda* commissioned by the Editorial Collective (see Annecke, 1990; and Irish, 1993), and in the grassroots women's magazine *SPEAK*, and one chapter in Kentridge (1990) which looks at the

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<sup>20</sup> Krämer's research work was towards a Phd thesis titled 'Violence as Routine. Transformations of Local-level Politics in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa'.

effect of political violence on women. These short articles are concerned with describing how women are affected by the violence. An article by Campbell (1992) links a crisis in African men's masculinity to the wider political violence. She suggests that it is within the family that men learn to be violent. However, while Campbell raises these issues, her article is only tangentially concerned with political violence. By focussing on the lives of women in areas affected by political violence, this study adds to the literature by exploring the ways in which political violence affected men and women differently both in its time-frame and in its modality, and how this articulates with the production of political identities.

Furthermore, this study raises questions of gender and generation; a theme that is also missing from the current literature. Much of the literature (see for example Kentridge, 1990; Sitas, 1992; Hemson, 1996) suggests that the violence is between elder men on the Inkatha side and younger men on the side of the UDF. This study shows that this is not the case. This thesis illustrates the ways in which the violence represents a generational rupture, fundamentally challenging and reforming generational power within the province. Additionally it adds to the literature by illustrating that embedded within the violence was a challenge to patriarchal order. The generational rupture represented a challenge to the patriarchal power of older men, but the gender violence (a theme not discussed in any of the existing work) encapsulated in the political violence sought to realigned gender relations between young men and young women. Thus, political violence asserted the patriarchal power of young men in relation to both older men and women.

In many respects I am also seeking to understand the 'causes' of the violence. What distinguishes my approach from the rest of the literature is my emphasis on process. I go beyond simple arguments of causality to explore how multiple forces are implicated in the political violence. While the participants in the debate around the 'causes' of the violence might ultimately be seeking to answer the same question

‘why’ their approach and starting point are very different. Thus a fundamental critique of the existing literature on violence in Natal is implicit in the analytical framework of the thesis.

#### **1.4 The Meaning of ‘Zuluness’ and Zulu Ethnicity in KwaZulu-Natal<sup>21</sup>**

This question is a central sub-text of the thesis. While not directly posed for investigation, it nevertheless lurks beneath many of the explanations for political violence. Inkatha, with its project of politicising Zulu ethnicity, firmly defined what it meant to be Zulu (see Bonnin et al, 1996). However, as the literature demonstrates there was a heterogeneity of meanings attached to ‘Zuluness’ which as Sitas (1988) argues meant many African residents of the province remained unavailable for ethnic mobilisation.

What constitutes Zulu ethnicity and the meaning of that identity has been widely written about (see Maré & Hamilton, 1987; Sitas, 1988; Marks, 1989; Maré, 1992; de Haas & Zulu, 1994; Campbell et al, 1995; Morrell, 1996; Wright and Hamilton, 1996; Dlamini, 1998; Muthien & Khosa, 1998). Much of the discussion on Zulu ethnicity has centred on the ‘fashioning and mobilisation of this experience by political brokers for political ends’ (Campbell et al, 1995:288). It suggests that it is imperative to distinguish between ethnicity as the ‘lived experience of ordinary people as the perceived members of an ethnic group’ and its mobilisation for political ends. While these two elements of ethnicity often interconnect they are discrete concepts and need, as the authors remind us, to be kept analytically separate.

Both concepts are relevant to my argument in this thesis. As I have suggested earlier an important characteristic of cultural identities in Natal was their heterogeneity. For

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<sup>21</sup> The reference here to KwaZulu-Natal should be read as meaning the place occupied by this

some people, an aspect of their lived experience as Zulus was the politicisation of their ethnic identities, which made them available for political mobilisation. But for others their lived experiences ensured that their ethnic identities remained cultural and they were not available for ethnic mobilisation.

Furthermore, ethnicities are historically specific and their meanings shift over time. The broader post-modern literature on identity (see for example Hall, 1992) suggests that ethnicity, along with other social identities, is a contingent rather than essential feature of human nature and organisation. Wright and Hamilton's (1996) work illustrates that ethnicity is not an inherent feature of African, and in this case Zulu, society. Their work demonstrates the political, social and economic changes that constructed ethnic differentiations in the early Zulu kingdom. They show that a broader Zulu identity within the Zulu kingdom did not develop until the late nineteenth century; furthermore, it was not until the twentieth century that this identity was appropriated by Africans south of the Thukela River (ie living in Natal).

The historical specificity of the construction of Zulu ethnicity is further developed in the work of Marks (1989). In her examination of African politics in early twentieth century Natal and Zululand she argues that by

Using the building blocks of past history, language, and 'custom' twentieth century ethnic consciousness has been the product of intense ideological labour by the black intelligentsia of Natal and the white ideologues of South Africa (Marks, 1989:217).

Concerned with the degenerative consequences of urbanisation and modernity, the African Christian community of Natal (the *amakholwa*) together with the pre-colonial ruling class forged a 'pan-Zulu identity' (Marks, 1989:233). Key organising elements in the construction of this identity were: symbols of the Zulu monarchy and its history; the need to preserve Zulu tradition and custom (most important the adherence to practices of *hlonipha*); the need to reassert moral control over women

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province historically as well as in the current period.

and youth; and an ethnic chauvinism towards non-Zulus.

Other work has also indicated the ways in which Zulu ethnic identity has been crafted both from above and below (see Sitas, 1988; de Haas & Zulu, 1994). De Haas & Zulu (1994:437) refer to apartheid's race classification policy, mother-tongue education and the homeland policy whereby a 'Zulu nationality' was imposed on all those who were assigned identity as citizens of the 'national state' of KwaZulu'. Maré (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987; Maré, 1992) has demonstrated the ways in which Inkatha and its leader Chief Buthelezi have shaped Zulu ethnic identity and consciousness through the honouring of traditional authorities, particularly the institution of the monarchy; the establishment of a common origin in Shaka as the 'founding father' of the Zulu nation; their glorification of a proud Zulu warrior past; and arguments of cultural distinctiveness. Sitas' (1988) paper suggests that while these 'projects from above' have had some measure of success, in that by the late twentieth century African people residing on both sides of the Thukela River in Natal subjectively identified with the ethnic group Zulu, the meaning ascribed to this identity was not uniform. He argues that

There is no 'Zulu-ness' held in common by all black workers in Natal, despite the fact that most of them identify themselves as 'Zulu'. The appropriation of this ethnicity by black workers is related to their varied forms of historical experience.' (Sitas, 1988:19)

He identifies the varied experiences of their relationship to land, dispossession, proletarianisation and chieftainship as responsible for 'heterogeneous clusters of meanings and traditions of resistance'. These varied and different experiences are closely tied to 'place' of residence.

Campbell et al (1995) and Dlamini (1998) have explored more closely the subjective meaning of 'Zuluness' for some residents of KwaZulu-Natal. Dlamini (1998:475) suggests that Zulu identity in KwaZulu-Natal has four criteria of identification – birthplace, descent, language and history. To this should be added 'familiar and

understood ways of behaviour’ – with the practice of *hlonipha* being most important. She argues that political groups have used these criteria of identification (ie birthplace, descent, language and history) differently in order to construct and formalise certain practices as ‘Zulu’. Similarly, cultural practices like *hlonipha* have been reinterpreted and redefined by some political groups. Yet despite attempts by political groups to homogenise Zulu identity many groups, particularly the youth remained outside these attempts. Campbell et al’s (1995) study further demonstrates the diversity of meaning attached to ‘Zuluness’. This study identifies language, customs and cultural practices as important in establishing ethnic identity and in the informants’ identification of themselves as Zulu. But an elaboration of any of these reference points by informants showed that their location was domestic and local ie family, home, clan and community. Customs that are understood as culturally specific are located within a particular family or clan, with a sense of ‘this is how things are done by our family’, rather than ‘this is how things are done by Zulus’. Similarly, a discussion of history did not make reference to a common origin in Shaka and the history of the Zulu nation but to personal and family histories. Respect or *hlonipha* was an important cultural value that served as a lynchpin of harmonious relationships both within families and communities.

This literature shows that the politicisation and construction of Zulu ethnicity has been a project undertaken by various political elites at different periods in the region’s history. As such these projects and the meanings they construct are always historically specific with particular political goals. However, this politicised ethnic identity is only one of many meanings that ordinary people might ascribe to ‘Zuluness’. As the more subjective studies show, many inhabitants of Natal lacked a self-conscious ethnic Zulu identity. While language is an important indicator of ethnic identity, what it means to be Zulu relates to family customs and kinship beliefs ensuing an heterogeneity of cultural identities. Nevertheless, amongst this heterogeneity there are common values – *hlonipha* being an important one.



A question which is not overtly explored in the literature is the resonances of age and gender with meanings of Zuluness. Campbell et al's (1995) study hints at some of the crises plaguing age and gender identities but doesn't explore how these are knitted into ethnic or cultural identities. However, Dlamini's (1998) discussion of how the practice of *ukuhlonipha* is impregnated with patriarchal meanings allows some unravelling of these linkages. *Ukuhlonipha* was practiced in terms of both age and gender. Reworkings and renegotiations of gendered and inter-generational relationships disrupt the practice of *ukuhlonipha* and thus forces a renegotiation of cultural identities as well. Furthermore, Dlamini (1998:483) argues that the politicisation of Zulu culture, with the extension of *ukuhlonipha* to those who held political power, meant that the challenging of age or gender hierarchies implied a challenging of the established political order and vice versa.

### **1.5 Gender, Generation and Masculinity**

A recently emerging literature (Campbell, 1992; Carton, 2000; Xaba, 2001; Waetjen & Maré, 2001; McClendon, 2002; Waetjen, 2006) attempts to explore the relationship between Zuluness, generation and gender/masculinity. The discussion of these three concepts is not equally balanced, with some of the literature emphasising one aspect more than the other. The first theme, generation, is explored in much of this work. Historical studies (Carton, 2000 and McClendon, 2002) demonstrate that the issue of generational revolt or disobedience has been of concern to the Zulu patriarch over many decades and, to cite Campbell (1992:618), 'as several historians have pointed out the erosion of African patriarchy has been a long-established social process'. Carton (2000) specifically explores generational conflict in late eighteenth century colonial Natal and Zululand (specifically the Thukela Basin region). He examines complicities between African and colonial patriarchal systems and their impact on homestead power relations. McClendon (2002) looks more closely at the relationship between customary law, labour tenancy and 'hierarchies of gender and generation'.

While similarly focussing on ‘relationships within African communities’ (McClendon, 2002:3), he also points to the alliances between patriarchs. His work is important to this study in two respects. Firstly, his discussion of gender and generational conflict allowed me to explore more fully the broader generational struggles that impinged on the Georgedale area in the period prior to the construction of Mpumalanga township. And, secondly, he sheds light on the multiplicity of Zulu identities that ‘competed and coexisted’ (McClendon, 2003:11) in early twentieth century Natal. He suggests that these identities draw on status, generation, gender, religion, tradition, migrancy and land in their construction.

In the work by Waetjen & Maré (2001) and Waetjen (2006), the discussion of generation is far more implicit and tangential. Drawing on other literature Waetjen, in her study of Inkatha and Zulu masculinity assumes that the generational struggle evident in the political violence of the 1980s was between young, urban and ANC/UDF supporting men and older, rural and Inkatha supporting men. This is an argument that this thesis takes issue with (see below). However, it should be noted that the major emphasis of Waetjen’s study is the exploration of Zuluness and masculinity as constructed by Inkatha. She demonstrates how Inkatha constructed a particular kind of masculinity drawing on their specific construction of Zulu identity. Key to the construction of Zulu identity was the subordinate position of women as ordered by ‘ethnic custom and traditional practice’ (Waetjen, 2006:73). Other key resources in the construction of Zulu masculinity by Inkatha are the institution of the *amakhosi* (Waetjen, 2006:72-74), the industrial cultures of the modern workplace and customary practices of the rural homestead (Waetjen, 2006:79). Waetjen (2006:93-94) argues that the efficacy of the masculinity constructed by Inkatha lay not necessarily in uniting Zulu men against a feminine other, but rather in capitalising on differences between men. This she argues was a key strategy in politicising Zulu masculinity and mobilising it in the political battles of the 1980s.

Political battles were fought within climates of ‘mobilised masculinity,’

where manhood was called upon by competing organisations and where political actions were prescribed and interpreted in the language of manhood. (Waetjen, 2006:95)

Undoubtedly Waetjen makes pertinent points with regard to the issue of masculinity and political violence. However, I would suggest that her discussion is limited by the sources from which she draws. Her analysis is primarily constructed from the discourses of Inkatha leadership; and, what is thus missing is a sense of how these discourses were received by ordinary men. Just as the work of Sitas (1988) and Campbell et al (1995) has demonstrated that there was a diversity of meanings associated with Zuluness, so there would have been a diversity of masculinities.

Campbell (1992) and Xaba (2001) examine constructions of masculinity from the side of the UDF youth. Campbell's (1992) study is interesting in that she locates her discussion of masculinity within a discussion of generation. She argues that the crisis besetting African patriarchy and masculinity in the 1980s was a crisis underscored by generation, with younger and older men experiencing that crisis differently (Campbell, 1992:618). She suggests that the status of older men has been severely undermined.

Social change has effected a radical contradiction in the experience of fathers. Older men are struggling to reconcile what they would call the traditional view of men as potent, powerful, proud beings, as well as repositories of community wisdom and experience, with a set of social relations where as black workers they fall low in the current social hierarchy and have little power within the family. The result of this is that men feel alienated and displaced in their families as well as their township communities. (Campbell, 1992:621)

Younger men also faced disappointments associated with economic and employment hardships. Yet, they were able to reassert their masculinities through 'the macho culture of resistance' (Campbell, 1992:624). For young men, participation in political violence becomes an integral part of the reassertion of their masculinity. Another aspect of the relationship between violence and masculinity was gender relations

(Campbell, 1992:625-626). Violence was a common theme in the way in which young men discussed their sexual relationships. Many young men referred to the 'use of violence in what they called the 'common practice of forced sex' amongst young people' (Campbell, 1992:626). Young men also spoke about the need to control, and if need be, discipline, their girlfriends. Xaba (2001) in his study of the 'young lions' alludes to similar traits in what he terms 'struggle masculinity'. He also discusses the generational tensions between younger and older men with younger men being impatient of older men who had tolerated or accommodated apartheid (Xaba, 2001:110).

These discussions are relevant to the questions explored in this thesis. They provide a broader context in which to locate the violent masculinities that exhibited themselves in the context of political violence. What the current discussions do illustrate is that 'what it means to be a Zulu man' is contingent upon time, generation and location.

## **1.6 Space, Place and Spatiality**

The empirical picture of the political violence in Natal with its differential impact across the province shows that space does matter. Central features of the political violence were its uneven spread and spatial concentrations. As I have suggested above a purely structural analysis like that proposed by Booth & Biyela (1988), Hindson & Morris (1990, 1992), Taylor & Shaw (1992) and Woods (1989, 1992) is unable to provide an explanation for this unevenness. It is not that such explanations ignore space; rather they rest on a passive conception of space with time being the dynamic and changing force. This according to Massey (1994:251) is a fairly common view of space, one that views space as stasis and in opposition to time. Over the last three decades this view of space has been the subject of much discussion within the literature, particularly within Marxist geography. I shall examine some of the key developments in these debates before outlining the way in which I shall be utilising the concept in this thesis.

Geography had always been the most spatial of the social sciences. However, the tendency to treat 'social relations as purely spatial relations' (Gregory, cited in Johnson et al, 2000:768) made many human geographers increasingly uneasy. David Harvey in his development of a Marxist geography<sup>22</sup> played a key role in repositioning human geography. Asking 'what is space?' he argued for the need to reconceptualise and interpret 'space' as well as the relationship between space, time and social being. This 'historico-geographical materialism' project, as Harvey termed it, resulted in Marxist geography developing a number of different directions in its reconceptualisation of space. However, according to Gregory (cited in Johnston et al, 2000:769) there was

... a general convergence on the *socialisation of spatial analysis* and, hard on its heels, the *spatialisation of social analysis*: like simultaneous equations, each was seen to require the other.

There were other important works within Marxist geography during the 1980s. A key work within this school was Neil Smith's (1984) book *Uneven Development*. Trying to understand the uneven development of capitalism, he argued that capitalism was a continuous but uneven process of expansion into absolute space. Space is not an empty container. He maintained that 'by living, acting and working we produce space' (Smith, 1984:85). Capitalism, he said, 'produces certain absolute spaces of its own as part of the larger production of relative space' (Smith, 1984:85). These productions were expanded upon at the ideological level

Thereby forging a powerful connection between the 'material' and 'metaphorical' spaces (Johnston et al, 2000:769).

The work of Henri Lefebvre was critical to the development of this literature. Both

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<sup>22</sup> His groundbreaking book was *Social Justice and the City* (1973), followed by *Limits of Capital* (1982). According to Soja (1989:59) there were very few 'original and synthesizing books' in the period between these two.

Smith and Harvey in their development of Marxist geography drew on his work and he has also been significant in the repositioning of space in critical social theory more generally eg Soja, Giddens, Massey. In his influential book *The Production of Space* ([1974], 1991) Lefebvre put forward an argument for the social production of space – spatiality.

According to Shields (1999:154) Lefebvre asserts the importance

of a dialectic in which space and the geographical is integrated into the understanding of the social just as time and history are.

Lefebvre suggests that space is something that is both produced and productive. It evolves historically rather than being created separately from society. Implicit here is a critic of the separation of space and time. Thus he argues there is a need for an approach ‘that seeks to understand the dialectical interaction between spatial arrangements and social organisation itself’ (Shields, 1999:157). His key concept is his ‘threefold dialectic within spatialisation’ (Shields, 1999:160-170). The first level is that of spatial practice which includes the ‘contradictions of everyday life’.

Through the practice of everyday life space is dialectically produced as human space. The second level is the representation of space. This is the discursive regimes of analysis, the expert knowledges that conceive space. And, the third level is the spaces of representation or the discourse of space. This is space as it might be. It is reflexive and allows for the imaginings that allow us to think about what kind of space is possible. This aspect is at the centre of any fully lived space. Each aspect of the dialectic is connected to the other two and altogether they make up space.

Key to Lefebvre’s work are his criticisms of social theorists, for example Althusser, Foucault, and Derrida, who use spatial metaphors ‘in abstraction from social practice’ (Hart, 2002:34; see also Gregory in Johnston et al, 2000). Lefebvre sees spatiality as being produced through the practices of everyday life, which are simultaneously material and metaphorical. Furthermore, as is shown above, he argues that space and

time are inseparable (see Hart, 2002:34). The problem with spatial metaphors, according to Smith and Katz (cited in Hart, 2002:34) is not with the metaphor itself but rather with the conception of space (absolute) upon which they rest.

Drawing on this work these formative Marxist geographers were amongst the first to challenge the dualities of time and space; absolute and relative space; and real/material space and imaginary/symbolic space. During the 1980s and 1990s these concepts were widely debated within critical social theory. According to Johnston et al (2000:771/2) three propositions have emerged from these debates. Both space and time (or space-time) (see Massey 1994b) are seen as being produced through action and interaction. Neither space nor time are seen as neutral and neither exists outside the practices of everyday life. Secondly, both space and time cannot be seen as 'held fast in fixed compartments'. Rather than the previous emphasis on order, pattern and symmetry it's important to recognise the multiple ways in which 'life on earth evades and exceeds those orders'. Space is produced and transformed through multiple 'productions, practices and performances'. Thirdly, following Neil Smith's (1984) proposition it is agreed that 'productions of space are inseparable from productions of nature'. Through practices these productions are constituted together.

Despite these theoretical developments the concepts of space and spatiality remain marginalised in much of mainstream sociological theorising. For example the second edition of the Collins *Dictionary of Sociology* (Jary & Jary), published in 1995 contains no entry on space, place or spatiality. An exception was the work of Anthony Giddens. In his 1981 book *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* he calls for

The injection of temporality and spatiality into the core of social theory, and binds and brackets the theory of structuration in time-space relations. 'All social interaction', Giddens writes (1981:19), 'consists of social practices, situated in time-space, and organised in a skilled and knowledgeable fashion by human agents'. ... Social systems are thus conceived as situated practices, patterned

(structured) relationships socially reproduced across time and space, as history and geography. (Soja, 1989:142)

Soja's (1989:143) conclusions, in a critical yet sympathetic review of this book, is that despite these intentions the spatial still plays second fiddle to the primacy of time and history. These criticisms still seem to hold for Giddens's later work *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) with its discussion of time-space distancing. Here he argues that

The 'emptying of time' is in large part the precondition for the 'emptying of space' and thus has causal priority over it. For, as I shall argue below, coordination across time is the basis of the control of space. The development of 'empty space' may be understood in terms of the separation of *space* from *place*. It is important to stress the distinction between these two notions, because they are often used as more or less synonymous with one another. 'Place' is best conceptualised by means of the idea of locale, which refers to the physical settings of social activity as situated geographically. ... The advent of modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between 'absent' others, ... (Giddens, 1990:18)

This analysis I suggest is problematic. As much of the literature (see above) has suggested, space is not an 'empty container'. In insisting that space is actively produced through everyday practices, Lefebvre (1991) was making an argument for the inseparability of space and time. Furthermore, as Hart (2002:34, emphasis added) argues

the production of space also implies the production of meanings, concepts and consciousness about space (or space-time) that are inseparably linked to its physical production through situated practices.

While not disputing Giddens's argument that the meaning of space and place changes from pre-modernity to modernity, Massey (1994:6) suggests that the challenge is to 'rethink the unity of space and place in different terms'.

As has been demonstrated Lefebvre's arguments have been central in the development of the more recent literature on space. His ideas have been used, albeit



critically, by a number of authors who have taken them in different directions. Amongst these is Doreen Massey (see [1984] 1995, 1994) whose work has been critical in shaping my conceptualisation of space and the way in which I have operationalised it in my analysis.

Massey (1994) was particularly concerned with the dichotomous portrayal of the relationship between space and time and in particular the view that space is a 3-D slice that moves through time. She argued that space needs to be conceptualised as

‘constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local level to the most global.’ (Massey, 1994:264)

Central to her argument is that space must be theorised integrally with time, the objective being to think in terms of space-time (Massey 1994:3). Space-time is conceptualised as a configuration of social relations imbued with power relations. Space-time is produced through both action and interaction, simultaneously in a number of different spatial locations. The spatial organisation of society is implicated in the production of the social; it is not merely the end product. Key to Massey’s (1994) argument is that the lived world consists of ‘a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces’ in constant interaction with each other. Space, in Massey’s view, is both active and dynamic. Furthermore, the ‘social relations of space’ are viewed and interpreted differently depending upon the social location of those who are part of it.

As stated above the differential nature of political violence illustrates that a spatial analysis is crucial in understanding the trajectories of the political violence. There was nothing in the social histories of either Natal or the places that were consumed by violence to indicate that political violence would be the primary social problem by the late 1980s. In effect the violence was the outcome of a multiplicity of social forces operating in different spatialities. The coming together of these social forces sedimented power relations and then reworked and reconfigured them over time. At any point along the way a different configuration of forces or spatialities could have

produced a different outcome ie political violence was not inevitable. It was the result of a series of spatial reconfigurations over time. In effect I am making an argument for a ‘processual’<sup>23</sup> analysis of the violence. It is necessary to trace and understand these different social forces, to understand how they come together and articulate with other spatialities, how at the point of articulation new spatialities are constructed and created along with new meanings of place and identity.

Understanding space-time as a configuration of social relations brings us to the question of power. The production of space itself is imbued with power relations. Here I would suggest Foucault’s discussion of spatiality is useful. Despite Lefebvre’s critical view of Foucault, as Robinson (1996:19) points out, he ‘explains spatial distributions and the division and arrangement of space in more than a purely metaphorical sense’. His empirical studies of prisons, asylums and hospitals illustrated that spatial strategies are key mechanisms for the operation of power in modern society. In all of these institutions, and by inference in wider society, the ordering of space allows for the disciplining of the inhabitants. In the chapters that follow I will show how the ordering of space during political violence allowed for the disciplining of residents and ultimately the constitution of particular subject-positions and the production of political identities.

Furthermore the production of space itself is not gender neutral. As Massey (1994:2) argues space is actively constructed out of social relations. It is produced through multi-layered, situated practices that are simultaneously material, symbolic, and mediated through power relations. Not only do all these spatial practices inscribe gender but gender inscribes itself into the production of space. The way in which spaces are gendered changes as spaces are produced and reproduced. Just as spatiality is ‘constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all social scales’

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<sup>23</sup> Lefebvre (Shields, 1999:155) discusses the ‘processual nature of l’espace’ to suggest that space is ‘always undergoing change from within through the actions and innovations of social agents’.

(Massey, 1994:3), so there are multiple ways in which gender relations are constructed and maintained (see McDowell, 1999:18). Gender relations are 'relations of power, hierarchy and inequality' (de Almeida, cited in McDowell, 1999:21). Thus as Hart (2002:37) reminds us, meanings of masculinity and femininity are invoked and contested as part of the exercise of power in multiple arenas.

The conceptualisation of the spatial as space-time formed out of a multiplicity of social interrelations has implications for how one views place. Within the literature there is a fierce debate over the conceptualisation of place (see Massey, 1994:4-11; Rose, 1995). These debates have relevance in both the academic and political spheres. One conception, linked to the idea of space as stasis, views place as bounded in various ways. Place is seen as the site of authenticity, it is singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity. The political consequences are exclusivist claims to place. The results have been seen in various parts of the world from Bosnia to Northern Ireland, from apartheid South Africa to Israel where contesting parties have attempted to fix the meaning of particular spaces, bestow them with fixed identities and claim them for themselves. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters a similar process was seen in Natal.

Thinking about space as active and dynamic allows one to recognise that places are similarly produced. Thus an alternative conceptualisation is to view place as a particular articulation of social relations and situated practices at all scales. To cite Massey (1995:5) place becomes 'a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings'. This view of place disputes the notion that the meaning of place can be based on internal histories (only) or ahistorical (timeless) identities. Therefore 'the identities of places are always unfixed, contested and multiple'. The distinctiveness of any place is therefore constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity in relation to the other but through the particular articulation of linkages with and connections to that outside. In this

analysis places are seen as open and porous. As Massey (1995:5, original emphasis) points out attempts to establish boundaries can therefore be seen as

attempts to stabilise the meaning of particular envelopes of space-time. ... For such attempts at the stabilisation of meaning are constantly the site of social contest, battles over the power to label space-time, to impose the meaning to be attributed to a space, for however long or short a span of time.

Massey (1993) argues for a progressive sense of place that recognises the open and porous boundaries between places as well as the numerous interlinkages and interdependencies among places. Places are not bounded entities but are socially created through their spatial connections with other places. According to Johnston et al (2000:583) the progressive concept of place is normative as well as descriptive.

It assumes social and cultural heterogeneity within places rather than assimilation to a national or local norm. Any given place is materially and imaginatively constructed by many different types of people.

The spatial form of political violence and the way in which it reterritorialised the spaces of everyday life throws the spotlight on the conception of place as open, shifting, multiple and porous (see Massey, 1994:7). Boundaries between places are always constituted and maintained by social relations of power and exclusion. In a situation of political violence boundaries both within and between places are constructed. It is important to understand how such boundaries are produced and to probe the consequences for the meaning of place. In the process the meaning of place becomes singular, furthermore there is little tolerance for alternative conceptions, boundaries become set and the meaning of those places become fixed. Moreover, the way in which men and women are able to access places and contribute to the construction of their meanings is gendered and differential.

## 1.7 Space, Place and Identity

A question that this thesis seeks to understand is how the production of space and place articulate with the co-production of political identity. Just as the identities and meanings of places are conceptualised as ‘multiple, shifting and unbounded’ so too are subjectivities and personal identities. Yet as chapter six will demonstrate as political violence reterritorialised the spaces of everyday life so it fixed the meanings and (political) identities of places.

Most theorists agree that the meanings ascribed to places are socially constructed. The identity of place, similar to other identities is always and continuously being produced. As Massey (1994:168) points out attempts to fix the meanings of place generally rest on singular, fixed and static identities for places. Such understandings of identities of places compel them to be enclosed, to have boundaries and most importantly to establish their identity through negative opposition with ‘the other’ beyond the boundary.

Massey (1994:168) suggests that this is not the only way in which place can be conceptualised. Moving from the premise that space is conceptualised in terms of four-dimensional space-time as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations at all scales, then it’s possible to reconceptualise place too. Social relations, she says, always have a spatial form and a spatial content. They exist both in space (ie locationally) and across space. However, I would suggest that this ‘progressive’ understanding of place doesn’t preclude the formation of a fixed and static identity for place. My argument here is that just as political violence was the outcome of multiple trajectories, so the articulation of these trajectories resulted in the construction of a fixed and static identity for place.

The identity of place is also constructed by the underlying structures of power (see Rose 1995:98-102). A sense of place marks differences between groups of people.

One way of marking that difference is claiming that ‘my group’ belongs to a particular place and other groups do not belong. These differences are further marked by boundaries that establish insiders and outsiders. The construction of boundaries is a means of organising space. The drawing of boundaries at all levels and in all circumstances is an exercise of power. They are an expression of the power structures of society, and are one among the many kinds of social relations that construct space and place (Massey, 1995b:69). The process of claiming place can take the form of elaborate rituals eg graffiti as in the case of many gangs or as in Natal the shouting of insults across the ‘borders’. Most importantly, territoriality is the ‘geographical expression of social power’ (Sack cited in Rose 1995:100).

Writing which only emphasises power in the construction of place tends to offer a structural analysis of the meaning of place. However, it is also important to take into account the feelings and emotions that play a part in creating places. The creations of boundaries are usually involved when there are intense emotional constructions of senses of place. Boundaries define identity by marking ‘not only what/where it is, but also what/where it is not’ (Rose 1995:103). The identity of the place is established through a contrast by defining something in opposition to what it is not (see Said, cited in Rutherford 1990)

... the Other, in its very alienness, simply mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the centre, but projected outside of itself. It is in these processes and representations of marginality that the violence, antagonisms and aversions which are at the core of dominant discourses and identities become manifest – racism, homophobia, misogyny and class contempt are the products of this frontier. (Rutherford, 1990:22)

Ideas about difference are articulated through the construction of ‘the other’. Rose (1995) suggests that exclusionary ideas about who belongs in a place and who doesn’t are made through the construction of Others.

The notion of the Other allows us to connect senses of place, power and identity in an analytical manner which does not neglect the emotional dynamics of place.

Communities actively make places both in imagination and through material practice (Massey, 1995b:48). There are many possible outcomes to the way in which places are made or produced. One possibility, grounded in the view of space as stasis, is to keep out things and people whom we argue do not belong. Each group draws lines of demarcation between itself and other groups, purifying the identity of place. This, according to Keith and Pile (1993a:20), provokes a reactionary vocabulary of both the identity politics of place and a spatialised politics of identity.

These views of the construction of the identity of place are useful in understanding the form the violence took in Natal. As will be shown in chapters six and seven political violence marked and divided up the township between two political groups. The reterritorialisation of the space of the township marked some areas as UDF and others as Inkatha. The boundaries signified the borders between areas supporting the different political groups. In the process both groups constructed an Other. Identities were expressed more in terms of what they were not than what they were.

Citing Walter Benjamin, Keith and Pile (1993b:26) suggest that identity and location are inseparable. 'Knowing oneself was an exercise in mapping where one stands'. They suggest that spatialities have always produced landscapes that are loaded with ethical, epistemological and aestheticised meanings. And these meanings are perpetually contested. However, what I am interested in here is a situation where that contestation takes a violent form. As will be shown in chapters six and seven, violence has more severe consequences for the construction of identities of place and subjectivities.

The construction of coherent places and identities are intertwined social processes. In the political violence in Natal the spatial politics involved moments of closure and boundary making. There were attempts by both parties to stabilise the identities of

places with those groups then claiming a right to that space. Residents within those places saw themselves as affiliated to that political group. Bodily survival depended upon a changed sense of self, and in the process a redefinition of one's political identity.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, I propose there is a strong correlation between individual subjectivity and the political identity of place.

Sitas (1988) in a paper examining the relationship between class, nation and ethnicity in Natal suggests a strong relationship between place and 'identity'. He rejects structuralist theories that 'collapse subject-formation to being no more than the result or the outcome of ideological interpellations' (Sitas, 1988:15). He argues that 'Zulu-ness' is by no means 'a common univocal or unilateral experience in Natal'. He distinguishes four main 'traditions of resistance' in Natal, mapping each of these traditions onto experiences grounded strongly in time and space.

The argument, stated so broadly suffices as a simple demonstration: that 'Zulu-ness' as an ethnic self-identification among black workers in Natal, although common, registers different experiences and comradeships from area to area. (Sitas, 1988:25)

In a similar vein, but a different time and place, Radcliffe (1993) looks at the way 'place and politics became intertwined' in the *Madras* movement of Argentina. She suggests that in the creation of the *Madras* as a political movement 'an elision between place and maternal identity was founded and maintained' (Radcliffe, 1993:110). Radcliffe argues that it is necessary to examine the linkages between the mechanisms of transformation of identities and the spaces of operation for politics.

A third study is by Watts (1992), where he looks at a number of Islamic insurrections that took place in several cities of northern Nigeria during the 1980s. He is interested to show how difference and identity are produced within constellations of power that

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<sup>24</sup> This point is made somewhat crudely here. See chapter seven for a more nuanced discussion of this process.



are located in interconnected spaces.

The importance of these studies is their stress on the relationship between place and subjectivity. They construct their arguments through detailed empirical material. I therefore turn to some of the more abstract writing on identity formation in order to identify some theoretical markers to assist in constructing my arguments.

Identities, Hall (1996) argues, are produced in specific historical and institutional sites ie to use Massey's terms in space-time. Most contemporary thinking on identity (see Appiah & Gates, 1995; Calhoun, 1994a; Castells, 1997; Hall, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Hall & du Gay, 1996; Laclau, 1990; Rose, 1995, Rutherford, 1990; Somer, 1994) disrupts the essentialist conception of identity. It disputes the idea of a stable core of self that unfolds from beginning to end; that there is some part of the self that remains 'the same', 'identical to itself across time [and space]' (Hall, 1996:3).

Instead the arguments suggest that identity is understood as that which is never unified but always fragmented and fractured, that it is never singular but multiple, that it is constructed across difference, that it is never completed but is always in the process of change and transformation (see Hall, 1996:4). Within these ideas I am trying to find a way to understand how ordinary people with little prior history of political activity came to identify with either Inkatha or the UDF and furthermore, how these political identities were produced.

Identities cannot be read off a subject position. For example, it does not follow that a working class identity will arise as a result of the positioning of a class in a particular relation to socio-economic relations. Identities must be actively constructed. This construction is itself a process - a process that involves articulations with boundaries, power, difference, otherness and situated practices. Moreover, as Laclau argues any articulation of identity is only briefly complete.

In such a fragile world of identity formation and object formation, political subjects are articulated through moments of closure that

create subjects as surfaces of inscription, mythical and metaphoric, invariably incomplete. (Keith and Pile, 1993b:27)

Politics, as Keith and Pile (1993c:222) suggest, is habitually about closure. It is the moment when boundaries become impermeable – the Berlin Wall. Politics seals the boundaries creating spaces of enclosure. ‘We’ are on one side and ‘you’ on the other. Boundaries fix the subject. They create moments of closure for the identities of the subjects within those spaces. The moment of closure creates and gives meaning to the ‘community’ defined by that identity. Thus the creation of boundaries has a double role; firstly, they produce the oppositional ‘us’ and ‘them’, and secondly, they produce the internal community. Central to understanding this moment of closure is locating it on, and then understanding the ground on which it takes place. In certain situations, like in Natal, these spatial boundaries are real. They are not just spatial metaphors indicating social oppositions and contrasts. The boundaries signify difference and distance, location and separation (Kirby, cited in Pile and Thrift, 1995b:374) both between places and between the subjects that inhabit those places.

Identities are formed in relation to each other. They emerge through difference. It is only in relation to the Other, to what it is not, that an identity can be constructed. Laclau (1990:21) draws on Lacan to flesh out this concept of identity formation. Identity formation is set within fields of (negative) differences, articulated through what it is not. Accordingly they are never complete since ‘relations do not form a closed system’. Identity and the conditions of their existence are inseparable. There is no identity outside of its context. Keith and Pile (1993b:30) raise a difficulty with a politics of identity that stresses the irreconcilable nature of differences. It can, they suggest, advance a notion of a politics of location that privileges each and every place.

The advantage of Laclau’s theorisation is that these spaces can be unpacked, they become equivalent to surfaces of inscription.

Through the process of boundary-making and othering identities construct an internal unity. However, this is not an inherent unity, it rests on the moment of closure, or opposition to the other. Thus, identities are always relations of power. As Laclau (1990:31) argues ‘the construction of social identity is an act of power and that identity as such *is* power’. To study the conditions of existence of a given social identity, then, is to study the power mechanisms making it possible. However as Rose (1995b:207) reminds us the subject is constituted through multiple power relations – whether they are supportive or antagonistic. This connects with the concept of the articulation of multiple trajectories that constitute place, reminding us that the power relations that are part of constituting identity are located at a number of spatial scales.

Finally just as communities make places through material practices, so identity is also constructed through practice. Pile and Thrift (1995a) in their introduction to the edited collection *Mapping the Subject* outline a variety of approaches to ‘the subject’. Amongst these they cluster a number of authors under ‘practices’ (see Pile & Thrift, 1995a:26-38).

... what these authors have in common is that they see the subject as primarily derived in *practice*. ... understanding of the subject in practice is fundamental in two ways. First, this kind of subjectivity is always present. Sometimes we frame representations. Sometimes we do not. But the practical intelligence is always there. More to the point, and second, the kind of representations we make are only comprehensible against the background provided by this inarticulate understanding. (Pile and Thrift, 1995:27)

They identify four main characteristics of this kind of thinking about the subjects’ understanding of the world. First, the subjects’ understanding comes from ‘a ceaseless flow of conduct, conduct which is always future-orientated’. Second, the subject’s understanding of the world is ‘intrinsically corporeal’. The socialised body is not an object, rather it is a storeroom of creative and generative abilities to understand. The third characteristic is that the subject’s understanding is worked out

in joint action. Actions are created through shared understandings that the subject both takes from and contributes to.

Dialogical action is a fundamental determinant of the intelligibility of social life, understanding comes from 'we', not 'I'. (Pile and Thrift, 1995a:28).

The fourth characteristic of the subjects' understanding of the world is its situatedness. The subject can only know from their location in a particular place.

Therefore abstracting subjectivity from time and space becomes an impossibility because practices are always open and uncertain, dependent to some degree upon the immediate resources available at the moment they show up in time and space. (Pile and Thrift, 1995a:29)

Finally, as Pile and Thrift assert, there is a major emphasis in theories of practice on the particularities of place. Specific contexts are crucial elements in the construction of subjectivity. 'In other words place is constitutive of the subject's understanding of the world.' (Pile and Thrift, 1995a:29)

Allan Pred (2000) in his book *Even in Sweden* utilises the concept of locally situated practices in his discussion of racisms and racialised spaces in Sweden. He (2000:17) argues that collective or individual identity can't be reduced to stories people tell about themselves. Furthermore, it's not just the boundaries that are drawn between 'them' and 'us'. He suggests that at the core of any dimension of identity is a set of taken-for-granted yet flexible meanings. These, he says, are attained and reinforced via involvement in a particular sphere of situated practice. Thus in the wake of new or transformed practices and discourses that accompany social or economic crises, collective identity crises are liable to develop as central taken-for-granted meanings become unhinged and problematic.

In chapter seven I demonstrate how these elements articulated to produce political identities. The reconstruction of both place and identity happened alongside the formation of boundaries, the enforcement of the 'new rules' of living, the othering of

political opponents and their spaces and through the lived experiences and situated practices of political violence.

## **1.8 Scope of the Thesis**

This introduction has outlined the argument of the thesis and reviewed some of the essential literature that the thesis engages with.

Chapter two charts the methodology used in the research process. The chapter begins by reviewing some of the philosophical concerns, making an argument for qualitative research, more specifically ethnography. It then details the reasons behind the choice of research topic before providing an account of the fieldwork process.

The purpose of chapter three ‘From Freehold to Model Township: The Making of Mpumalanga – Space, Control and a ‘New’ Zulu Identity’ is to sketch the historical narrative of place, space and identity with regard to the Hammarsdale area. It covers the period from the establishment of Georgedale as a *kholwa* mission in 1862, to the forced removal of residents into Mpumalanga township in the 1970s, and, the establishment of new structures of township governance and the conflicts associated with these in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Chapter four – ‘Local Politics: Resisting an Ethnic Politics of Identity’ focuses on the period of the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. It examines the organisational politics of Mpumalanga illustrating that public communal life in Mpumalanga during this period was characterised by a variety of organisations and associations.

Chapter five – ‘National and Regional Politics: The Role of the State in Political Violence in Natal’ argues that if we wish to understand what was politically distinctive about this period, and why this order of violence didn’t happen previously, then it is necessary to confront the role and nature of the central state. The chapter

discusses the South African state in the 1970s and 1980s. Secondly, it looks at the specific politics of Natal and KwaZulu. Finally, it outlines the implementation of covert strategies to sow conflict and violently destroy political opposition to both the South African state/government and the KwaZulu government/Inkatha.

In chapter six ‘Mapping Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township’ the events in the years 1987 (from when political violence starts) to 1991 (when peace is established) are described. The focus of the chapter is place-specific and intensely local; discussing the form and character of political violence in Mpumalanga township. It shows the extent to which the violence transformed and disrupted the spatiality of the township and clearly illustrates what was new and singular about this mode of conflict. The chapter is concerned to demonstrate the ways in which political violence reshaped the space of the township. It explores the different spatialities – the body, the household and the neighbourhood – through which violence was produced through the simultaneous interaction of forces at different levels.

Chapter seven – ‘Ethnographies of Violence: The Making of Political Identities’ attempts to answer similar questions (how and why) but from the local perspective. This chapter provides a textured and ethnographic account of how political identities were made.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis by restating the contributions of the thesis and looking to the legacies of the political violence.