“So, the Killings Continued”
Wartime Mobilization and Post-War Violence in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

Sebastian van Baalen† & Kristine Höglund

ABSTRACT

Many post-war states experience continuous low-intensity violence for years after the formal end of the conflict. Existing theories often focus on country-level explanations of post-war violence, such as the presence of spoilers or the nature of the peace agreement. Yet, post-war violence does not affect all communities equally; whereas some remain entrenched in violence, others escape the perpetuation of violent conflict. We argue that communities where wartime mobilization at the local level is based on the formation of alliances between armed groups and local elites are more likely to experience post-war violence, than communities where armed groups generate civilian support based on grassroots’ backing of the group’s political objectives. We explore this argument in a comparison of three communities in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, which have experienced different levels of post-war violence. The analysis supports the main argument and contributes to the research on the microdynamics of civil war by outlining the implications of certain strategies of wartime mobilization and how these may generate localized legacies.

KEYWORDS

post-conflict states, post-war violence, microdynamics of civil war, South Africa

*This is an author’s accepted manuscript of an article published in The Journal of Terrorism & Political Violence published online 19 May 2017. To cite, please use the following information: Sebastian van Baalen & Kristine Höglund (2017). “So, the Killings Continued”: Wartime Mobilization and Post-War Violence in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The Journal of Terrorism & Political Violence, online first, doi:10.1080/09546553.2017.1318126.
†Corresponding author: sebastian.van-baalen@pcr.uu.se
Introduction

All wars eventually end, but what follows differs widely. While some post-war societies see a substantial reduction in violence, others, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Northern Ireland, and Timor-Leste, continue to experience various forms of political and criminal violence for years after the formal end of hostilities. Residual violence endangers fragile peace agreements, destabilizes the political situation, and threatens to plunge societies back into war.¹ This study focuses on the determinants of such post-war violence, that is, organized violence perpetrated by a group or the state after and armed conflict has come to a formal end.

Scholars have long acknowledged the pervasive continuity of violence in post-war societies. Much of the research explores relatively high-intensity instances of post-war violence and its effects on the durability of peace, highlighting the nature of the peace agreement and process, along with associated peacebuilding reforms, as the main causes of violence.² A related body of research accentuates how war transforms societies at the local and individual level and legitimizes violence, resulting in violent crime and intra-community tension.³ Taken together, these research strands have contributed significantly to our understanding of the national dynamics of post-war violence and the effects of violence at the individual level, but often falls short of accounting for low-intensity and locally-rooted patterns of violence. Not all regions and communities are equally affected by post-war violence; subnational research on Colombia, Northern Ireland, Italy, and Guatemala shows that even war-weary communities can escape the entrenchment of violence, but only under certain conditions.⁴

This paper departs from this empirical puzzle and explores why some communities experience post-war violence while others do not, and hence contributes to our understanding of the legacies of civil war. We draw on previous research on post-war violence and the emerging literature on the microdynamics of civil war and local orders to develop a theory that emphasizes local wartime mobilization as a key variable that mitigates or aggravates the risk of post-war
violence. We make a distinction between direct mobilization, when armed groups generate civilian support based on grassroots’ backing of the group’s political objectives, and indirect mobilization, when groups ensure civilian support by forming mutually beneficial alliances with local elites. Indirect mobilization, we posit, is more likely to result in post-war violence, because it intensifies local tensions and renders in-group enforcement of compliance more difficult, making local elites more likely to pursue their agendas through violence. By bringing the analysis of the microdynamics of civil war into the post-war period, we are able to explore how pre-existing local conflicts become entangled with larger conflict dynamics and how they hamper progress towards peace and stability in post-war societies.

The study also contributes to the literature on post-war violence by studying post-war violence across communities within a country, which allows us to move beyond country-level explanations that cannot account for subnational patterns of violence. Despite the spatially segmented nature of wartime dynamics, there are few studies that theorize and empirically analyse local variations of post-war violence. We conduct within-case analyses and a structured focused comparison of three South African communities—Richmond, Umbumbulu and Bhambayi—that all exhibited intense wartime violence, but different levels of post-war violence. The analysis builds on a combination of existing sources and new insights from interviews carried out in the communities. South Africa is an interesting case because it exhibits significant subnational variations in post-war violence, and because the negotiated settlement made it impossible for any single actor to exercise full control over the country. Although previous studies have examined the continuities and discontinuities of political violence in post-war South Africa, they have not in a comparative study traced the subnational legacies of wartime mobilization as a factor accounting for variations in local post-war violence.

While recognizing the importance of understanding why modes of mobilization vary in the first place, and how external and local peacebuilding initiatives influence levels of post-war violence, the analysis suggests that patterns of wartime mobilization influence the risk of violence
after the war has come to an end. Indirect mobilization is a key factor when accounting for why post-war violence was most intense in Richmond and Umbumbulu. In these communities, wartime mobilization was predominantly indirect and contributed to the perpetuation of violence by intensifying tensions and making in-group enforcement of compliance more difficult. In Bhambayi, our analysis suggests that direct mobilization both limited the impact of local challenges to peace and facilitated compliance from local elites.

From Wartime Mobilization to Post-War Violence

Peace agreements signal the formal end of hostilities among the belligerents. However, the legacy of civil war often entails a complex mix of personal, criminal, and political violence. A first strand of research addresses the issue of violence in post-war states and how it relates to critical concerns about conflict resumption or attempts to spoil or re-negotiate the settlement. This research typically accounts for violence between the main warring actors, for example, by pointing to the parties’ inability to credibly commit to peace, the role of rouge elements within their ranks, and the importance of third-party actors in preventing violence. But this strand of research has paid less attention to local level dynamics of violence that fall short of threatening the post-war political dispensation of power.

Another strand of research stems from the notion that the experience of war may lead to an increase in violence more generally. It builds on the idea that war entails transformations of socio-cultural, institutional, and economic structures of society that both enable and legitimate violence in the post-war era, sometimes to the extent that scholars speak of “a culture of violence.” Previous research shows that post-war states exhibit, on average, more violent crime than before the war and have significantly higher levels of homicides compared to non-war societies. Moreover, recent statistical analyses of post-war violence and crime illustrate the importance of exploring local variations and legacies in patterns of post-war violence. Deglow shows that war-related fatalities related to anti-government groups at the ward-level in Northern Ireland are associated with higher
levels of post-war violent crime, and Bateson finds a positive relationship between local levels of wartime violence and collective vigilantism in Guatemala.\textsuperscript{11} Grandi similarly demonstrates that patterns of extrajudicial executions in post-World War II Italy were a result of power struggles shaped by war-related organization, ideology, and territoriality, and that former local commanders where important agents in the killings.\textsuperscript{12}

We build on insights from these strands of research by focusing on how local patterns of wartime mobilization affect local order and the territorial distribution of post-war violence. To this end, we draw explicitly on the large literature on the microdynamics of war that theorizes how armed groups establish and maintain local order. By studying the implications of different modes of mobilization, we gain new insights on how already existing local conflicts affect and are affected by ideology and national-level factors. Moreover, by empirically examining communities that experienced both higher and lower levels of violence, we add to existing qualitative research that explores important mechanisms through which a legacy of war may translate into post-war violence. These studies are primarily concerned with cross-national analysis and do not account for important within-country variations, or focus exclusively on those instances where post-war violence did occur and hence contain a selection bias.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{The Importance of Wartime Mobilization}

The causes of civil war violence are generally more complex than commonly assumed. Far from being binary conflicts between easily distinguishable actors, civil wars are often fought between irregular armed groups over multiple issues. Such an understanding of the microdynamics of civil war, first introduced by Kalyvas, is based on the observation that what drives violence at the national level—the war’s “master cleavage”—is not necessarily the same as what drives violence at the local level.\textsuperscript{14} Essentially, civil war is seen as a conglomerate of multiple, more or less overlapping, localized civil wars. The implication is that we cannot assume that local actors engage
in violence for the same reasons as national actors do. Instead, violence is often a function of pre-existing local rivalries and feuds.\textsuperscript{15}

Moreover, classic guerrilla warfare theory and research on local order in civil war stress that gaining the support of local populations is paramount in civil war.\textsuperscript{16} A large literature on the microdynamics of civil war emphasises the importance of civilian populations as a source of food, labour, cover, information, and new recruits.\textsuperscript{17} While coercion may secure civilian compliance, violence is also costly since it can lead to enemy collaboration, flight, or civilian resistance.\textsuperscript{18} An alternative tactic is therefore to mobilize civilian support. Since local communities differ in both their willingness to embrace armed groups and their capacity to resist them, armed groups may employ different types of mobilization strategies in different communities.\textsuperscript{19}

These insights on how national factors and local dynamics intertwine, and how armed groups mobilize support during war, are covered extensively in the literature on the microdynamics of civil war. However, there is reason to believe that legacies from the war will also shape dynamics in the post-war period. While a peace agreement at the national level will ease the tensions between main contending actors, we are interested in whether, in cases where local conflicts were exploited by armed actors, the war may have lasting negative effects on local conflict dynamics. Specifically, we focus on the influence of two distinct strategies for civilian mobilization during war: direct and indirect mobilization. The distinction is derived from Kalyvas’ elite mobilization theory and distinguishes how civilians are mobilized, by whom they are mobilized, and why they mobilize.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{Direct mobilization} occurs when agents from the armed organization, like party officials or rebel commanders, evoke grassroots support for an armed group’s political objectives. This strategy enables armed groups to extend their political beliefs to local communities.\textsuperscript{21} As a consequence, local dynamics often become a manifestation of the central cleavage.\textsuperscript{22}

\textit{Indirect mobilization}, on the other hand, occurs when armed groups mobilize civilian support by forming alliances with local elites. This mobilization strategy exploits the prominent position of local elites when it comes to mobilizing local constituencies, since local elites can draw on
reputation and cultural/traditional authority to mobilize support. This approach may be particularly useful for centralized or less powerful armed groups that are unable to generate support from, or impose control over, civilian populations more directly. Local elites may also have an interest in such alliances. If involved in local power struggles, they gain access to arms and military training by allying with armed groups, and their association with a more powerful group may serve as a deterrent against rivalling elites. This is not to imply that local elites are disinterested in national political cleavages, just that family feuds, local land disputes, and local conflicts related to day-to-day survival are more immediate.

How do different strategies of wartime mobilization affect the likelihood of post-war violence in a community? We argue that communities that were mobilized indirectly during the war will experience higher levels of post-war violence than those communities that were mobilized directly, since indirect mobilization influences post-war violence in two significant ways. First, indirect mobilization intensifies local tensions. When armed groups employ indirect mobilization, they may deliberately enflame local tensions. By providing local elites with arms and military skills, armed groups use local elites as proxies to gain dominance in a community. As long as they facilitate civilian support for armed groups, local allies are free to employ violence as they see fit. Moreover, “preexisting conflicts at the local level acquire enhanced meaning and intensity when plugged into the national conflict and its violence,” making them more difficult to deescalate.

Armed groups that rely on direct mobilization, on the other hand, focus on promoting their political objectives at the local level. They have an interest in promoting national issues, while at the same time suppressing local conflicts that threaten group cohesion and local order. As national peace agreements address some or all of those incompatibilities, the agreement is more likely to resonate with the cause of hostility in the community and allow local stability to take root. Armed groups also have stronger incentives to quell local violence in such instances, since violence along the war’s master cleavage may be destabilizing and could be interpreted as spoiling behaviour.
Second, indirect mobilization renders in-group enforcement of compliance more difficult, enabling local elites to employ violence at will in the post-war period. Some local elites may have developed vested interests in violence—particularly when violence is tightly linked to their power, self-image, and livelihood—and are unlikely to give up their wartime benefits lightly.\textsuperscript{31} If local elites oppose local peace, it falls upon the national signatories of peace agreements to ensure compliance. Yet, the signatories do not always possess the necessary internal control needed to ensure such compliance. Typically, indirect mobilization is more likely to result in horizontal or cellular organizations that struggle to monitor the behaviour of their members and punish those who violate the terms of the settlement at the community level.\textsuperscript{32} While local elites are connected to, they are rarely brought into, the larger organization. This makes it difficult to use existing command and control structures to maintain control. Furthermore, local supporters cannot easily be controlled by national leaders. In short, when armed groups lack the ability to influence those using violence in the post-war period, the cost of using violence is reduced which may give rise to splinter groups and generate “regional microcosms of violent activity.”\textsuperscript{33}

When mobilization is direct, on the other hand, armed groups rally support by promoting local endorsement of their political objectives and are therefore more likely to retain effective command and control structures. Mobilization agents, such as party officials and rebel commanders, will more often be part of the armed group and can more easily be forced to comply with decisions through internal command structures. This is in line with Boyle’s assertion that hierarchical organizations have tighter institutional and bureaucratic control over the behaviour of their members than those with diffuse, horizontal, or cellular structures.\textsuperscript{34}

**Methodology and Case Selection**

We explore the relationship between wartime mobilization and post-war violence by comparing three South African communities that experienced different levels of violence despite all being
identified as hotspots of violence prior to the end of the civil war. The main incompatibility in South Africa concerned the racial oppression and segregation forcefully imposed by the apartheid government. The civil war began when the African National Congress (ANC) launched an armed struggle to overthrow the government following the Sharpeville massacre in 1961 and ended with the first democratic elections in April 1994. A second incompatibility arose between the ANC and the Zulu-nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) over the tactics of the liberation struggle and how a free South Africa should be governed. It was an irregular civil war, with irregular forces, paramilitary groups, and militarized civilians battling the powerful apartheid state and its security forces, causing an estimated 15,000 deaths.35

South Africa is a pertinent case to analyse because it displays clear regional and local patterns of post-war violence, which is essential for subnational comparison.36 By studying a civil war terminated through a negotiated settlement, we also have the opportunity to observe local dynamics in a society where neither actor could exercise sufficient control over the entire population.37 While commentators sometimes question to what extent political violence in South Africa constituted a civil war, it fulfils the criteria stipulated by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).38 We do, however, recognize that some of the more unique characteristics of the civil war influence how the findings may be extended to civil wars beyond South Africa.

We compare post-war dynamics in three communities—Richmond, Umbumbulu and Bhambayi—in the five-year period following the 1994 elections. As all three communities are located in the KwaZulu-Natal province, a number of regional, historical, political, and socio-economic factors were very similar. This is important since KwaZulu-Natal was particularly hard-hit by wartime violence.39 Despite a common history of civil war, the communities experienced different levels of post-war violence. As will be described, Richmond and Umbumbulu experienced continuous cycles of organized violence after 1994, whereas Bhambayi saw a sudden and significant reduction in violence. Data on political violence by the Human Rights Committee of South Africa (HRC) support this interpretation. A review of the monthly Human Rights Reports published by
the HRC May 1994–December 1998 shows that 103 and 75 deaths were reported in Richmond and Umbumulu, respectively, while 44 deaths were reported in Bhambayi, of which only four deaths were recorded after October 1995. Importantly, these figures suggest that tensions with the potential to turn violent existed in Bhambayi. No other established system for collecting conflict data exists in South Africa, and while the HRC data contains several limitations, such as underreporting and coding errors, there is little reason to suspect that systematic coding errors distort the data. To increase reliability, we also triangulate the HRC data with qualitative sources.

We employ both within-case analysis and a structured focused comparison to explore the types of mobilization and its influence on post-war patterns of violence. ‘Post-war violence’ is defined as organized violence perpetrated by a group or the state after an armed conflict has come to a formal end. The definition captures the range of organized violent activities prominent in post-war states, for example assassinations, reprisal killings, attacks by insurgents, and terrorist attacks, while excluding individual acts of revenge and individual criminal acts.

The empirical material consists of interviews and secondary sources, of which some were collected in South African archives. More than 30 individuals that were close to the events were interviewed in 2014 and 2015 about the violence in the communities, including violence monitors, development workers, community leaders, former militants, and community residents. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, some respondents’ identity are kept confidential. In order to limit potential biases, multiple entry points were used, including NGOs, academic experts, and violence monitors.

Richmond

Few South African communities have experienced violence as intense as Richmond. In 1989–1993 hundreds of people were killed and 20,000 displaced in fighting between the ANC and IFP. Following the first democratic elections, Richmond experienced continuous violence as a result of
what were primarily local power struggles. Between May 1994 and December 1998, 103 people were killed according to the HRC.\textsuperscript{44} How can post-war violence in Richmond be explained?

The conflict in Richmond has generally been seen as a political conflict between the ANC and the IFP.\textsuperscript{45} This disregards the fact that violent conflict was prevalent in Richmond already before the outbreak of ANC-IFP violence in early 1990. Local monitors note that factional fighting in the 1980s predated the ANC-IFP conflict, as parts of the community were fighting each other over land boundaries and scarce resources.\textsuperscript{46} One local monitor recollected how “faction fighting between families” in the 1960s continued to influence subsequent conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s.\textsuperscript{47} Several of these local conflicts became politicized with the advent of ANC-IFP fighting; land conflict between the area of Patheni and the combined Smozemeni/Magoda/Indaleni areas turned violent in the mid-1980s when a local man from Smozemeni was killed,\textsuperscript{48} and a second conflict over the authority of Zulu chief Mzwandile Majozi emerged around the end of the 1980s. Chief Majozi was appointed by the apartheid government and exercised the administrative jurisdiction over Richmond’s rural areas.\textsuperscript{49} When Majozi had a fall-out with local strongman Sifiso Nkabinde in 1991, he was forced to seek refuge in Patheni and his house was torched.\textsuperscript{50}

When the ANC was unbanned in 1990 and started to re-establish a foothold in Richmond, local elites sought alignment with the ANC and IFP in order to gain strategic advantages over their adversaries. Local leaders in Patheni, pitted against three other areas of Richmond, became increasingly affiliated with the IFP, while Nkabinde facilitated the ANC’s growing popularity in Indaleni and Magoda. As a result, the conflict became increasingly politicized.\textsuperscript{51} The conflict over chief Majozi’s authority also became closely associated with the growing rivalry between the political parties, especially since opposition towards traditional authority (and the KwaZulu homeland government that paid the chiefs) was an essential pillar of the ANC’s political agenda.\textsuperscript{52} Growing animosity between local leaders hence exacerbated community polarization as Majozi and Nkabinde brought their followers into the IFP’s and ANC’s spheres of interest.
The mobilizing agents in Richmond were primarily local elites that, like chief Majozi and Nkabinde, drew their support from traditional authority, a reputation for bravery, and personal charisma. Chief Majozi played an important role in generating local support for the IFP among conservative Zulu communities. Other chiefs acted in similar ways and spawned further militarization of local conflicts. For example, in May 1991 chief Majozi handpicked six IFP supporters to undergo paramilitary training. Nkabinde played a similar role for the ANC by setting up the Self Defence Units (SDUs) in Richmond and selecting individuals for military training by the ANC’s armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the Transkei Defence Force. In return, Nkabinde obtained an impressive arsenal of weapons, including AK47s, land mines, and RPGs.

The mode of civilian mobilization in Richmond contributed to post-war violence in two ways. First, indirect mobilization spawned continuous tensions between local elites that eventually developed into full-scale political conflict between the ANC and Nkabinde’s newly formed political party, the United Democratic Movement (UDM). The most immediate tensions originated in the factional conflicts of the 1980s that re-emerged as power struggles between the Richmond SDUs. These power struggles were a direct consequence of the ANC’s unconditional support for Nkabinde. In 1991, SDUs from different areas of Richmond became increasingly divided due to the perceived favour given to Nkabinde’s Magoda SDU in terms of access to weapons. In the ensuing power struggle the Magoda grouping prevailed and rival leaders were killed. This conflict took on an additional dimension after 1994 when Nkabinde was expelled from the ANC and brought the Magoda militants to the UDM. As the conflict politicized further, the intensity of the conflict escalated in intensity and involved heavier weaponry, increasing community polarization between the Indaleni and Magoda areas of Richmond. Community members that ventured into enemy territory were likely to be killed and most killings after 1994 occurred in those areas. The conflict in Richmond hence became increasingly multi-layered over time; tensions endured between individuals, communities, and political parties without clear-cut conflict lines. Because of the intensity of these local tensions and the failure to address the root causes of the conflict,
violent conflict in Richmond persisted despite a number of local peace initiatives initiated between 1994–1996.62

Second, indirect mobilization rendered in-group enforcement of compliance more difficult, which enabled local elites to engage in violence. Local elites were deeply implicated in the violence in Richmond, but calls for peace by the national leaders, including president Nelson Mandela, fell flat as the political parties progressively lost control over their local associates. While the IFP and its paramilitary structures were confined to isolation in Patheni after 1994, similar ANC groups remained active. Local defence structures were allowed under the terms of the National Peace Accord, but in many instances elements of the structures acted “in total contravention of the spirit” of the accords and carried out attacks on political rivals.63 Nkabinde and his associates were at the centre of destabilizing the community. These militants acquired significant power and wealth through armed extortion and refused to relinquish their arms when called to disband in 1994 by the ANC’s national leadership. Instead Nkabinde disarmed rival SDUs in Indaleni and Smozemeni, collected their weapons, and trained his personal militia.64 In the words of the mayor of the time: “Nkabinde, in spite of being directed by the national ANC leaders to disband the SDUs, refused ... He then turned them into his own personal bodyguards or army.”65 Without strong vertical ties in the community, the ANC leadership was paralyzed by their unruly associate and repeatedly failed to enforce compliance.66 In April 1997, the ANC expelled Nkabinde and in effect completely lost control over the rising warlord. 500 members of the South African police and Army secured his arrest in 1997.67 But he escaped justice and was never brought under control before being assassinated in January 1999.

In Richmond, local elites that sought ANC or IFP protection and patronage were deeply involved in generating local support for the parties by manipulating existing local grievances along political lines. As a result, local tensions intensified, became increasingly hard to solve, and continued to cause death and destruction in the community up until 1999. As in-group control weakened and local elites developed vested interests in violence, national leaders completely lost
control over their local associates after 1994 and not even the deployment of the army succeeded in curtailing the battle for power among local elites.

**Umbumbulu**

Umbumbulu, a vast semi-rural district west of Durban, has a long history of violence and experienced both local conflicts between rivalling clans and ANC-IFP fighting. Despite the fairly peaceful conduct of the elections in Umbumbulu in April 1994, tensions remained high and violence continued well into the 2000s. Violence initially decreased dramatically, but soon escalated again, particularly around the elections in 1996 and 1999. Between May 1994 and December 1998, at least 78 people were killed in Umbumbulu according to the HRC reports, but the actual number of casualties in Umbumbulu was most likely higher. Violence thus continued to affect the area, albeit with slightly different dynamics. How can the post-war violence in Umbumbulu be explained?

Large-scale ANC-IFP fighting broke out in Umbumbulu in the early 1990s. But the origins of violent conflict in the area can be traced back to the 1950s, and escalated significantly with the onset of violence between the eMbo and Makhanya clans in 1984. The dispute, which had a particularly strong impact on the community’s conflict dynamics, originally concerned land boundaries, local authority, and access to resources, and escalated when two men from the rivalling clans fought over a woman. Power struggles among local elites also fuelled the conflict. The conflict lasted for about two years and involved full-scale battles, small-scale fighting, and skirmishes. Other local conflicts between families and ethnic communities also existed and fed into the larger conflict system.

When violence between the ANC and the IFP escalated in KwaZulu-Natal around 1990, local conflicts in Umbumbulu became increasingly political and eventually divided the area into ANC and IFP zones. When the ANC-IFP conflict spread from urban to rural areas, local elites
in Umbumbulu affiliated themselves with the political parties to gain access to resources and political patronage: the Makanyas with the IFP and the eMbo with the ANC. These elites generated support for the political parties by building on their reputation as strong leaders, traditional authority, and ability to distribute resources to the people; only occasionally did leaders promote their political objectives. Oftentimes, cultural events were manipulated by local chiefs and played a significant role in instigating violence. Existing local conflicts facilitated further mobilization and local elites politicized communal tensions, often focusing on areas that were already affected by violent conflict.

Mkhandi Shozi is an illustrative example of the complex interactions among local elites and the political parties. He gained a reputation as a strong leader in the eMbo-Makhanya war. During the late 1980s, the ANC, the IFP, as well as the apartheid security police, tried to convince him to join their ranks. He eventually joined the ANC and began recruiting followers from his house in Mpandwini. With the formation of alliances came access to weapons and military training. While the eMbo-Makhanya war was largely fought with traditional weapons and according to tribal custom, the national political parties introduced heavier weaponry and facilitated military training for local supporters.

This indirect mobilization during the war influenced post-war violence in several significant ways. First, local conflicts continued to be a source of violence in the community post-1994. The regional peace process after 1994 resolved the regional conflict, but largely failed to address the underlying causes and the historical roots of conflict in Umbumbulu. Until the early 2000s, few attempts were made to address the legacy of conflict in the area. The consequence was that when the political parties announced peace, past tensions re-emerged, particularly conflicts over territorial boundaries and local power struggles between rivalling traditional leaders. The intensity of local tensions made it hard for national leaders to control the situation on the ground, particularly the agendas of local elites. A local MK soldier related that even though local leaders “converted to the political parties … they still maintained and preserved the identity of being tribal
men” which meant that they could “easily revert also to go back and fight if there is a tribal war.” A family feud with political overtones from the early 1990s in eZimwini, for instance, appears to have resurfaced in 1998, causing at least seven deaths during a spiral of violence that only de-escalated when the army was deployed in the area.

Second, local elites were profiting from the on-going violence in Umbumbulu and therefore actively resisted attempts to establish peace. Because these local elites were not integrated into the IFP’s and ANC’s organizational structures, attempts to enforce compliance often failed. The former commander of the Umbumbulu police station specifically put Mkhandi Shozi at the centre of such attempts. Shozi profited from racketing and selling muti, a traditional Zulu medicine that is believed to make the user stronger in battle. Other leaders profited from looting houses in the aftermath of violence or from imposing protection fees on people. Because national leaders had few holds on these warlords, they resisted national pledges for peace. “At some point they [the political leaders] would definitely lose control … because the killings continued, even when the leaders were now wanting to agree, wanting to come to some solution.”

In the post-war period, Umbumbulu continued to experience violence. The analysis suggests that mobilization in Umbumbulu was indirect rather than direct, and contributed to the post-war developments by intensifying local tensions and making in-group enforcement increasingly difficult. National actors actively fuelled local tensions and these conflicts continued to be a source of violence in the community after 1994. Local elites pulled the strings and national leaders exercised little control over people in the district.

Bhambayi

Mahathma Gandhi originally founded the Bhambayi informal settlement in 1904 as a “model community.” It is therefore paradoxical that Bhambayi in the early 1990s became known as one of the most violent areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Nonetheless, violence subsided dramatically in
Bhambayi following the elections in April 1994. Between May 1994 and December 1998, 44 people were killed in Bhambayi according to the HRC. A closer look also reveals that 40 of the 44 recorded deaths occurred before October 1995. Importantly, post-war violence was not entirely absent and tensions still existed. Still, whereas such tensions frequently led to violence in Richmond and Umbumbulu, only a few people lost their lives in post-war violence in Bhambayi after 1995. Why?

Bhambayi experienced several waves of violence, starting with violent riots in 1985, followed by inter-ethnic violence and intra- as well inter-party violence. But although these outbreaks of violence all had their own, unique dynamics, they all revolved around similar issues: resources scarcity and poverty, inter-ethnic rivalry, and political competition between the ANC and the IFP. Importantly, these issues aligned with the more general conflict lines between the ANC and the IFP.

Violence first emerged in Bhambayi in 1985 when the Gandhi settlement was attacked and destroyed by supporters of the IFP. While the violence had racial undercurrents, most observers highlight the interaction between political affiliation and ethnic identity as the driver of the violence. Following what became known as the Inanda riots, tensions between ethnic groups associated with competing political parties continued to simmer in Bhambayi. Refugees from other parts of the province that were of Pondo decent were perceived to be ANC-aligned, while the Zulu inhabitants of Bhambayi were perceived as IFP-affiliated. Tensions were exacerbated by competition for scarce resources, including locally grown drugs and traditional medicine.

The increasing ethnic-political polarization and resource competition in Bhambayi precipitated the dramatic increase of violence in the community in late 1992. Wartime mobilization was primarily related to the political parties in the area. In 1992, conflict broke out between two competing ANC-factions. When the conservative “Green” faction became increasingly marginalized by the ANC leadership in the area, it turned to the IFP and from then onwards the
conflict lines were primarily drawn between the two parties. This escalated the conflict and an estimated 200 Bhambayi residents lost their lives in the subsequent fighting.  

Interviewees largely agree that local actors in Bhambayi were mobilized based on their support for the parties’ political objectives. Not only were local elites largely supportive of the war’s overarching political dimension; evidence also suggests that local constituencies were predominately mobilized by agents associated with the national parties rather than local strongmen. While the ANC was banned at the time, “there was what was called the UDF … which was mobilizing within the youth in the areas everywhere.” Older leaders such as local ANC leader Pat Marshall, and the leaders of the ANC Youth Leauge, emerged as prime mobilizers of support in Bhambayi. On the IFP side, mobilizing agents were referred to as “patriarchs” that through their endorsement of traditional culture “emerged as ‘headmen’ and political bosses of the area.” Two traditional healers associated with the competing ANC factions allegedly also garnered support based on their provision of muti, but their role as mobilizing agents is hard to ascertain and around 1994 these traditional leaders had both been killed. Some interviewees also said that political affiliation was forced rather than voluntary. Arms and military training was provided to the local branches of the ANC and the IFP by their national structures. Local party militias, highly militant, were set up by the national organizations.  

The strong focus on the political objectives of the national actors in Bhambayi had important implications for the post-war period. First, the causes of conflict in Bhambayi were largely resolved in the early post-war era, both due to the national peace process and due to local, inter-party peace initiatives. Violence subsided following the elections in 1994 and with the adoption of a new constitution. The main source of violence in Bhambayi was the rivalry between the ANC and the IFP, a conflict that was further intensified by local poverty and competition for scarce resources. As ANC-IFP violence de-escalated at the regional level, violence between the parties in Bhambayi also abated: an increase in political tolerance was observed as the regional peace process
deepened. In addition, Bhambayi was less sensitive to post-war violence since it did not have “old fights … coming from generation to generation.”

There were also local peace initiatives that sought to address local disputes in Bhambayi. A local peace forum, the Bhambayi Development Forum (BDF), was established in 1992 and consisted of local community members that participated in peace negotiations and were responsible for both conflict resolution and development-related decision making. This process, along with a number of other, informal peace initiatives, brought “progress in the local peace talks” and “calm to Bhambayi.” While no respondents directly addressed why such peace initiatives succeeded, it is plausible that these local initiatives succeeded precisely because local, as opposed to regional, tensions were less entrenched than in Richmond and Umbumbulu.

Second, direct mobilization also made it easier for national actors to enforce compliance with the peace settlement in Bhambayi. Several factors account for this. To begin, both state and party institutions were increasingly able to deal with local actors that employed violence. For example, two local ANC strongmen that were referred to as “the real perpetrators of violence,” were arrested by the police. The BDF played a prime role in enforcing compliance through internal structures that monitored violence. The parties themselves also dealt with people that were found to challenge the peace: “If you were found … [to commit] a crime … people were going to instil discipline, it was going to be the political parties’ structures within the community. So there was accountability somehow now.”

Moreover, even though local party cadres were armed and given military training, the negative impact of such militant elements was relatively limited in Bhambayi after 1994. Militants were either demobilized and disarmed, or forced to leave the community. Those who remained in the community were engaged in workshops or development initiatives to limit the negative impact of their presence in the community.

Finally, some of the more powerful warlords and instigators of violence either died or left the community around 1994, and other militants failed to take their place. According to Clifford
Marion, the KwaZulu-Natal provincial head of detectives, violence subsided “a lot” following the death of a local warlord. A local peacebuilding advisor also expressed such a view: “Warlords who were in the ANC and the IFP, many of them died. So new leadership came up in the area, which … were focusing on development.”

Thus, while tensions remained and other types of violence continued to affect the community, levels of violence in Bhambayi declined significantly after April 1994, particularly from October 1995. The analysis suggests that the type of wartime mobilization that occurred in Bhambayi is important for understanding this trajectory. Direct mobilization, manifested through local support for the political objectives of national actors and little reliance on local elites, reduced local challenges to peace and enabled successful interventions at the local level. The underlying causes of violence in the community largely resonated with that of the national and regional conflict, wherefore national and regional efforts increasingly brought peace to Bhambayi. The commitment by the local elites to peace further limited violence by providing a conflict resolution forum and enforcing compliance. These efforts where strengthened because the political parties were able to enforce peace by sanctioning disruptive elements in their ranks.

Comparing the Communities

The within-case analyses show how the mode of wartime mobilization contributed to post-war violence by intensifying local tensions and rendering in-group enforcement of compliance more difficult in Richmond and Umbumbulu, but not in Bhambayi. In this section, we assess the explanatory power of our theory by comparing the communities and discussing alternative explanations. Table 1 summarizes the findings from the within-case analyses and the alternative explanations discussed below.
Table 1. Summary of findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Richmond</th>
<th>Umbumbulu</th>
<th>Bhambayi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-war violence (DV)*</td>
<td>High (103 deaths)</td>
<td>High (78 deaths)</td>
<td>Lower (44 deaths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of wartime mobilization (IV)</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of wartime violence</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of ex-combatants</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons proliferation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts at local conflict resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement by national actors</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported “third force” involvement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The analysis shows that patterns of post-war violence are consistent with the logic of our theoretical argument. In violence-affected Richmond and Umbumbulu, where the ANC and IFP approached local leaders with an existing local support base, wartime mobilization was indirect. In Richmond, mobilization occurred both because local elites supported the cause of the national actors, and because allying with a national actor ensured protection and local advantages. In Umbumbulu, the realization of local advantages was the prime mobilizing factor. In Bhambayi, on the other hand, where post-war violence was much more limited, wartime mobilization was more related to the political objectives of the national actors. Local elites strongly identified with the national political organizations and the underlying causes of conflict in the community largely resembled those at the national level. Local causes of mobilization were not entirely absent in Bhambayi, but were less critical than in Richmond and Umbumbulu.

Some commonly invoked determinants of post-war violence, for example the level of wartime violence, presence of ex-combatants, and proliferation of weapons, were relatively similar in the three communities. Two other alternative explanations, partly connected to the unique features of South Africa, warrant more detailed attention.

First, communities may experience varying levels of post-war violence because they differ in terms of their inherent capacity for conflict resolution. Local institutions, a vibrant civil society,
and shared communal norms can mitigate conflicts by providing mechanisms for conflict resolution and targeted sanctions against offenders that may help opposing parties to overcome commitment problems.\footnote{111} In an African context—post-war South Africa included—local conflict resolution is often facilitated by the native administration or informal traditional leaders like chiefs. Local capacity for conflict resolution did indeed impact the trajectory of the communities. Bhambayi in particular emerged from the transitional period with more robust local institutions (such as the BDF), which enabled more effective conflict resolution. Similar institutions and engagements were, however, also present in the other communities. Local peace initiatives were initiated in Richmond in 1994–1996 and chieftaincy institutions were particularly strong in Umbumbulu, yet none of these factors seem to have had a substantial impact on post-war violence. One explanation for this discrepancy could be that the nature of wartime mobilization in Richmond and Bhambayi undermined the legitimacy and sanctioning ability of traditional institutions and leaders, hence suggesting an important interplay between wartime mobilization and local conflict resolution capacity worth exploring in future research.\footnote{112}

Second, post-war trajectories of local communities could differ as a function of varying levels of national actor involvement. The state and national parties almost always possess greater military and economic capacity by which they may be able to provide security at the local level. Throughout the post-war period, the government and other national actors certainly engaged more heavily in Richmond and Bhambayi. The government deployed the army to Richmond and initiated criminal proceedings against a number of key individuals, including Nkabinde, but these efforts did little to quell local hostilities and violence. If anything, these measures served to heighten the intensity of conflict. Bhambayi also saw significant involvement by outside actors, for example by the ANC and IFP regional leadership. Due to its reputation as one of the most violent communities in the province prior to 1994, Bhambayi was also covered extensively by the media and attracted substantial financial investments.\footnote{113} These efforts reportedly contributed to local peace.
It is also possible that defeated or disappointed national actors could seek to challenge the settlement indirectly by destabilizing the “harder-to-supervise local level,”\(^{114}\) in South Africa referred to as the “third force.”\(^{115}\) Although evidence of “third force” involvement emerged in all three communities,\(^{116}\) it remains unclear how this contributed to more violence in Richmond and Umbumbulu than in Bhambayi. A plausible interpretation is that covert elements targeted those communities precisely because they had experienced indirect mobilization; remaining local tensions and the existence of powerful local warlords offered ample opportunity for external destabilization campaigns.\(^{117}\) Hence, while a simple comparison of the three communities is somewhat indeterminate, a close look at the processes involved give more credit to the role of wartime mobilization than to differences in national involvement. Understanding how the interactions between national and local actors affect both the wartime and post-war production of violence constitutes an important avenue for future scholarship.

**Conclusions**

This study demonstrates that different modes of wartime mobilization affected the level of post-war violence in three South African communities after 1994. The generation of local support through local intermediaries in Richmond and Umbumbulu forestalled severe local tensions and obstructed internal efforts to enforce compliance among the rank and file, thereby entrenching pervasive insecurity and violence. The logic of the theory also explains why Bhambayi, where national actors evoked grassroots support by appealing to their political objectives, saw a substantial reduction in violence after 1994. The extent of national level intervention and local capacities for conflict resolution also affected community trajectories, but generally explain less of the cross-community variation.

Future research should be extended to other similar contexts to further assess the explanatory value of the wartime mobilization theory developed herein and explore additional
mechanisms that connect wartime mobilization with post-war violence. One way could be to explore the origins of different types of wartime mobilization, especially with regard to a community’s relative rurality and previous conflict experience. The fact that indirect mobilization occurred in rural Richmond and Umbumbulu, but not in semi-urban Bhambayi, may be indicative that kinship ties and land conflicts facilitate mobilization through local intermediaries.

More attention should also be given the distinction between locally and nationally driven post-war violence. While post-war violence took many shapes in South Africa, local leaders were important instigators of violence across KwaZulu-Natal in general, and in Richmond and Umbumbulu in particular. This differs from a case such as Northern Ireland after the 1998 peace agreement, where violent splinter groups challenged the peace agreement and some of the key signatures of the peace agreement resisted disarmament. Deepening our understanding of the different origins and dynamics of post-war violence is critical for designing post-war transitions that contribute to sustainable peace.

Acknowledgements

Our sincerest gratitude goes to the people of Richmond, Umbumbulu, and Bhambayi, who have courageously shared their most traumatic memories in interviews. In South Africa, we specifically thank Tim Houghton, Glenda Caine, and Andries Odendaal, as well as the Centre for Civil Society, Sinai Survivors of Violence, and Diakonia Council of Churches. We also thank Dr. Nadine Ansorg and the participants at the International Workshop on the Legacy of Armed Conflicts: Southern African and Comparative Perspectives in Pretoria, July 26–28, 2016, as well as two anonymous reviewers, for their constructive comments. The study was funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and The Swedish Research Council.

---


Berdal and Suhre (see note 1 above); Boyle (see note 1 above); Schedin (see note 2 above).

Steenkamp (see note 3 above); Wood (see note 3 above).

Archer and Gartner (see note 3 above); Collier and Hoefer (see note 3 above); Ember and Ember (see note 3 above). On post-war crime in South Africa, see e.g. Mark Shaw, “South Africa: Crime in Transition,” Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence 8, no. 4 (1996): 156–175.

Bateson (see note 4 above); Deglow (see note 4 above).

Grandi (see note 4 above).

See e.g. Autesserre (see note 1 above); Carrie Manning, “Local Level Challenges to Post-Conflict Peacebuilding,” International Peacebuilding 10, no. 3 (2003); Andries Ondelaar, A Crucial Link: Local Peace Committees and National Peacebuilding (Washington D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 2013).


Kalyvas (see note 14 above), 479.


Arjona (see note 6 above), 125.

See e.g. Kalyvas (see note 5 above); Klaus Schlichte, In the Shadow of Violence: The Politics of Armed Groups (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2009).

Arjona (see note 6 above), 125.

Kalyvas (see note 5 above), 364–386.

Arjona (see note 6 above), 125.

Kalyvas (see note 5 above), 364–386.

Local elites can be understood as leaders that “are perceived as prominent persons within their communities” (Johan Brosché, “Masters of War: The Role of elites in Sudan’s Communal Conflicts,” PhD dissertation, Uppsala University (2014): 33–34).


Kalyvas (see note 5 above), 383.

Ondendaal (see note 13 above), 9.

Ondendaal (see note 13 above), 12.

Arjona (see note 6 above), 125.
29 Manning (see note 13 above), 26–27; Odendaal (see note 13 above), 11.
30 Stedman (see note 2 above).
32 Boyle (see note 1 above), 81–83; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion* (see note 24 above), 43–44.
33 Boyle (see note 1 above), 47.
34 Boyle (see note 1 above), 80; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion* (see note 24 above), 6.
35 Schuld (see note 7 above); Guelke (see note 7 above), 242.
37 Odendaal (see note 13 above), 24.
39 Guelke (see note 7 above).
40 Figures compiled from all the Human Rights Reports published by the HRC between May 1994 and December 1998. No reports were published after December 1998.
42 All interviews were conducted by the lead author.
44 *Human Rights Report* (see note 40 above).
45 See e.g. Bruce (see note 7 above), 14–15; *Confronting the Legacy of Wispom in Richmond, KwaZulu Natal* (Johannesburg: The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), 2005).
46 John Aitchison, Wendy Leeb, and John Vaughn, *Political Violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Centre for Adult Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2010), 129; TRC (see note 43 above), 293.
47 Interview with Haydn Osborne (violence monitor), Durban, South Africa, 6 January 2015.
48 Interview with local resident, South Africa, 4 August 2014; community leader, Richmond, South Africa, 9 August 2014; development workers, South Africa, 3 August 2014.
49 CSVR (see note 45 above), 11–12; Interviews with Zandile Nhlengetwa, peacebuilding advisor, Durban, South Africa, 12 August 2014 and 7 January 2015.
50 Interview with Andrew Ragavaloo, mayor Richmond (ANC), Richmond, South Africa, 11 August 2014; CSVR (see note 45 above), 11–12.
51 Local resident (see note 48 above); Ragavaloo, interview (see note 50 above); development workers (see note 48 above).
53 Interview with Cedric Nunn, historian, Richmond, South Africa, 3 August 2014.
54 TRC (see note 43 above), 294.
57 TRC (see note 43 above), 300–302.
59 Osborne (see note 47 above).
60 Andrew Ragavaloo, *Richmond: Living in the Shadow of Death* (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2008); Taylor (see note 55 above), 487.
61 Interview with development worker, South Africa, 29 July 2014; Glenda Caine, peacebuilding advisor, Durban, South Africa, 25 July 2014; Osborne (see note 47 above).
62 Houghton, “Zuza Ithemba,” (see note 58 above), 55; CSVR (see note 45 above), 15.
63 TRC (see note 43 above), 299.
64 Development workers (see note 48 above); Marion (see note 58 above); Taylor (see note 55 above), 487.
65 Ragavaloo, interview (see note 50 above); see also Taylor (see note 55 above), 487.
66 Taylor, (see note 55 above), 486–487.
68 Human Rights Report (see note 40 above); Mathis (see note 7 above), 424.
69 Interview with peacebuilding advisor, South Africa, 12 August 2014; Teacher, South Africa, 5 January 2015; Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
70 Mathis (see note 7 above), 425.
71 Mathis (see note 7 above), 431; TRC (see note 43 above), 234–236.
8Interview with Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier, South Africa, 13 August 2014; Grant McNulty, “Archival Aspirations and Anxieties: Contemporary Preservation and Production of the Past in Umbumbulu, KwaZulu-Natal,” South African Historical Journal 65, no. 1, (2013): 48; Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above); Mathis (see note 7 above).
10Peacebuilding advisor (see note 69 above); Mathis (see note 7 above), 432; Meintjes and Nhlengetwa (see note 72 above), 2–4.
11Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above); Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier (see note 73 above).
12Mathis (see note 7 above), 436–437.
13Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier (see note 73 above); Myunyelwa Cele (see note 74 above); Bah Mhlongo, station commander Umbumbulu Police Station, Durban, South Africa, 17 August 2014; Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
14Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier (see note 73 above); Mhlongo (see note 78 above); Listen Myeza, government official Umbumbulu, Umbumbulu, South Africa, August 2014.
15An informal peace process did eventually take place, but it only started around 2001 and culminated in a large peace rally in 2007 (Peacebuilding advisor (see note 69 above)).
16Mhlongo (see note 78 above).
17Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
18Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier (see note 73 above).
20Teacher (see note 69 above); Myunyelwa Cele (see note 74 above); Listen Myeza (see note 79 above).
21Mhlongo (see note 78 above).
22Myunyelwa Cele (see note 74 above); Listen Myeza (see note 79 above).
23Peacebuilding advisor (see note 69 above).
24Human Rights Report (see note 40 above).
25TRC (see note 43 above), 236–237; Interview with Ela Gandhi, peace activist, Durban, South Africa, 6 January 2015; Sharm Maharaj, peace activist, Durban, South Africa, 6 January 2015.
26Interview with Miriam Cele, peace activist, Durban, South Africa, 5 January 2015; Simphiwe Myeza, development worker, Bhambayi, South Africa, 7 January 2015; Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
27Miriam Cele (see note 91 above); Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
29Simphiwe Myeza (see note 91 above). The United Democratic Front (UDF) was an anti-apartheid coalition formed in the 1980s with close ties to the ANC in exile.
32Craig Higson-Smith, Supporting Communities Affected by Violence (Oxford: Oxfam, 2002), 56; Maharaj (see note 90 above); Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
33Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
34Gandhi (see note 90 above).
35Interview with Lillian Moatle, development worker, Bhambayi, South Africa, 18 August 2015.
36Matheevathinee Benjamin, “An Assessment of the Bhambayi Community with the View to Planning and Improved Home-Based Care Programme for People Living with Aids” (MA diss., Durban Institute of Technology, 2005), 6–7; Simpson (see note 95 above), 147.
38Moatle (see note 100 above).
39Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
40Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
41Miriam Cele (see note 91 above); Maharaj (see note 90 above); Simphiwe Myeza (see note 91 above).
42Moatle (see note 100 above); Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
43Marion (see note 58 above).
44Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
45See e.g. CSVR (see note 45 above).
47Cf. Brosché (see note 23 above).
48Nhlengetwa (see note 49 above).
49Manning (see note 13 above), 33.
115 Guelke (see note 7 above), 244–245.
116 TRC (see note 43 above).
117 Manning (see note 13 above), 33–34.
118 Boyle (see note 1 above), 12; Odendaal (see note 13 above), 31.