Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde:
Violence and transition in South Africa

Brandon Hamber[1]

The aspiration [of a society] is for a democratic polity and prosperity at home. And this must be achieved simultaneously. Neither must be forsaken for the other since each meets a different need. Democracy is fulfilling for the citizen in the public sphere. Economic well-being satisfies one's ambitions to sustain the household. For the ancient Greeks where there was no such clear demarcation of the public from the private, these goals could never be inherently incompatible. But industrialized societies have learnt to live with such trade-offs. (Lawrence, 1991, p.56)

South Africa's negotiated transition to democracy has been widely heralded as a miracle. This perception has largely been rooted in the earlier belief that apartheid South Africa was heading for a violent end. Yet, out of protracted political negotiations and constitution-making, there emerged an embryonic democracy based on broad political consensus in favour of reconciliation.

However, since the beginning of the negotiations in early 1990 there has been a burgeoning rather than decreasing level of social violence, although levels of political violence have generally dropped. This raises key questions about the relationship between formal political change and social and structural factors that underpin the pervasive violence in South African society.

The notion of "reconciliation" is central to these questions, precisely because reconciliation is assumed to provide an alternative to violence, although the term does not denote structural redress. Furthermore, the content and terms of reconciliation can all too easily be taken for granted. Whether reconciliation initiatives deliver on assumed promises depends upon whether the initiatives tackle the deep-rooted inequities and social imbalances at the most fundamental structural level.

The greatest potential deception intrinsic to the South African miracle may reside in the contested notion of reconciliation. "The ideology of reconciliation" may be a mask or political substitute for failure—or lack of political will—fundamentally to redress the structural factors that underpin violence and social conflict in South Africa. If such a failure indeed existed, reconciliation would promote new forms of social conflict—and possibly even increase the levels of violence. Such reconciliation would therefore flatter only to deceive—a Dr Jekyll covering for an ominous Mr Hyde.

The value of negotiated political change and the constitutionalisation of South African law and politics can hardly be denied. But to assume that such political reconciliation engages adequately with the roots of violence in South Africa is problematic. Indeed, the depth of politicisation in South Africa under apartheid, which transformed workplaces, communities, schools and homes into sites of frequently violent political struggle, suggests that popular

---

expectations of political change would not stop at the enfranchisement of the disenfranchised. Unless the impact of apartheid on the identities of its victims, the nature of its institutions and the nature of the underdevelopment that it wrought are addressed, there can be little guarantee that the current social violence will be overcome.

This chapter seeks to briefly examine aspects of structural violence in South Africa and suggests that true reconciliation can be achieved only if these aspects are redressed. The structural violence of the past has vital implications for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) enterprise to acknowledge and rewrite an often denied history of human rights abuses. It also has significant implications for the transformation of state institutions inherited from the apartheid era. It raises vital questions as to the nature of economic development and its relation to new and ongoing forms of social conflict. Finally, it raises fundamental questions about the entrenched identity of apartheid's subjects, rooted in individual and collective memory.

The victims of the apartheid regime suffered arbitrary arrests, beatings, assassinations and torture. In addition they were subjected to the structural and systematic violence of poverty, malnutrition, inferior education, urban overcrowding and social strife in townships (Dowdall, 1992, cited in Desjarlais, Eisenberg, Good & Kleinman, 1995). However, the relationship between the social inequality created by the apartheid state and the political violence that ensued is complex. A few pathological individuals within the government and security apparatus did not alone cause the political violence. Neither can the social inequality created by the apartheid system (although it is a key factor) be held solely responsible.

In this context, the chapter then examines three, albeit not exclusive, solutions to the problem of political violence. First, the chapter focuses on the TRC because it has been established to address the legacy of political violence and to make recommendations to prevent future violations of human rights abuses. Second, the issue of development as a solution to social violence is critically evaluated because, as argued throughout the chapter, the unequal distribution of resources and the structural inequality wrought by apartheid are root causes of the violence. Finally, the chapter explores the need for the social and psychological empowerment of victims of violence as a key preventive mechanism.

Keys to Understanding Political Violence in South Africa[2]

To explore the relationship between social structure and political violence it has to be acknowledged that political violence is contingent on a range of factors. These can include the relative political, social and ideological strengths of opposing political groups, and the functionality of violence to these groups. The impact and manipulation of socio-cultural and ideological frameworks can also shape the nature of political violence. Similarly, the easy slide and "fudged" dividing line between political and criminal violence may also shape the nature of violent outcomes of social conflict. Finally, the very processes of transition, whether through negotiated settlement or through violent revolution, will fundamentally impact on the nature and extent of violence after such transition.

The root cause of political violence in South Africa has to be located within the social matrix and the long history of oppression, poverty and exploitation in the country. Central to this

---

[2] Much of this analysis is drawn from Simpson (1993). Any divergence from Simpson's arguments is, however, the author's sole responsibility.

was the fact that, from 1948, the apartheid government denied the majority of South Africans access to central political authority and entrenched racially-based social inequality. The state used vertical institutional violence to maintain this inequality, racial superiority and social control. In terms of overt political violence the state repressed those opposed to it through "legalised" detentions, convictions and bannings, and reacted violently to any resistance to its authority. State-sanctioned assassinations and harassment were common, often orchestrated directly through official government bodies.

In the face of ongoing repression, and as all legal and peaceful channels of protest were blocked, the African National Congress (ANC) and other liberation organisations resorted to the "armed struggle" (African National Congress, 1996; Orkin, 1992). This reactive violence, coupled with continued repressive violence by the state, resulted in an exponential growth of political violence over the next three decades, culminating in the intensified political violence of the 1980s.

By this time, attacks by the liberation armies were expanded to the targeting of civilians as well. The cumulative consequence was that on both sides of the political divide violence was sanctioned and legitimised as a means of either maintaining power or achieving change. Moreover, the "culture of violence" in the political arena quickly spread to the social and civic arena. This largely occurred because apartheid permeated all aspects of South Africans' lives. The structural violence and economic impoverishment was "effected" through racially-based inequalities in resources and opportunities coupled with repression, politicised housing, education, jobs, wages and the delivery of services. Consequently, violence was socially sanctioned as a means of solving problems in South Africa (Simpson & Rauch, 1992). The actual and perceived representatives of the apartheid state (e.g. local authorities, informers) fell victim to attacks that were broadly regarded as legitimate by the majority of South Africans. Although they were never the official policy of the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement, "necklacing", house-burning and other forms of violence had many victims.

By the 1990s the term "culture of violence" was frequently used to describe the conflict that enveloped South African society. The pervasive nature of the violence undermined the moral, interpersonal and social fabric. Significantly, this was exacerbated as the negotiated transition began in February 1990.

The period 1990 to 1994 was marked by unprecedented inter- and intra-community violence. Simpson and Rauch (1992) argue that this violence was facilitated by the deregulation of the overly repressive forms of social control that had characterised the apartheid state. The violence had also been legitimised by all political groupings in the decades prior to the 1990s and the mechanisms for social control (e.g. the state security forces) enjoyed even less legitimacy than before. Although the repressive forms of control used by the apartheid government were rendered ineffective, no viable alternative was generated during the negotiations. Ironically, precisely at the point of peaceful negotiations towards political change, political and criminal violence escalated.

Simpson and Rauch (1992) argue further that competition within impoverished communities over access to scarce resources also triggered and sustained violence during the transition. They argue that competing claims to limited resources became less constrained as the repressive mechanisms that had historically entrenched limitations on people's aspirations began to disintegrate.

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

Furthermore, various political roleplayers also fanned violence for their own ends and to strengthen their hand at the negotiating table. The evidence is now undeniable that "third force" activities and covert state operations supported and fuelled violence into the early 1990s. Of particular importance was the manipulation of "ethnic identity" as a recruitment tool for wider political ends. Once mobilised, groups based on ethnicity were generally volatile, defensive and extremely difficult to demobilise (National Crime Prevention Strategy. 1996).

These factors, coupled with the socially sanctioned use of violence and the politicisation of everyday life, resulted in extraordinary levels of intra- and inter-community conflict. This can be termed "horizontal conflict" between those who themselves were the objects of vertical state repression.

The 1994 election heralded the so-called "miracle" transformation to democracy in South Africa. Although political violence decreased significantly, other types of violence, particularly violent crime, continued to increase. Political violence also continued, albeit at lower levels than during the negotiations. In the course of 1995 the Human Rights Committee documented over 800 deaths from political violence, the majority of them resulting from massacres - often of whole families. The worst of these was the massacre of 20 ANC supporters in the Shobashobane area in KwaZulu-Natal on Christmas Day in 1995. In addition, Amnesty International (1996) documented the fact that electric shocks, suffocation and other forms of torture of both political arid criminal suspects had continued in 1995. Furthermore, 195 people died in police custody during the first nine months of 1995. More than 80% of them died at the time of arrest or on the way to hospital as a result of injuries inflicted by the police (Amnesty International, 1996).

Although these figures remain alarming, the number of deaths from political violence is dramatically overshadowed by the high levels of violent crime. Comparative international information suggests that this is not uncommon during political transition (Glanz, 1995b; NCPS, 1996; Shaw, 1995). It was observed in Namibia following the transition to democracy in that country (Glanz, 1995b; Tapscott, 1992) and occurred in Eastern Europe during the post-Cold War shift to democracy, as well as in the final days of the former Soviet Union (Shaw, 1995). In South Africa, between 1990 and 1994 violent crime (i.e. public violence, rape, aggravated assault, murder and aggravated robbery) increased at a greater rate than property crime and less serious offences (Glanz, 1995a).

As in the case of political violence, structural deprivation in South Africa provides the context to understanding the increasing levels of crime (NCPS, 1996). The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) (1996) attributes the increase in crime to the destruction of social control mechanisms, enormous social and economic disparity, unemployment and underdevelopment, the legitimacy crisis in state institutions related to the slow transformation from the old order, and the "culture of violence" in South Africa. Clearly, these are the same issues that shaped the period of political violence of the 1980s and early 1990s, briefly explored above. As in that context, in the current context of crime there is no direct correlation between poverty and violent crime. There is probably a greater correlation between poverty and acquisitive crime such as theft or housebreaking, but it is considerably more difficult to establish any inherent link between poverty and violent crime.

The NCPS (1996) also specifically mentions the issue of expectations. The document ties the issue of expectations to the politicisation of everyday life outlined previously. It is argued in

the NCPS that the historical politicization of social, economic and civic concerns has overloaded expectations of political change and in some cases generated a "culture of entitlement". In the context of enormous historical disadvantage coupled with the freedom the new dispensation has come to symbolise, these expectations are understandable. Nonetheless, the NCPS maintains that while these expectations may be appropriate, there has been inadequate engagement with the residual culture of violence, and a lack of anticipation as to the expectations that go with new-found freedoms. Since the fundamental overhauling of state institutions takes time to show tangible results, and since the majority of South Africans perceive the new government to be failing to deliver the expected goods, the unmet expectations and relative deprivation will continue to contribute significantly to violent crime and other forms of social conflict.

The Prevention of Future Violence

Some of the key factors responsible for the extent of political violence, and subsequently criminal violence, have been outlined, but the question of how to prevent such violence in the future remains. The solution will have to address the impact of this violence and the very factors that precipitated and escalated the violence in the first place. If these root causes are not addressed, it is extremely difficult to contemplate sustainable processes of reconciliation in South Africa.

This section explores three broad areas in this context. First, because the past period of violence was exacerbated by "legitimacy crises" and the covert culture of state institutions, the need to transform them is discussed. Second, it has been argued that the roots of violence lie in the social structure, thus development and the eradication of inequality as a solution to violence are explored. Finally, although political violence has decreased, those affected by both political and criminal violence need to have their social and psychological needs addressed. This is not merely curative but can serve to prevent future violence through engaging with the issues of residual identity among victims and perpetrators of apartheid's violence. Each of these three areas goes to the roots of structural violence in South Africa.

The Need for Institutional Transformation

It could be argued that the South African "miracle" at this stage lies more in the relative decline in political violence in most areas of the country than in any institutional transformation. Despite the elections and the legal and constitutional reform, there are still traces of the structure, organisation and even the personnel of the old order in state institutions. This is juxtaposed with the lingering memory of institutional human rights violations that impedes the development of citizens' trust in and allegiance to the new political dispensation (Wilson, 1995). In short, as a consequence of the negotiated settlement, the new South African government has inherited a range of state institutions - largely intact - from the old regime. These institutions, particularly those of the criminal justice system, have been inherited along with popular mistrust (Simpson & Rauch, 1992; NCPS, 1996).

Furthermore, pervasive inter- and intra-community conflict still resonates through the affected communities. Victims and survivors in communities still have to come to terms with the implications of neighbours fighting against neighbours, as well as the residual mistrust of a leadership who failed to prevent the violence, but who are now in positions of power in a new government. Against the backdrop of the unmet expectations discussed briefly above, a legitimation crisis for the new government and its institutions looms rather large.

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

To address the problems of institutional reform, various structures and commissions have been established (along with a new constitution) to protect the society from future violations of human rights. Some of these include the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Gender Commission and the Youth Commission, the Office of the Public Protector, anti-corruption units, a judicial inquiry into illegal arms dealing, and a new Police Services Act which includes provision for an Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD). However, when analysing the history of many countries in transition, tension is often apparent between the theoretical and legislative powers of such bodies and their ability to contribute to fundamental institutional change.

Roht-Arriaza (1995) states that transitional governments that face the paradox of having to institute changes before they lose widespread credibility, and are overwhelmed by intractable social and economic problems, tend first to turn to institutions that they can create from scratch. These would include investigatory commissions, ad hoc groups and statutory commissions which require little extra infrastructure to begin functioning. The problem is that these bodies often fail to contribute to fundamental change or do not substantially guarantee the prevention of future violence. There is always the potential for such bodies to become little more than tools of the transitional government to "whitewash" issues, or for them to become bureaucratically and politically defunct no matter how well intentioned they initially were.

A case in point is the 1974 commission set up in Uganda by President Idi Amin to investigate the disappearance of subjects that had occurred under his government. However, he rejected its report, and extensive human rights violations continued throughout his rule. Hayner (1996) concludes from this that commissions can be used to project concern for human rights and to satisfy those who provide aid, but may in fact be a "whitewash" for a government with no substantial will to change. In South Africa, the pre-transition Harms Commission of Enquiry into Apartheid Hit-squads arguably represents a similar feat.

South Africa has established commissions (among other strategies) to assist the transition process. Thus the point now is how these bodies are used rather than whether they should have been established in the first place. The TRC represents the first independent body established to deal with past political violence and the prevention of future human rights abuses. The TRC is intended to facilitate the recovery of truth. This is to occur through establishing as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of past human rights abuses. The TRC is also charged with providing victims with the space to recount their victimisation and must make recommendations about reparation and rehabilitation for them. The TRC is also to grant amnesty to perpetrators in exchange for full disclosure of their past involvement in gross violations of human rights.

The broader aim of the TRC, not mentioned directly in the National Unity and Reconciliation Act which established the Commission, should be to re-establish the rule of law, transform state institutions responsible for past human rights abuses and regenerate popular trust in government institutions (Simpson & van Zyl, 1995). The challenge to our society in transition is whether the TRC can fundamentally achieve these objectives.

It could be argued that, in countries where there have been extensive truth commissions, the ability of these commissions to contribute to fundamental change has been partly dependent on the political compromises that underpin them. These compromises essentially relate to amnesty agreements prior to their establishment. In Chile, despite the efforts of the Truth

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

Commission to hear the testimonies of victims, a blanket amnesty had already been agreed to (and the former Junta leader, General Pinochet, remained commander in chief of the military). This resulted in a lack of acceptance of responsibility by the armed forces. The moral fibre of institutions such as the military therefore remained largely unchanged.

In Argentina, human rights abuses went largely unpunished after the transition to democracy. This prevented the law courts from fulfilling the function of symbolic redress (Edelman, Kordon & Lagos, 1995), and the prestige and professional status of the armed forces, who were accused of large-scale violations, remained suspect (Waldman, 1993).

The most important lesson from Latin American experiences is that amnesties are unpopular and widely considered to constitute a fundamental breach of justice. It may be possible to justify amnesty for political and/or practical reasons, and this may be accepted for less serious offences in exchange for truth-telling, but extending immunity to the perpetrators of the grossest human rights abuses is generally unacceptable to victims and to society at large (Africa Watch, 1992).

The South African truth commission seeks to take this dilemma into account and amnesty is therefore not automatic. The act for which amnesty is sought has to be political in nature and all the facts for each offence have to be fully disclosed. The National Unity and Reconciliation Act, which established the TRC, also states that the decision to grant amnesty should be considered in light of the motive of the person who committed the act, the context in which the act was committed, the legal and factual nature of the act - including the gravity of the offence, the objective of the act, and whether the act was carried out by order or with the approval of a political body, institution or individual. The relationship of the act to a political objective and the proportionality of the act also need to be considered.

In essence, unlike a blanket amnesty, the South African truth commission trades full disclosure - or truth recovery - for amnesty. It is argued that in the absence of full disclosure and public knowledge of past human rights abuses, the inherited institutions of the new government will retain the culture of clandestine, unaccountable and covert activity which shaped their operation under apartheid (Simpson & van Zyl, 1995). The substitution of truth recovery for retributive justice is intended to assist in leaving an undisputed account of history, and to document how violations occurred. This opens up the possibility of learning from the past and in so doing ensuring that future violence does not occur.

However, a central test of the TRC in South Africa lies in its ability to elicit this information from perpetrators in exchange for amnesty and, where necessary, to refuse amnesty if full disclosure does not occur or if the act does not meet some of the considerations outlined above (e.g. gravity, proportionality). The debates concerning how such information can be elicited from perpetrators are beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the retrieval of information has come to be seen as a matter of "carrots and sticks", i.e. perpetrators will seek the "carrot" of amnesty only if they fear the "stick" of prosecution. However, the threat of prosecution remains a thorny issue, since it relies on the ability of the Investigation Unit of the TRC to threaten perpetrators with possible prosecution after the TRC cut-off dates for amnesty applications - if they do not apply for amnesty. This in turn has to be seen against the backdrop of whether the state can (and has the political will to) prosecute, given the present state of the judicial system and resources available for extensive political prosecutions if perpetrators do not apply for amnesty. Several perpetrators may thus refrain from applying for amnesty and information may be lost to the TRC. It also remains to

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

be seen if the TRC will be able to overcome the political pressure that generally occurs in times of transition to grant such amnesties, owing to the significant power still maintained by remnants of the old order.

A further issue is whether "knowing the truth" can in fact be transformed by the government, the TRC and civil society into a means of preventing future violence. This is a multi-faceted issue, mainly because the prevention of future political violence by means of mechanisms like the TRC is interwoven with the structural circumstances of those testifying. The majority of victims or survivors who appear before the TRC were victimised not only because of their political affiliation and activities, but because of their structural circumstances, including their gender, their poverty, their race and their general social marginalisation. Structurally these marginalised groups run the risk of being re-victimised because of their sustained social standing. The threat of political violence may have decreased substantially but it may re-emerge in the face of structural and other forms of violence. Black South Africans have historically been more likely to be victims of structural and thus political violence. Similarly, largely as a result of their structural position in society, they remain the most likely victims of violent crime.

Statman (1995) asserts this firmly when he warns against a sanitised public transcript of reconciliation which seems to forbid emotions of anger or vengeance by focusing primarily on the dramatic testimony and confessions of a few. He feels that the construction of the "truth" from the testimony of individual human rights victims and abusers threatens to obscure a larger truth of systematic subjugation, enslavement, oppression and exploitation over centuries.

With or without the TRC, a re-emergence of large-scale political violence (particularly inflicted by the state) in South Africa is unlikely in the short term. Lawrence (1991) argues that after apartheid the majority of South Africans would reject compromises in respect of democratic values or non-accountable authoritarianism in government. However, without structural change, victims of political violence remain potential targets of other types of violence by virtue of their very positions in society.

Nonetheless, the TRC should not be expected to address the structural inequities in South African society. Any truth commission is doomed to failure if it is the exclusive vehicle of reconciliation, or if it is expected to address fundamental imbalances in power and wealth. In fact, the TRC needs to be viewed as one of several mechanisms for reconciliation and only as one among other mechanisms for addressing the conflicts of the past. Indeed, it can be predicted that in years to come the TRC will amount to little unless it is complemented by broad processes of human and economic development, the legal and constitutional protection of human rights, and the building of a human rights culture, as well as other reconciliation mechanisms and violence prevention strategies which seek to address the differing and changing forms of violence that marginalised South Africans continue to endure.

The Need for Managed Development

In order for the TRC to contribute to the prevention of future violence, its operation has to be coupled to a process of development. However, the amorphous use of the term "development" as a catch-all solution to all these problems requires some attention. Any process of economic development needs to engage with the culture of violence and the

socially sanctioned use of violence which persists in many communities. In other words, economic development is extremely vulnerable if human development is ignored.

Expectations and structurally determined relative deprivation remain potential stumbling blocks to development. Bronkhorst (1995), in his review of several countries in transition, argues that, in general, as the economy and the authority of new governments consolidate, frustration often increases as the population confronts a rise in unemployment and unequal economic development. The transition itself can therefore result in increased social conflict, violence, crime and - potentially - further oppression.

Naturally, meeting the expectations of the population and reducing social and economic disparity would significantly decrease prospects of social violence. However, when dealing with criminal violence, for example, viewing development as the panacea to the crime problem fails to acknowledge adequately that crime has a complex and detailed history, and that there are many different types of crime which require different solutions (NCPS, 1996). Ironically, the magnitude of crime itself can undermine developmental initiatives, while developmental processes can themselves service and generate new and different forms of crime. A range of special economic crimes is often perpetuated by the affluent rather than by the impoverished. For example, the NCPS reports that in 1995 alone, 48 474 cases of commercial crime cost South Africa an estimated R2 460 million. The growing problem of syndicated crime - generating substantial wealth and an affluent lifestyle - cannot be dealt with through job creation and economic development initiatives targeted at the poorest of the poor.

Nonetheless, development over time will generally cause crime rates to decrease. This is indicated by the higher rates of violent crime in less developed countries (Shaw, 1995). On this basis Shaw concludes that, rather than scrutinising the cost of development in terms of increased crime, we should conclude that the impact of crime is less in developed countries - even if some forms of crime (e.g. property crimes) increase. However, this requires a more holistic approach to crime which acknowledges the need to desegregate the different types and nature of, and solutions to, violent crime in society analytically.

As much as a lack of resources may fuel conflict, so may an injection of resources into an impoverished community spark competition and rekindle old political conflicts and hostilities (NCPS, 1996). Vienings (1996), for example, shows how the building of new houses by the Reconstruction and Development Programme in a section of Alexandra Township in Gauteng continually ran the risk of sparking conflict among the parties competing for housing. The competitors included township residents who had been driven from their homes by hostel residents and found refuge in the nearby squatter camp, the de facto residents of the squatter camp, and the hostel residents who now occupied the township homes that escaped destruction. This example shows that managed, mediated and carefully planned development is necessary to reduce violence which may result from competition for the scarce resources being injected into structurally impoverished communities.

Assistance to the Victims of Political Violence

Even if South Africa consolidates its democracy, manages development and transforms its state institutions, the enormous psychological impact of political violence on thousands of individuals will continue to harbour the associated potential for violence. Victim aid is often considered to be a remedial rather than a preventive measure, and is therefore frequently

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

under-emphasised in societies in transition (Simpson, 1996). However, if untreated, victims of past violence can become the perpetrators of retributive violence or displaced social and domestic violence (NCPS, 1996; Simpson, 1996). The recent increase in vigilante violence (usually targeted against criminals but frequently resulting in clashes with the police) and the ongoing spiral of political revenge and retribution in KwaZulu-Natal bear testimony to this thesis.

Although there needs to be an increased shift towards violence and injury prevention - particularly in the public health sphere (cf. Butchart, Hamber, Seedat & Terre Blanche, 1995; Seedat & Butchart, 1996) - aid for all victims of violence will have to remain a central concern. It is vital to engage with the residual identity and subjective experiences of victims and survivors of past violence, since these aspects are also structurally based stimuli to ongoing violence.

As far as past political violence is concerned - even if the TRC gives people adequate space to tell their stories, provides some form of reparation, and breaks the culture of silence associated with South Africa's past - it is unlikely that the individual processes of psychological restoration will occur without ongoing social and psychological assistance. In the case of victims of criminal violence, there is even less available at present by way of effective victim support and empowerment programmes (although such a programme is proposed in the NCPS (1996)).

Lessons from countries where truth commissions have been held show (albeit with differing degrees of success) that there are thousands of traumatised individuals that require attention for many years after the demise of the official bodies. Five years after the fall of the Chilean dictatorship, Chileans were still seeking to report cases of human rights abuses, often unaware that the National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation issued its report in 1991. Similarly, Argentinean society still grapples with disappearances because social acknowledgement and recognition have not occurred (Jelin, 1994). In his comparison of transitions to democracy in South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru, Lawrence (1991) comments that in all these societies the citizens are still grappling with human rights violations perpetrated by the military - long after the formal transition to democracy.

For this reason, those working for the TRC and within the relevant government ministries will have to make a concerted effort to develop social services which run parallel to the TRC and beyond. Given the relative strength of many non-governmental organizations in South Africa, they will have to make a powerful community-based mental health contribution. The very processes of the TRC and the space afforded by political transition in South Africa may well re-evoke difficult and traumatic experiences for many survivors. Specifically, the TRC will have to make contact with many traumatised survivors of past abuses, not to mention those whose trauma may be re-awakened by the public nature of the TRC proceedings. It is imperative that the TRC does not unearth painful memories or cause people to relive difficult experiences without ensuring that appropriate support services exist for such people. It is very likely that the transition, and the TRC as its main foil in dealing with political violence, will lead to feelings of revenge, bitterness and anger if victims do not receive appropriate counselling and adequate support.

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

Conclusion

The violence of South Africa's past is deep-rooted, diverse and self-perpetuating. Apart from political life, it has also affected social and community life. In some areas the division between political and criminal violence has long been obscured, so that the conflict goes on. Moreover, the power dynamics and power processes differ from one setting of violence to another and may well take on a life of their own outside the political situation. Private motivations and political concerns are generally interwoven, and these need to be recognised as motivational factors in any violence.

As South Africa moves through the transition to democracy, the legacy of political and other forms of violence will continue to take its toll on the psychological, social, political and economic lives of all South Africans. Institutional and legal reform, a sound constitution, adequate and appropriate victim aid and the recognition of the suffering of survivors and families of past human rights abuses (and the taking of collective responsibility for such abuses, and disclosure by the perpetrators) will assist South Africans never to forget the past and help them to build a future free of political violence.

Since political violence is caused primarily by structural inequality, this inequality, if unresolved, will maintain and intensify political violence. We therefore require significant development, a recognition of the complexity of the causes of violence and a full understanding of the dynamics of violence. We need to look beyond transition to how South Africa will begin to re-adjust once democracy has been consolidated. The intense demands of transition tend to detract from the recognition that, on a broad scale, the nature of violence during our transition is relatively predictable and that comparisons with countries with similar experiences are readily available. Nevertheless, structural inequalities will not be eradicated in the short term. Most of those marginalised and victimised in the past remain potential victims (as well as perpetrators) of criminal, political or domestic violence, owing to their structural position. In addition, their social position means that they remain the victims of structural violence.

The challenge, therefore, is not only to facilitate a political transition at the level of redistributing power and creating institutions such as the TRC and the Human Rights Commission, but to couple this process with a broader process of social transformation. Such a transition is characterised by managed development, physical violence prevention (e.g. reducing the number of available weapons), social awareness and violence prevention education programmes, increased awareness and monitoring of human rights issues through a range of statutory bodies and civil organs, and the radical transformation of state institutions. These, in turn, will eradicate the inequalities that gave rise to victimisation in the first place, both through the overt political expressions of violence and the more subtle structural oppression.

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

References

Africa Watch. (1992). South Africa accounting for the past: The lessons for South Africa from Latin America. *News from Africa Watch, 4*(11), 1-28.

African National Congress (ANC). (1996). *Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.* Johannesburg: The African National Congress: Department of Information and Publicity.

Amnesty International. (1996). The Republic of South Africa. In *Amnesty International Report 1996.* United Kingdom: Amnesty International Publications.

Bronkhorst, D. (1995). *Truth and reconciliation: Obstacles and opportunities for human rights.* Amsterdam: Amnesty International Dutch Section.

Butchart, A., Hamber, B., Seedat, M., & Terre Blanche, M. (1995, October). *From violent policy to policies for violence prevention: Violence, power and mental health in twentieth century South Africa.* Paper presented at the Regional Conference on Mental Health Policy, Cape Town.

Desjarlais, R., Eisenberg, L., Good, B., & Kleinman, A. (1995). *World mental health: Problems and priorities in low-income countries.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Dowdall, T. (1992). Torture and the helping professions in South Africa. In M. Basoglu (Ed.), *Torture and its consequences: Current treatment approaches* (pp. 452-471). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edelman, L., Kordon, D., & Lagos, D. (1995, November). *Impunity: Reactivation of psychic trauma.* Paper presented at the VII International Symposium on Torture as a Challenge to the Medical Profession, Cape Town.

Glanz, L. (1995a). Crime in South Africa: What police statistics tell us. *CSD Bulletin, 2*(8), 18-21.

Glanz, L. (1995b). Patterns of crime: Deciphering the statistics. *Indicator South Africa: Crime and Conflict*, 1, 7-11.

Hayner. P. B. (1996). Commissioning the truth: Further research questions. *Third World Quarterly, 17*(1), 19-29.

Jelin, E. (1994). The politics of memory: The human rights movement and construction of democracy in Argentina. *Latin American Perspectives, 21*(2), 38-58. Lawrence, R. (1991). Transition to democracy: South America and South Africa. Unisa Latin American Report, 7(1), 49-56.

National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). (1996). Document produced by an inter-departmental strategy team consisting of the departments of Correctional Services, Defence, Intelligence, Safety and Security, Justice and Welfare. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Hamber, B.E. (1998). Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: Violence and Transition in South Africa. In Bornman, E., Van Eeden, R. & Wentzel, M. (Eds). Violence in South Africa, pp. 349-370. Human Sciences and Research Council: Pretoria.

Orkin, M. (1992). Democracy knows no colour: Rationales for guerrilla involvement among black South Africans. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 642-669.

Roht-Arriaza, N. (1995). Conclusion: Combating impunity. In N. Roht-Arriaza (Ed.), *Impunity and human rights in international law and practice* (pp. 281-304). New York: Oxford University Press.

Seedat, M., & Butchart, A. (1996, February). *The control and management of intentional injuries in South Africa: Implications for the recently democratised context.* Paper presented at the Third International Prevention and Control Conference, Melbourne, Australia.

Shaw, M. (1995). Exploring a decade of crime. *Indicator South Africa: Crime and Conflict, 1*, 12-15.

Simpson, G. (1993). *Explaining endemic violence in South Africa.* Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Simpson, G. (1996, September 15). The fight against crime can no longer afford to ignore victims' rights. *Sunday Independent*, p. 11.

Simpson, G., & Rauch, J. (1992). Political violence 1991. In N. Bolster & K. Ferguson-Brown (Eds.), *Human Rights Yearbook* (pp. 212-239). First edition. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Simpson, G., & van Zyl, P. (1995). *South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.* Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Statman, J.M. (1995, July). *Exorcising the ghosts of apartheid: Memory, identity and trauma in the "new" South Africa.* Paper presented at the 18th Annual Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Washington, DC.

Tapscott, C. (1992, August). *Crime in independent Namibia: Social equity and the crisis of expectations.* Paper presented at the Managing Crime in the new South Africa Conference, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria.

Vienings, T. (1996, June). *Violence and development.* Paper presented at Seminar No. 5, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg.

Waldman, P. (1993). Political violence in Latin America. *Unisa Latin American Report*, 9(2), 4-11.

Wilson, R. (1995). Manufacturing legitimacy: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the rule of law, *Indicator SA, 13*(1), 41-45.

* Correspondence to Dr Brandon Hamber at mail@brandonhamber.com