

The Political Origins of Zulu Violence during the 1994 Democratic Transition of South Africa

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One of the most interesting cases of the third wave of democratization around the world is that of South Africa in 1994. We have a great magnitude of literature on the South African regime change. Most studies focus on the power struggle between the African National Congress (ANC) and the then governing National Party (NP) or between the Blacks and the Whites or on the type of democratic institutions to be adopted in the post-transitional period. Yet, few have addressed the issue of why the largest black ethnic group of Zulus played a "spoiler" during the transition to democracy. This study deals with the issue of why many Zulus, represented by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), collaborated with the Whites to wage bloody struggles against other Black "brothers," although they themselves had belonged to the repressed in the system of apartheid. This study begins with an introduction to the Zulu ethnic group and its nationalism in order to provide preliminary information about who the Zulus are. This is followed by our explanation for why they were engaged in violent conflicts with the other Blacks.

Keywords: *democratic transition, ethnicity, violence, simple majority rule, consensual democracy, majoritarian democracy, nationalism, Zulu*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting cases of the third wave of democratization around the world is that of South Africa in 1994. We have a great magnitude of literature on the South African regime change. Most studies focus on the power struggle between the African National Congress (ANC) and the then governing National Party (NP) or between Blacks and Whites or on the type of democratic institutions to be adopted in the post-transition period (Jung and Shapiro 1995; Friedman 1995; Horowitz 1985 and 1991; Shugart and Carey 1992; Lijphart 1985; Steytler and Mettler 2001; Pottie 2001).¹ Yet, few have addressed the issue of why the largest black ethnic group of Zulus played a "spoiler" during the transition to democracy.²

¹ For a brief introduction to history and politics including political parties in South Africa, see Banks, Muller, and Overstreet (2007). The ANC was the leading opposition party against the NP's apartheid system, that is, the South African style of racial segregation policy. Its prominent leaders include Nobel laureate Nelson Mandela. The White-dominant National Party was the government party under the old regime, and it was later renamed the New National Party in 1998. It has increasingly lost its political influence after the democratic transition, giving way to the Democratic Party or Alliance, a parliamentary opposition during the old-regime period. The IFP is an ethnic party that promotes the interests of Zulus, the largest ethnic group in South Africa. It turned out to be the third largest party in the country in all three post-transitional elections of 1994, 1999, and 2004.

² Notable exceptions are Auvinen and Kivimaki (2001) and Chipkin (2004). Auvinen and Kivimaki tend to emphasize the *perceptual* differences about the system of apartheid among the ethnic Zulus as well as economic deprivation and rapid urbanization. Meanwhile, Chipkin focuses on the rise of a

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This study begins with an introduction to the Zulu ethnic group and its nationalism in order to provide preliminary information about who the Zulus are. This is followed by our explanation for why they were engaged in violent conflicts with the other Blacks. Political violence by the Zulus during the 1994 transition to democracy might not be explained by a single variable; rather, it might be attributed to a variety of variables. The violence might be due to devastating economic conditions that destabilized the life of the Zulu masses, or to a psychological crisis of self-identity in the wake of modernization and social mobilization that led the masses to seek a sense of identity from an ethnic or national community. The violence might also have its origin in the past or history; thus, it might be viewed as a prolonged expression of intractable antagonism between the Zulus and their historical enemy, often implied in news journals. In this study, however, we argue that the Zulu violence was motivated largely by political factors such as the political elite’s expected total exclusion from post-transitional politics under majority rule. We finally conclude with a brief summary.

2. WHO THE ZULUS ARE: HISTORY AND LANGUAGE

The word, Zulu, corresponds to the English word, blue or blue sky. Thus, the Zulu people literally means the people of the sky. More meaningfully, it referred originally to the Zulu clan. The origin of the Zulu clan, in turn, goes back “to about 1670, to an old man who lived a nomadic life in the Babanango area of Natal’s northern midlands (Elliott 1978: 14-15).” His name was Malandela, and the younger of his two sons was called Zulu. Yet, he has little historical meaning for today’s Zulus except having left his name. Of more significance is one of his descendants, who was born about 1787 and founded the first Zulu kingdom. His name was Shaka or Chaka. Zulu nationalism today claims that he was the founder of the Zulu *nation*. It attempts to construct Zulu national identity based on the historical facts, myths, or fictions concerning Shaka.⁴

However, the claim of Zulu nationalism that the Zulu *nation* was established as early as the 1820s seems untenable. History of Shaka’s kingdom was that of the so-called Mfecane, or bloody conquest.⁵ This *bloody* history is unlikely to have successfully instilled a sense of *community* in the clans brutally conquered by him. Furthermore, as early as 1879, history of the Zulu kingdom as a sovereign state ended with the military defeat of Shaka’s nephew, Cetshwayo, and the consequent disintegration of his kingdom into thirteen separate

new style of *nationalistic* labor unionism, which advocated the idea of national democratic revolution and antagonized *tribalism* or the traditional value system of Zulus.

³ For more about political violence in South Africa, see, among others, Adam and Moodley (1992) and Benini (1998). For the post-transitional political developments in South Africa, see Garcia-Rivero (2006) and Southall (2000).

⁴ For a critical review of Zulu nationalism, see Golan (1994).

⁵ The term, Mfecane, literally means “crushing.” Shaka was infamous for his ruthless rule and bloody conquest. During the Mfecane, millions of people were slaughtered. An old story says that he killed those who did not cry loud enough when his mother died (*Economist* 31 December, 1999: 70).

territories. This means the independent Zulu kingdom lasted only for about 60 years. This period does not appear to be long enough for the independent Zulu kingdom to build a strong sense of national identity. It is true that at the moment of the British invasion into Zululand in 1879, there was a population identified as Zulu by the British, but it is still uncertain whether the Zulus identified themselves as a separate ethnic group.⁶ In other words, it is not clear whether the Zulus who had inflicted the greatest disaster on the British army since the Crimean War entertained a distinct ethnic (or national) identity or remained simply members of a political entity called the Zulu kingdom. Nonetheless, Zulu nationalism today clearly prefers to view the Zulus at that time as constituting a nation founded on an ethnic identity of its own.

Today the term, "Zulus," sometimes means those who speak the Zulu language at home. The Zulu-speaking people are one of the three sub-divisions of the Nguni-speaking people; the other two are the Xhosas and the Swazis. The Nguni-speaking people, in turn, are distinct from the other three or four groups: the Kwasan, the Sotho, the Venda, and the Tsonga (Keyter 1991: 21-22).⁷

Despite the existence of striking differences between the Xhosa and Zulu languages, they are still mutually understandable. The Zulu language is one of the dialects of the Nguni language, implying that the linguistic distinction between the Xhosa and Zulu peoples is not fundamental. In terms of purely linguistic distance alone, more salient is the distance between the Nguni and Sotho languages than that between the Zulu and Xhosa languages. Nonetheless, the political division between the Xhosas and the Zulus is, in fact, more salient in South Africa than that between the Nguni and the Sotho. This is in part due to the politicization by Inkatha of the linguistically closer distance between the Zulus and the Xhosas, on the one hand, and the de-politicization by the ANC of the much longer distance between the Nguni and other Black populations, on the other.⁸

3. THE FEATURES OF ZULU NATIONALISM

To better understand the Zulus, we also need to explore the role of an image-maker or history-interpreter in addition to their shared history and language.⁹ In the case of the Zulus, this role has been played by Zulu nationalists who first formed a cultural movement organization, the Inkatha yeNkululenko yeSizwe and later turned this into a political party, the Inkatha Freedom Party. The choice of the word, Inkatha, in naming the movement is

⁶ This issue is not clear even in a classic on South American history, Wilson and Thompson (1971: 261-267). Some more recent studies, including Golan (1994) and Piper (2002), tend to question the historical presence of the Zulus as *a nation*.

⁷ The Kwensan in turn divide into two separate subdivisions: the Bushmen and the Khwe-Khwen. They are in a true sense aboriginals in South Africa. The Bushmen today have almost disappeared, and the Khwe-Khwen have been assimilated by the colored population such that there are no pure members of the Khwe-Khwen.

⁸ In a similar way, we can understand the fact that the Hindus in the Punjab reacted to the demand for Punjabi Suba by disowning the Punjabi language, their mother tongue. Their disowning of the mother tongue was done for political reasons. See Nayar (1966: 44-50).

⁹ For detailed discussion about overall difficulties inherent in objective identification of nation, see Deutsch (1966, chapter 1).

highly symbolic. "It refers to the thick coil or ring, made up of the many strands of grass that represent the unity of the Zulu people in their circle of loyalty to their king. But an inkatha is also a grass ring or coil placed on the head as a pad when carrying a weight. Thus, it carries a double meaning: it is both a sacred emblem of Zulu unity and a support when under stress (Harries 1993: 114-115)." Inkatha's interpretation of Zulu identity has rarely encountered a serious challenge because there were few other competing Zulu organizations. Hence, this study will see the features of Zulu nationalism expressed in the Inkatha movement.

3.1 A Strong Consciousness of History

First of all, like any other nationalism, Zulu nationalism is characterized by a strong consciousness of history. Inkatha has attempted to make the best of Zulu history since the rise of Shaka, especially, the period of the independent Zulu kingdom, in order to build a strong Zulu identity. The notion of history occupies the central position of the ideology. This is clearly shown in Chief Buthelezi's speech on Shaka Day in 1988: "Zulu were a product of history . . . and history has 'prepared a place for us'; history is 'guiding us' to a destiny (Mare 1993: 65)." Buthelezi often draws parallels between past and present. For example, "a proposed ANC march on the Kwazulu capital is likened to the British invasion of Cetshwayo's kingdom (Harries 1993: 112)."

In passing, it is notable that the Zulu history Buthelezi speaks of is not objective but deliberately selective and invented. Some historical events were intentionally dismissed. For example, he keeps silent about the fact that his great grandfather "deserted the young king Dinuzulu when the British annexed Zululand in 1887 (Harries 1993: 112; see also Mare 1993: 99)." Some events were even created from nothing. For example, the battle of Qokli Hill which is often quoted to show that Shaka was cunningly tactical was invented by E.A. Litter, who was responsible for the shift of Shaka's image from monster to hero (Wylie 1994: 11). In fact, it is not history that provides Buthelezi a guide to the present; it is rather his conception of the present political situation that gives him direction on how to view the past.

3.2 King as the Nation

In addition to the preceding universal characteristic, Zulu nationalism has its own peculiar features. Above all, it is a highly king-centered ideology. This nature of Zulu nationalism is found in King Goodwill's words, "I am the nation (Mare 1993: 68)" or in Buthelezi's words, "His Majesty [sums up] Zulu history in his person (Mare 1993: 97)."

Zulu nationalism attempted to restore the declining authority of King Goodwill. As a result of Inkatha's attempts to strengthen his authority, the king had three palaces and many other trappings of his traditional position in the late 1980s. Zulu nationalism also embellishes the very undemocratic past of the Zulu kingdom. The most important historical symbol of the Zulu nation is King Shaka, the founder of the Zulu kingdom. He, as a despot, determined, among other things, whether and when his young subjects could get married. Despite his despotism, the idolization of Shaka constitutes a central part of Zulu nationalism. According to Buthelezi, King Shaka "already saw the new South Africa as inevitable even while he was putting the Zulu kingdom together. Before he died, he had visions of aeroplanes flying in the air carrying the people . . . (Mare 1993: 66)."

The efforts to refurbish the authority of King Goodwill, nonetheless, were not intended to

confer substantial political power on him as King Shaka exercised in his lifetime. Chief Buthelezi wanted King Goodwill to remain as just a symbolic figure of the Zulu nation while preferring to put substantial power under his own control. That is, Buthelezi wanted a clear-cut division of labor between king and prime minister. He made sure that “Zulus love their king and it is unthinkable that he should be given executive functions which mean inevitable involvement in politics . . . [sic] which would tarnish the royal kingdom (Marks 1986: 117). This idea of the division of labor was not supported by history of the Zulu kingdom in which Zulu kings including Shaka exercised a tremendous amount of substantial power. This fact made the division of labor unstable; in fact, Zulu kings sometimes made unsuccessful attempts to regain their past substantial power.¹⁰

3.3 Heredity-based Political Legitimacy

Inkatha has not only tried to restore an old order by refurbishing the declining authority of the Zulu royal family but also made strenuous efforts to seek political legitimacy from heredity rule. Hereditary legitimacy basically means that rulers are legitimized to rule their people simply because they have so far done so; thus, their political legitimacy is unlikely to rely on their governmental performance or on what their people think of them.

In Zulu nationalism, the idea of hereditary legitimacy is extended not just to determining who is a legitimate king, but also to determining who is a legitimate prime minister. Chief (or Prime Minister) Buthelezi defended his position to say that he was entitled to his position because his ancestors held the same position in the past. His dead ancestors, not the living masses, entitled him to be prime minister. In his own words,

I am a great grandson of King Cetschwayo who fought the whites for independence of the land and his people. King Cetschwayo was a nephew of King Shaka who founded the Zulu nation . . . I am a grandson of King Dinuzulu. I am a hereditary chief of the Buthelezi tribe, the great grandson of Mnyamana Buthelezi who was Prime Minister to the Zulu nation when we were still a sovereign nation. My great grandfather was commander-in-chief of the entire Zulu army. My father was Prime Minister to King Solomon . . . I was Prime Minister to King Cyprian, who was my first cousin (Harries: 1993: 113).

It is also true that Buthelezi's claim for hereditary legitimacy resonated with a large number of Zulus. This fact is explained largely by traditionalism prevalent in Zulu society, which I will discuss next.¹¹

3.4 Traditionalism

Zulu nationalism has attempted to maintain a traditional political order that gets more and more discredited among the masses, and, in particular, young university students (Marks 1986, chapter 1). For example, Buthelezi referred to traditional chiefs as “the pillars on which the Zulu nation stands (Mare 1993: 68).” He also clearly said, “We will preserve the

¹⁰ For the power struggle between King Zwelithini and Chief Buthelezi, see “Annual Reference Supplement,” *Keesing's Record of World Events* 41 (1995: R31).

¹¹ For a recent study of the traditional institution of chieftaincy in KwaZulu-Natal after the democratic transition, see Beall, Mkhize, and Vawda (2005).

traditional system of Chieftainship in Kwazulu (Mare 1993: 68).” The traditionalism alienates the reform-minded younger generation, especially, university students, and most labor unions from the Inkatha movement. Conversely, Inkatha supporters typically “in rural communities and migrant hostels deeply resent the political crusades of urban-based youths who were challenging a traditional order in which children ‘obeyed,’ and left politics to, their elders (Adam and Moodley 1992: 503-504).”

The following paragraph, even if a little out-of-date, provides us with some clue to the issue of why strong traditionalism still survives in the Zulu region.

The discovery of diamonds in the southern African interior in the late 1860s had brought the first stirring of economic revolution to most communities between the Cape and the Zambezi. One of its effects was to attract to the mines Africans from all parts of the sub-continent. The Zulu, however, seem to have been an exception to this. There was as yet no need for them to labor outside their territory for cash or firearms because the expanding forces of colonialism had not penetrated the structure of the Zulu social formation. While other African communities [including the Xhosas] had been forcibly driven from their land, or had lost their self-sufficiency as their surplus products and labour were drawn beyond their borders, the Zulu remained in possession of their land, and their labour was still expended within the kingdom (Guy 1979: 3).

Of course, the later destruction of the Zulu kingdom by the British invasion forcibly incorporated the Zulus into the modern economy. Yet, the Zulu area was colonized much later than other contemporary South African areas. It remained independent while most other areas had already been occupied by colonialists. As a result, its history of exposition to modern Western society is relatively short.

In addition to its short and brief history of Westernization or cultural colonization by the West, the low level of modernization or economic development in the Zulu area allows its residents to sustain much of their traditional way of life, including their uncritical political attitudes toward their traditional rulers.¹² The Zulu area is one of the most underdeveloped areas in South Africa. The regions of Kwazulu and Natal, where most of the Zulus live, are relatively poor in South Africa. Much worse, within the region, Kwazulu, the Zulu homeland, is much poorer than Natal. “Annual per-capita income in Kwazulu in 1980 was under [R] 200; of this only R 45 came from domestic production (Marks 1986: 114).” “[T]oday the vast majority of the inhabitants of Kwazulu are dependent on the earnings of migrants and commuters to the ‘white economy’ for subsistence. Yet, 80 percent of these earnings are spent in the area of the ‘white economy.’ Kwazulu is a land of ‘women without men,’ as each year about the two-thirds of the able-bodied men seek work at the mines, farms and factories of white South Africa (Marks 1986: 114-115).” In some areas, “the absentee rate of men between the ages of twenty and forty-five is 80 percent, while 50 percent of the population is under the age of fifteen (Marks 1986: 115).”¹³ In sum, the homeland of the Zulus is fairly underdeveloped, and as a result, their traditional way of life in Kwazulu remains by and large uninterrupted. Even the Zulu migrants, living outside their homeland, have not uprooted themselves from their traditions. Their urban income is too small for them

¹² Their political attitudes are characterized by lack of self-consciousness as independent political decision-makers. This feature may be succinctly expressed as follows: Leave politics to leaders.

¹³ Also see Schlemmer and Muil (1975: 107-120).

to bring their families to the city. Instead, they send back their earnings to their families left behind them. Moreover, they periodically return to their families. The Zulu migrants have not broken their ties with their home villages permanently. As a result, the so-called social mobilization of the Zulus is at best incomplete both within and outside their homeland.¹⁴

3.5 Militancy

The last feature of Zulu nationalism lies in its emphasis on history of war and conquest or in its image-making of Zulus as indomitable warriors. Zulu nationalism characterizes the Zulus as *brothers born of warrior stock*. It takes very great pride in King Shaka's ruthless conquest of neighboring clans, which is said to have victimized more than one million people. In line with this emphasis on the warrior tradition, Buthelezi announced a program of restoring no fewer than 74 historic battlefields (Mare 1993: 79). Consequently, Zuluness is characterized by such virtues as valor and wisdom required to conquer, incorporate, and if necessary, eliminate the enemy. The Zulus are told by Buthelezi to "have a duty to flush out anything that in any way undermines the unity and solidarity of our people (Mare 1993: 70)."

Zulu nationalism not only allows political activists to employ violence as a means of overcoming their political obstacles, but also legitimizes violent political actions in the name of the Zulu nation. However, a full understanding of the violent nature of Zulu nationalism is only possible when we recognize that the emphasis of Zulu nationalism on violent history reflects the way Zulu elites perceive and evaluate their *present* political circumstances. In other words, the violent nature of Zulu nationalism which puts heavy emphasis on war and conquest *in the past* is to be explained by understanding the political circumstances that confront Zulu elites as a nation-builder *in the present*.

4. EXPLANATIONS FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE BY THE ZULUS

4.1 Alternative Explanations for Zulu Violence

Political violence exercised by the Zulus during the 1994 transition to democracy in South Africa might not be explained by a single variable; rather, it might be attributed to a variety of variables. The violence might be due to devastating economic conditions that destabilized the life of the masses, or to a psychological crisis of self-identity in the wake of modernization and social mobilization that led the masses to seek a sense of identity from an ethnic or national community. The violence might also originate in the past or history; thus, it might be viewed as a prolonged expression of intractable antagonism between the Zulus and their historical enemy, Xhosas, as is often implied in news journals.

It is true that the aforementioned poor economic conditions of the Zulus were in part responsible for their violent actions. The destabilizing effect of the devastated economy accounted, in particular, for why the masses were so easily mobilized by Zulu elites for political purposes. "Indeed, the main participants and victims of the 1990-94 political violence were hostel dwellers and squatters who . . . were most severely exploited and disadvantaged by the apartheid system (Auvinen and Kivimaki 2001: 77)."

However, it is difficult to explain the intensive violence by the Zulus during the transition

¹⁴ For the idea of social mobilization, see Deutsch (1966).

to democracy by *past* antagonism between the Zulus and other *ethnic* groups in South Africa. The reason is that it was the Whites who waged the biggest war against the Zulus in their history and, at the same time, disintegrated the independent Zulu kingdom. Only the Whites could be really to blame for having destroyed the emerging Zulu nation in the past and for having incurably impaired the Zulus' pride in their indomitable history; the other Black ethnic groups were rather a victim of the Zulus' historical violence and conquest. Thus, from a historical point of view, the Zulus should have directed the most violent antagonism towards the Whites, not towards the other Black groups. However, the targets of Zulu violence during the democratic transition were very rarely Whites.

A psychological explanation for Zulu violence is unsatisfactory too.¹⁵ Adam and Moodley point out a psychological condition of the masses among other explanatory variables by saying that "The [Zulu] migrants at the bottom of the social hierarchy, not surprisingly, find solace from their material and symbolic deprivation in their identification with a mystical Zulu pride and fighting spirit (Adam and Moodley 1992: 505)."¹⁶ This psychological explanation, however, does not explain either the actual cycle of the Zulu violence during the transition, i.e., why most cases of significant Zulu violence took place during the early and concluding stages of regime transition or the pattern of the violence, i.e., why the Zulus directed their violence at the other Black groups even with the help of the Whites. Furthermore, the loss of self-identity due to the uprooting from their traditional communities in the wake of industrialization and urbanization might lead the Zulus to subscribe to nationalism or any other kind of communalism with which they could identify themselves with, but it could not explain why they exercised *violence* at all to express their identity.

A better explanation for the Zulu violence in South Africa towards the other Black groups with the assistance of the Whites is that both the White government and the Zulu Black leadership were driven by some common interest to confront the ANC as an enemy. Their common threat laid in the political arena, namely, the ANC's preferred program for post-transition politics, i.e., establishment of simple and pure majority rule without regional autonomy.

4.2 Political Explanation for Zulu Violence: Permanent Exclusion of Zulu Elites from Power under Majority Rule

Simple and pure majority rule, as opposed to what is called consensual democracy or super-majority rule, does not often provide a solution to deep-rooted political conflict based on ascriptive cleavages such as racial, ethnic and regional divisions. This is especially true when one of the ascriptively divided forces is numerically dominant over other forces. In this case, democracy as simple majority rule merely means the permanent monopoly of power by a numerically dominant force and the consequent exclusion of minorities from power *on a permanent basis*, as long as the ascriptive divisions remain immutable. A working model of democracy can be established when majority rule is more or less temporary or when a next majority group is not always predetermined before an election.¹⁷

¹⁵ For a typical psychological explanation, see Horowitz (1985, chapter 4).

¹⁶ The more recent explanations with reference to the ideological or perceptual differences in note 2 may be also categorized into this type of psychological explanation.

¹⁷ For the idea that democracy means temporary majority rule, see Rustow (1967: 227-236). For some

Among other obstacles to the formation of temporary majorities, ethnic cleavage is prominent. Whenever ethnic cleavage is dominant over relatively temporary cleavages, such as socioeconomic one, a particular political force's electoral constituency is more or less fixed. Its political influence is limited to a certain constituency in every election. Of course, even in a working model of democracy, few political forces are really popular across every cleavage. Thus, a certain political force's popularity is always limited whether the main cleavages are ascriptive or non-ascriptive. But in the case of ascriptive cleavages, there is a very low mobility of membership across cleavages; even such limited mobility, if ever, occurs over a very long term. In contrast, in a society characterized by non-ascriptive cleavages, there is a higher degree of expected mobility across cleavages over a relatively short term. As a result, in an ascriptive society, there are few floating votes for which political forces can compete, in contrast to a non-ascriptive society. A significant political implication of this fact is that any political force whose electoral constituency consists of an ethnic minority should take the great risk of being excluded from power *on a permanent basis* unless the political force successfully blocks the introduction of simple majority democracy in every possible way including violence.

Under the South African system of *apartheid*, Zulu political elites exercised limited autonomy in Kwazulu, one of the ten Black homelands. They were rulers, as long as they chose to remain as a part of the system. However, an ANC-led transition to democracy threatened this limited autonomy of Zulu political elites in two respects. First, Zulu political elites had so far sought their main political legitimacy through tradition and heredity rather than through their governmental performance and electoral support. A newly established democratic regime of any kind threatened the hereditary legitimacy, and it was expected to leave Zulu elites little room for resorting to such legitimacy.

Second, a particular form of democracy preferred by the expected governing force, the ANC, was based on uncompromised simple majority rule without regional autonomy. This had several implications for the Zulu ruling class. One implication was that the Zulu kingdom was to be abolished or at least significantly weakened. However, as mentioned above, Zulu nationalists behaved as if there would be no Zulu nation without a Zulu kingdom.

A more important and comprehensive implication was that such a regime would exclude Zulu nationalists permanently from the new central and regional governments. First, Inkatha did not have confidence in electoral victory in a new system of representation through free competition in its homeland, even though it claimed over 750,000 dues-paying members (Kitchen 1988: 43). Second, should it win t all of the Zulu votes, this sum would constitute only a small minority in South Africa's whole electoral constituency, even though the Zulus were the single largest ethnic group.¹⁸ The reason was that not ethnic identity but the democratic/antidemocratic line was expected to prevail in *post-apartheid* elections in the majority of South African areas. If ethnicity had been the most important variable in political decisions of the non-Zulu Blacks as well as of the Zulus, the South African Black electorate would have divided into so many contending ethnic forces. In this hypothetical situation of complete ethnic division, the Zulu-based IFP would have turned out to be the largest political

other discussion on majoritarian democracy and ethnic competition, see Horowitz (1985: 86 and 360-362).

¹⁸ For the approximate composition of the South African population, see Selby (1973: 267). The precise statistic is not available since the White government excluded the Blacks in the so-called homelands from population censuses.

force in South Africa because the Zulus were the single largest ethnic group. However, this was not the case; the non-Zulu Black groups were not politically divided along ethnic lines.

Violent actions by Zulu activists during the transition were due largely to the *expected* high risk of permanent exclusion from central and regional power in case that a unitary system of simple majority rule should be adopted. Since the primary goal of Zulu nationalists was to prevent the possibility of falling into a permanently governed minority force, they were willing to share a common political interest with the Whites who also worried about the similar possibility after a regime transition took place. Thus, Zulu nationalists collaborated in one or another way with the Whites in the face of their common political enemy, the ANC and its allies.

At first, the Apartheid government denied the offering of any kind of aid to Inkatha's political actions. What was symbolically called "Inkathagate" revealed that it had lied (*Maclean's* August 12, 1981: 21; *Time* August 12, 1991: 43; *Time* July 29, 1991: 41). Based on the above-mentioned common interest between the Zulus and the Whites, some forces within the Apartheid government that was out of President de Klerk's control helped Inkatha in several ways. The collaboration of the regime forces with Inkatha was described in the following report:

The following is a typical scenario of incidents in which police fail to intervene in Inkatha attacks. The scenario is based on a composite of numerous actual reports: 1) A rumor spreads of an impending Inkatha attack; 2) Police are notified but are slow to respond; 3) Residents [who are usually ANC supporters] take matters into their own hands and erect barricades; 4) Police appear on the scene and remove barricades and/or disperse residents; 5) The attack ensues; 6) Police do not intervene and in some cases participate in either attacks or looting (The Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs 1992: 78; brackets in original).

The fact that much of the Zulu violence was manipulated by *apartheid* White forces and Zulu elites sharing a common interest in avoiding the worst political outcome of permanent deprivation of power was supported by other events including the issue of "cultural weapons."¹⁹ The largely manipulative nature of Zulu violence was also clearly shown, on the one hand, in the abrupt increase in violence when Inkatha denounced the final multi-party compromise concerning a new South African constitution and transition procedures and, on the other hand, in the sudden dramatic decrease in violence when Inkatha revoked its decision to boycott the first universal elections and announced its plan to participate in the elections. With the assistance of the White governing forces that had a shared interest in preventing their permanent exclusion from power, the politically threatened Zulu leadership largely manipulated its rank and file's violence in order to increase its political bargaining power at the negotiations during the transition and obtain as many concessions from the ANC as possible.²⁰

4.3 The Political Benefits of Zulu Violence

Buthelezi threatened to boycott elections and adopt an extreme option of "liberation war"

¹⁹ With regard to the issue of "cultural weapons," see The Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (1992: 70-72 and 103-104).

²⁰ A similar point of view is found in Piper (2002).

unless significant concessions were made to accommodate his political demands including regional autonomy (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1994: 39894). The ANC provided significant political concessions, one after another, to Inkatha in order to prevent it from boycotting elections and continuing violent resistance. Without intensive expression of its political demands through fierce violence, Inkatha would not have obtained such significant political concessions from the ANC. After significant political concessions from the ANC, Buthelezi finally agreed to participate in elections, just a week before the start of elections. The concessions of benefit to the Inkatha Freedom Party were as follows:

1. 3,000,000 hectares of state land, one-third of the Kwazulu province, was transferred to the control of King Goodwill Zwelithini, which left only 300,000 hectares of land in the hands of the state (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1994: 39992).
2. Guarantees would be provided on the constitutional status of the Zulu monarchy and kingdom within Kwazulu-Natal (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1994: 39942).
3. The powers of regional legislatures would be strengthened. Regional legislatures would have exclusive legislative functions in a wide range of policy areas from planning and development to casinos and gambling. In the areas of education, health and housing, regional legislatures would enjoy concurrent legislative competencies with national government (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 39584). Each provincial legislature would be also entitled to write a constitution for the region, provided that it compiled with the principles governing the national constitution (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 39723).
4. A two-ballot system would be adopted. Separate ballot papers would be used for the election of national and regional representatives, rather than the single-ballot system approved at the multi-party constitutional negotiations in 1993 (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 39846).
5. The province of Natal would be renamed to Kwazulu-Natal (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 39846). Besides, Kwazulu and Natal would constitute a single constituency. This had a political effect of making the Zulu-dominant area the second largest constituency. According to the Interim Constitution, the provincial legislature of Natal-Kwazulu would have 80 seats, which was second only to that of PWV that accounted for 86 seats. The province of Natal-Kwazulu would also account for 40 of the 200 National Assembly seats from regional lists (Ruchti 1995: 196 and 200).
6. Based on the pre-election polls showing that the IFP would obtain about 10 percent of the votes (*Facts on File* February 25, 1993: 109), at least one cabinet portfolio was expected to be assigned to the IFP. This was due to a constitutional provision that any party with at least 5 percent of the votes would be entitled to a number of Cabinet portfolios proportionate to the number of seats it held (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 39723).
7. A 90-seat Senate would be newly established, with each of the nine newly drawn regions electing 10 senators (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 38723).
8. A 400-seat National Assembly would be elected by proportional representation, with 200 seats from regional lists and 200 seats from the national list (*Keesing's Record of World Events* 1993: 39723).

As long as these institutional provisions helped to constrain simple and pure majority rule and reduce the risk of the IFP's exclusion from power, it would be less likely to resort to violent methods in order to realize its political demands. In fact, one of the most striking features after the IFP reached the final decision to participate in the elections was the

comparative lack of violence. "Police reported on April 30 that the whole country, including Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Transvaal which had been racked by political conflict, had been almost violence-free (*Keesin's Record of World Events* 1994: 39943)."²¹

5. CONCLUSIONS

To provide some preliminary knowledge about the Zulus, the key ethnic group involved in political violence during the South African democratic transition, this study has begun with a brief introduction to who the Zulus are, with focus on their history and language. It has also discussed the features of Zulu nationalism, which helps to understand today's Zulus and their politics better. Zulu nationalism is characterized by a strong consciousness of history, the idea of king as the nation, the seeking of political legitimacy from heredity, persistent traditionalism, and militancy. This study has also noted that the relatively late exposition of the Zulus to the modern economy and the underdevelopment of the Zulu area account for why a strong traditionalism is still prevalent among them inside and outside the Zulu homeland.

This was followed by a new explanation for the origins of the Zulu violence in the early 1990s. This study has attempted to provide a political explanation for the violence instead of the existing historical, economic or psychological explanations. It has argued that the primary sources of the Zulu violence during the period were the great risk of permanent exclusion of Zulu political elites from power after a post-*apartheid* transition to simple majority rule and the threatened Zulu elites' manipulation of the economically destabilized masses for their own political benefits. In fact, as a result of the intensive resistance to the ANC program for post-transition politics, Zulu political elites succeeded in securing a lot of significant political concessions from the prospective post-transitional government party.

Let us conclude by noting that even though this study has emphasized a political variable in the explanation for the Zulu violence in the early 1990s, it has not completely ignored the destabilized economic life of the masses as a source of the violence. The poor economy was clearly responsible for the Zulu violence in the sense that it made the masses more vulnerable to the political mobilization by the elites.

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²¹ This does not mean that in the wake of the democratic transition, bloody political violence had completely disappeared. Nonetheless, it is true that the nature of violence increasingly changed. Before the transition, Inkatha more or less succeeded in presenting the ANC and its allies as the enemy of the *whole* Zulu nation. Yet, after the transition, it became more and more difficult for Buthelezi and his Inkatha to picture the ANC as the enemy of all Zulus. This difficulty on the part of Buthelezi was due to his increasing isolation from King Goodwill and many Zulu urban dwellers and youth, many of whom were ANC sympathizers or supporters. See *Facts on File* October 20, 1994: 786; *The Economist* March 30, 1996: 43. Also see Piper (2002: 86). For post-1994 patterns of violence, see Benini (1998).

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