



Utrecht University

State terror out of a position of strength

The reasons behind South Africa's choice to support RENAMO's terrorism during the Mozambican Civil War

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Master Thesis in International Relations in Historical Perspective

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Word count: 16'492

Master Thesis

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MA International Relations in Historical Perspective
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Academic year 2017 – 2018

Utrecht, 16 August 2018

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the rather underdeveloped academic field of state terror. More precisely, it seeks to explain why South Africa supported the terror of the anti-communist resistance movement RENAMO during the Mozambican Civil War from 1977 to 1992. According to most theories, this question remains a paradox as terror is commonly seen as a tool of weak actors rather than strong ones, such as South Africa. To get to the bottom of this paradox, this paper applies an innovative theory of the American professors Raymond Duvall and Michael Stohl. According to them, specific military experiences in the past, the belief in the ability to control the terror process and a high degree of vulnerability of the target population render terrorism perpetrated by strong states more likely.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. dr. Jacco Pekelder, for his highly competent supervision of the thesis. His enormous experience in the field of terrorism studies helped me to put my topic in a greater academic context while his substantiated comments guided me throughout the working process. Also, I would like to express my gratitude towards my family, friends and fellow classmates. Their unconditional support was always a great source of motivation for me. Lastly, I would like to thank the friendly employees at the library of the African Studies Centre in Leiden. Without them, the localisation of relevant sources would have been a much more complicated undertaking.

Marian Schulte-Orlet

Utrecht, August 2018.

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
DST	Directorate for Special Tasks
FNLA	National Liberation Front of Angola (Portuguese: <i>Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola</i>)
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front (Portuguese: <i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i>)
GTD	Global Terrorism Database of the University of Maryland
MNR	Mozambican National Resistance (English Acronym for RENAMO)
MPLA	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Portuguese: <i>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</i>)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party (South Africa)
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance (Portuguese: <i>Resistência Nacional Moçambicana</i>)
SADF	South African Defence Force
SWAPO	South-West African People's Organisation
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Portuguese: <i>União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola</i>)
USA	United States of America
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Introduction

In 1992, the Southeast African state of Mozambique hit rock bottom. An estimated 4 million people had fled the country or were internally displaced. Around 100'000 had died in the battles of the civil war raging in the country in between 1977 and 1992.¹ The remaining population was traumatised by the atrocities of mentioned civil war, 10 years of independence war and hundreds of years of ruthless exploitation of its coloniser Portugal. The economy was shattered and constituted for years to come, literally speaking, a minefield for every foreign investor. Mozambique, which had so enthusiastically celebrated its independence in 1975, was ranked last in the human development index.²

While multiple aspects contributed to the miserable state of the country in 1992, the civil war was one of its major causes. Namely, it opposed the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO), a violent rebel group backed by South Africa, and the armed forces of *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO), the ruling communist party in Mozambique. Lacking any clear political ideology, RENAMO's military agenda consisted mainly in the destruction and destabilisation of the entire socialist nation. Hereby, Mozambique's capitalist neighbour South Africa played a crucial role as it heavily supported the movement from 1979 on. In fact, it used RENAMO as a proxy force fighting the spread of communism in Mozambique. Often poorly equipped and demoralised, FRELIMO's armed forces aimed at defending their newly established socialist state against the attacks.

During the conflict, both parties inflicted unbearable violence on civilians. FRELIMO's armed forces, for instance, regularly forced men to serve in the military whereas women were obliged to have sexual relations with them. RENAMO forces showed even less mercy. According to countless witness reports, they regularly employed terror as a means of warfare. To name several examples, the rebel movement used to cut off body extremities, burn humans alive or force individuals to torture and kill family members.

¹ Newitt Malyn, *A History of Mozambique*. London: C. Hurst & Co, 1995, p. 571.

Other sources count the victims differently. The United Nations, for instance, estimated that “ war and war-related hunger and disease have cost a total of 600'000 lives [...]” (Africa Watch, *War, Famine & the Reform Process in Mozambique*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992, p. 2).

² Knoema, *Human Development Index*. Via: <https://knoema.de/atlas/ranks/Human-Development-Index?baseRegion=MZ> (29 July 2018).

As no ranking of the Human Development Index from 1992 could be found, the text refers to the year 1990.

As will be explained later in more detail, the academic body generally attributes such terror warfare to actors which are considered “weak.” Accordingly, terror is typically employed by agents which do not have the political or military power to reach their goals. Strong actors, however, are not seen as “textbook terrorists.” Commonly, it is thought that they possess weapons which are equally efficient but less costly for their reputation. To name an example, they are meant to eliminate their opponents through precise airstrikes instead of arbitrarily terrorising them. Put bluntly, “terrorism is the air force of the poor.”³

At the time of the Mozambican Civil War, South Africa was the military and political hegemon in Southern Africa. Hence, according to the theory of the “weapon of the weak”, it was supposed to employ conventional military attacks rather than supporting terrorism. In reality, however, it constantly fuelled the Mozambican Civil War through covert support of RENAMO’s terrorism. Hence, afore mentioned theory fails to explain South Africa’s military position in the civil war.

The present paper seeks an alternative explanation for South Africa’s support of terrorism. Put simply, it aims at finding an answer to the question “for what reasons did South Africa support terrorism in the Mozambican Civil War?”

To answer this question, this paper uses an interesting theory developed by Raymond D. Duvall, Political Scientist of the University of Minnesota, and Michael Stohl, Researcher and Professor at the Department of Communication at the University of Santa Barbara.⁴ Trying to explain past and future employments of terror warfare by strong states, they list three criteria which enhance its likelihood. Firstly, they state that the successful use of terror in the past enhances the likelihood of its employment in the future. Secondly, they affirm that strong states are more probable to inflict terror if they believe that they can “manage the process of terror.”⁵ Thirdly, they argue that terrorism is more efficient, and therefore more often employed, if it targets marginalised groups far away from mainstream society.

To apply Duvall’s and Stohl’s theory on the South African case, the paper bases itself on a vast range of sources. To name the most important ones, it uses the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) of the University of Maryland to get a reliable account of

³ Fortna Page, *Is Terrorism Really a Weapon of the Weak?* New York: Columbia University, 2016, p. 3 (hereinafter: Fortna, *Weapon of the Weak?*).

⁴ Duvall Raymond D. & Stohl Michael, “Governance by Terror”, In: *The Politics of Terrorism*. Edited by Stohl Michael. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1988, p. 257-259 (hereinafter: Duvall & Stohl, *Governance by Terror*).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

RENAMO's deeds. Moreover, it analyses the relevant parts of the reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which documented the most cruel crimes of Apartheid. Additionally, it refers to newspaper articles published in South Africa at the time of the Mozambican Civil War. Furthermore, it uses numerous books and journal articles. For example, the book "Apartheid's Contras" by William Minter, a leading American specialist on the Southern African region, proved particularly helpful for a nuanced but concise overview of the conflict.⁶ Most importantly, however, the paper refers to several primary sources, such as the "Gorongosa Documents."⁷ Mentioned documents are specifically interesting as they consist of several notebooks of RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama.

As the sources are relatively diverse, it does not make sense at this point to give an exhaustive explanation of the methodology applied to analyse each of the documents mentioned before. Rather, the paper will come back on this topic before each of the sources is analysed individually.⁸ To give a general indication, however, it shall be mentioned that the paper simply applies the first and third argument of Duvall and Stohl to the South African case. Concretely, it will try to establish whether experiences in the past influenced South Africa's terror support and whether its targets could be characterised as "vulnerable." Due to the limited scope of this paper, the second argument could, unfortunately, not be treated in this context.

To give a short overview of the structure, the paper is divided in introduction, conclusion and four chapters. Hereby, the latter are subdivided in sections which are sometimes further split in parts. The first chapter provides the reader with the theoretical framework of the analysis. This includes, *inter alia*, a definition of terrorism, the academic debate surrounding it as well as a more detailed explanation of Duvall's and Stohl's theory. The second chapter illustrates the historical perspective, both from a Mozambican and a South African perspective. The third chapter contains the first argument of Duvall's and Stohl's theory. For this purpose, it

⁶ Minter William, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994 (hereinafter: Minter, *Apartheid's Contras*).

⁷ Joaquim Vaz, "Gorongosa Documents." In: *the origins of armed banditry in Mozambique* (presumably published around 1985). Available at the Afrika Studiecentrum in Leiden. (hereinafter: Vaz, *Gorongosa Documents*).

⁸ For instance, methodological remarks on the analysis of the Gorongosa Documents can be found in chapter 3.3.1., for the use of the GTD in 4. and for the interpretation of the statistics of the author Jeremy M. Weinstein in 4.3.

analyses, *inter alia*, the Gorongosa Documents. The fourth and last chapter applies the third argument of mentioned scholars to the case of South Africa.

1. Theoretical framework

There is no unique definition of terrorism. The circumscription of the term is usually subject to wide academic discussions. Without going into detail of such controversies, one selected definition shall be cited. Namely,

terrorism by the state (or non-state actors) involves deliberate coercion and violence (or the threat thereof) directed at some victim, with the intention of inducing extreme fear in some target observers who identify with that victim in such a way that they perceive themselves as potential future victims. In this way they are forced to consider altering their behaviour in some manner desired by the actor.⁹

The advantages of cited definition are numerous. Most importantly, it is held in an understandable writing style. Moreover, it is rather general as it is applicable to terrorist attacks perpetrated by state as well as non-state actors.¹⁰ Furthermore, it includes all necessary elements of terrorism. In this way, it states that terrorist attacks target not only the victim, but also other witnesses of the deed. In addition, it mentions that they are intentionally perpetrated in order to alter the behaviour of the target audience.

Interestingly, this definition is rather inclusive. For instance, it not only defines actual deeds as terrorist acts, but also the extreme fear thereof. Moreover, it is to be highlighted that the definition does not refer to civilians as being a particular target of terrorism. Hence, it also considers members of armed forces as potential targets of terrorism.¹¹

1.1. Academic debate

An important focal point of the academic debate on terrorism is the identity of the perpetrator. In fact, the common opinion is that terrorist acts are more likely to be perpetrated by “weak” actors. Already in 1960, Brian Crozier, a well-known

⁹ Blakeley Ruth, “State Violence as State Terrorism.” In: *The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence*. Edited by Breen Smyth Marie. London: Ashgate, 2012, p. 3.

¹⁰ Despite the fact that afore cited definition encompasses both, state and non-state terror, a distinction is sometimes made in between the two concepts. Violent acts perpetrated by states are referred to as “terror” while atrocities inflicted by non-state actors remain under the umbrella of the term “terrorism.” The insurgent group RENAMO had components of both concepts. On the one hand, it was supported by South Africa. On the other hand, it had a certain degree of independence as it carried out the attacks without open support of Pretoria. Hence, this paper will not differentiate in between the two terms mentioned above.

¹¹ Those particularities are well suited in the present case. As will be established later, RENAMO did not only target civilians, but also members of the Mozambican Armed Forces. Moreover, it worked well with the instrument of fear as thousands of peasants lived in the constant threat of being attacked.

Australian historian and journalist, notes that “terror is usually the weapon of the weak” and that it is “most suited to national liberation struggles against foreigners.”¹²

In his role as an influential American researcher of political conflicts, Ted Robert Gurr affirms, while not excluding the possibility of terror committed by strong states, that weak regimes are more likely to use terror than strong ones.¹³ Richard Jackson, a professor at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Zealand, reaches a similar conclusion. Despite emphasising that state terrorism is a heterogenic phenomenon which depends on its context, he states that, historically, weak actors have used terrorism far more often than strong actors.¹⁴

The reason behind the perception of terrorism as a weapon of the weak is usually related to the resources of the perpetrator. Page Fortna, an American professor of International Relations at Harvard University, notes that most authors implicitly attribute terrorism to agents which are too weak to wage “full blown insurgency.”¹⁵ According to them, the perpetrators do not possess the military strength to use more conventional means of warfare. The Spanish political scientists Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca and Luis de la Calle have a similar line of argumentation. Following their logic, terrorism is linked to the inability of the perpetrator to control territory.¹⁶ For instance, potential perpetrators might consider the employment of terrorism because they do not have the pool to recruit soldiers from or the territory to train an army on.

The American Political Science Professor Dustin Ells Howes underlines the suitability of terrorism for the weaker party of an asymmetrical conflict. Particularly, he states that the utility of terrorism consists in the fact that it “makes everyone else weak for a time, allowing the group to operate on a more level playing field.”¹⁷ In other words, terrorism allows rather weak actors, such as rebel groups, to bridge the gap to opponents considered strong.

More recently, certain scholars begun to challenge the image of terrorism as the “air

¹² Brian Crozier, *The Rebels: A Study of Post-war Insurrections*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960, p. 159.

¹³ Ted Robert Gurr, “The Political Origins of State Violence and Terror: A Theoretical Analysis”, In: *Government Violence and Repression*. Edited by Lopez George & Stohl Michael. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986, p. 46-48.

¹⁴ Jackson Richard, Murphy Eamon & Poynting Scott (eds.), *Contemporary State Terrorism*. Abingdon: Routledge: 2009, p. 229.

¹⁵ Fortna, *Weapon of the Weak*, p. 4.

¹⁶ De la Calle Luis & Sánchez-Cuenca Ignacio, “Domestic Terrorism: The Hidden Side of Political Violence.” In: *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 12 (2009), p. 36.

¹⁷ Howes Dustin Ells, “Terror in and out of Power.” In: *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 11 (2011), p. 43.

force of the poor” or “the weapon of the weak.” Fortna, for instance, concluded her paper by stating that she found “remarkably little” empirical support for cited dictums.¹⁸ The British researchers Jon Bailes and Cihan Aksan dedicated an entire book on the United States of America (USA) and terrorism. Therein, they advance the thesis that the USA, clearly a strong state, are the “most consistent perpetrator and supporter of terrorism in post-Second World War history.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is to be remarked that Fortna as well as Bailes and Aksan remain in the minority. As illustrated before, the predominant opinion still attributes terrorism to weak actors.

While the scholars cited above usually refer to state and non-state terrorism, the importance of both phenomena is not the same. In fact, state sponsored terrorism has had significantly greater consequences in the last centuries than its counterpart. To name a few examples, the Great Terror of Stalin, the Great Leap Forward of Mao as well as the numerous military regimes in Latin America cost the life of millions. As a comparison, the most prominent terrorist attack perpetrated by non-state actors, namely 9/11, led to the death of almost 3000 people.

Compared to its impact, the literature on state-sponsored terrorism is scarce. Or, in the words of Richard Jackson, the academic silence in this regard is equal to a “ghost of state terror.”²⁰ Indeed, most of the general works, such as for instance “The History of Terrorism” by the Belgian geopolitics professor Gérard Chaliand and the French historian Arnaud Blin focus on terrorism of non state-actors.²¹ The few books available on state terrorism mostly seem to put their attention to Latin American case studies, such as Argentina or Chile, instead of giving a systematic analysis of the phenomenon.²²

1.2. Theory of confident strength

The researchers Duvall and Stohl are amongst the few to fill this academic vacuum. In fact, they established a theory which not only treats state terrorism, but also challenges its general perception of a “weapon of the weak.” Namely, the American

¹⁸ Fortna, *Weapon of the Weak*, p. 19.

¹⁹ Aksan Cihan & Bailes John (eds.), *Weapon of the Strong: Conversations on US State Terrorism*. London: Pluto Press, 2012, p. 2.

²⁰ Jackson Richard, “The ghosts of state terror: knowledge, politics and terrorism studies.” In: *Critical Studies on Terrorism* (2008), p. 377.

²¹ Blin Arnaud & Chaliand Gérard (eds.), *The History of Terrorism*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007.

²² See, for instance, Wright Thomas C., *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

scholars argue that states finding themselves in a position of “confidence and strength” might adopt terrorism as a means of warfare in certain cases. According to them, three considerations help predict whether such states are likely to recur to terrorism.

Firstly, they argue that a “process of learning” may contribute to the usage of terror. By this, the scholars refer to situations where other comparable states, or the terror supporting state itself, have already successfully used the means of terror before. If such “positive” experience has been made, even strong states might consider using terror as a means to pursue their interests. Besides, Duvall and Stohl add that the “convers also follows.” In other words, if a state has made negative experiences with non-terrorist warfare, such as for instance conventional military interventions, it is more likely to use terrorism the next time.

Secondly, the researchers emphasise that a government’s belief to be able to “manage the process of terror” renders its employment more likely. Intuitively, this argument is about the probability of a terror campaign to get out of hand and to become uncontrollable for the government. Duvall and Stohl, however, see a slightly different dimension in their considerations. For them, the argument is about the question whether a government has the “means to penetrate the informational and politically relevant sectors of society.” Although this argument remains somewhat blurry, it could refer to the capacity of the government to steer public opinion and to keep certain incidents secret. To illustrate this statement, if a government has control over certain media outlets, it could downplay terrorist attacks and delegitimise their victims. In such a case, terrorism would be less costly as the government would face less resistance.

Thirdly, the professors argue that terror is a particularly efficient means of warfare to fight vulnerable targets. Hereby, they define the latter term as “socially marginal groups, without strong ties to and support from the mainstream of society [...]”²³ To explain their argument, the scholars state that less integrated individuals are disoriented and therefore more susceptible to change their behaviour if they are exposed to terrorism. In other words, they are more receptive to the message of terrorists. Conversely, if the target group is well integrated within the dominant social fabric, terror is less likely to change their opinion and to alter their behaviour. Hence,

²³ Duvall & Stohl, *Governance by Terror*, p. 258.

terror is less suited in such cases. To illustrate this argument with a rather blunt example, terror attacks targeting Western democracies typically cause different reactions amongst the victims. Those who identify with mainstream values of Western societies, will not suddenly change their opinion due to terrorism. Their opinion is simply too strong to be changed through terrorism. If anything, they will step up the protection of those values.²⁴ On the flipside, those who are marginalised, might be more vulnerable to the message of terror as they were on the verge of society anyway. In this way, they might take the lack of security shown through terrorist attacks as a reason to demand changes or resist society. In short, they alter their opinion and behaviour.

When explaining his theory, Duvall and Stohl do not define “states in a position of confidence and strength.” Hence, it might not always be clear when the three considerations are applicable to predict the likelihood of state terror or to explain its usage in the past. In the South African case, however, the setting is relatively unambiguous. When South Africa first supported RENAMO in 1979, it was the economic powerhouse as well as the military hegemon of the region. In this way, it possessed thriving financial centres in Johannesburg, Cape Town or Durban. Moreover, it could rely on a relatively developed industrial sector supplemented by precious natural resources. Additionally, it could even count on a small armament industry which was topped up by fighter jets imported from France and Italy until 1975.²⁵ While the failed Angola intervention and the economic sanctions did hurt the regime, particularly towards the end of the 1980ies, they did not alter its leading position in the region.²⁶ Hence, there is no doubt that South Africa falls under the category of a strong state, or in the words of Duvall and Stohl, a state in a position of confidence and strength.

Regarding this paper, it shall be mentioned that its scope does not allow for a treatment of all three arguments of Duvall’s and Stohl’s theory. Rather, it focuses on the first and third consideration while it does not analyse the second one at all. To explain this selection, the first argument on the learning process presented a welcome opportunity to analyse one of the few primary sources, namely the Gorongosa

²⁴ Put very simply, this corresponds to the discourse of “now, we have to protect our Western values more than ever.”

²⁵ Seegers Annette, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996, p. 218.

²⁶ Please refer to chapter 3.1 for further details on the Angola intervention. Chapter 2.1. gives a brief explanation of the economic sanctions against South Africa.

Documents, and constituted therefore a particular enrichment of the paper. The third aspect was declared by the authors as “perhaps the most important consideration” and was, consequently, indispensable for the application of their theory.²⁷ While equally interesting, the importance of the second criteria was slightly lower in the particular case of South Africa. As the atrocities of terror were committed abroad, Pretoria was, presumably, less concerned about the danger that its control over the terror process would slip away.

In this context, it is to be underlined that the three considerations are not cumulative. In other words, the fact that one consideration might not correspond to the reality or might not have been analysed does not devalue the other arguments. Rather, each of them can be interpreted as a consideration on its own to help explain past and future terror employments by strong states.

²⁷ Duvall & Stohl, *Governance by Terror*, p. 258.

2. Historic context

The historic context surrounding the Mozambican Civil War is rather complex. In fact, the war was strongly influenced by the interplay of international, regional, national and local events. To illustrate this statement, the Cold War, the independence of the Republic of Rhodesia or the rise to power of Frederik Willem de Klerk in South Africa all decisively affected the Mozambican Civil War. To account, at least partially, for this complexity, the chapter is divided into two sections treating the South African and Mozambican perspective individually.

2.1. Historic context from a South African perspective

After having fought each other in the Boer War, the former British colonies of Orange Free State and Transvaal as well as Natal and the Cape came together to form the Union of South Africa in 1910. From early on, the Union established discriminatory laws against the large majority of black and coloured people. Through the Native Land Act of 1913, for instance, non-white people were banned from acquiring land on 93% of South Africa's territory.

This discrimination persisted throughout the first half of the 20th century and was further consolidated from 1948 on, when the National Party (NP) rose to power. Under the name Apartheid, the NP pursued an extensive program aiming at the complete segregation of white and non-white populations of South Africa. This program reached its climax under prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd, who was in power from 1958 to 1966. Amongst others, he implemented the "Grand Apartheid Program", which foresaw the relocation of a big part of the non-white population into geographically confined zones, the so-called Bantu-Nations.

Any internal resistance to the racist policies was met with great violence. Peaceful protests in the town of Sharpeville, for instance, were countered with heavy sniper fire resulting in the death of 69 people in 1960.²⁸ As a consequence of the protests, organisations fighting apartheid, such as the African National Congress (ANC), were banned and their leaders, including Nelson Mandela, imprisoned.

In the context of heavy resistance at home and the independence of many African nations abroad, Pretoria's racist regime was under considerable pressure in the

²⁸ Burns James M. & Collins Robert O., *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 352.

beginning of the 1960ies.²⁹ To counter the stress, South Africa relied heavily on its *cordon sanitaire*. With this term, Pretoria referred to a belt of racist states led by white minorities surrounding South Africa. Namely, this “buffer” was constituted by the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola, as well as the British colony of Southern Rhodesia, which unilaterally declared its independence as the Republic of Rhodesia in 1965. In addition, it was supplemented by South-West Africa³⁰, which South Africa refused to give back after its mandate period ended in 1949.

Through this *cordon sanitaire*, the Apartheid regime was protected from direct influence of its enemies. To name an example, the ANC had to set up its bases in the black-dominated states of Zambia and Tanzania, thousands of kilometres away from Pretoria. Moreover, the security belt enabled South Africa’s secret service to channel arms to friendly movements fighting for white domination in the neighbouring countries.³¹

With the designation of Pieter Willem Botha as defence minister of South Africa in 1966, the Cold War found its way into Southern Africa. In his view, “the West was threatened by Soviet expansionism” which needed to be countered by South Africa “as part of the West.”³²

The best example to illustrate the influence of the Cold War on regional geopolitics is the South African invasion of Angola following the retreat of the Portuguese colonisers in 1975. As will be explained later in more detail, South Africa sent 1500 to 2000 soldiers into Angola in order to support local forces fighting against the establishment of a communist regime.³³ Despite initial backing, the USA later refused to provide military support to South Africa and its allies in Angola.³⁴ The Soviet Block reacted more affirmative. Besides hundreds of military advisors from Moscow, thousands of soldiers from Cuba were sent to Africa to support the Angolan Communists. In the end, South Africa backed down and the communist People’s Republic of Angola was founded.

²⁹ In the year of 1960 alone, 17 African countries became independent.

³⁰ Nowadays the Republic of Namibia.

³¹ Daniel John, “Racism, the Cold War and South Africa’s regional security strategies 1948-1990.” In: *Cold War in Southern Africa: White power, black liberation*. Edited by Onslow Sue. Abingdon: Routledge, 2009, p. 39.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³³ Please refer to chapter 3.1. for a more detailed account of Operation Savannah.

³⁴ More precisely, it was the so-called Clark Amendment which banned further military assistance to Angola’s rebel groups.

As illustrated by the example of Angola, the *cordon sanitaire* started to crumble in the 1970ies. In fact, the Portuguese not only abandoned Angola, but all African colonies. Mozambique, for instance, became independent in 1975 and was quickly taken over by the communist FRELIMO party. In the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia, the pressure of the black-nationalist movements Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) augmented during the 1970ies as well. In 1980, it resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Zimbabwe led by Robert Mugabe. Hence, by that time, South Africa's was suddenly surrounded by states with black majority rule.

In his Cold War vision, Botha interpreted the disappearance of the buffer as a total onslaught on South Africa orchestrated by Moscow.³⁵ To counter the perceived Soviet threat and re-establish dominance over Southern Africa, he developed a total national strategy. While this strategy included certain peaceful efforts in the beginning³⁶, it was soon transformed into a military campaign intended to destabilise and ultimately destroy South Africa's neighbours.

Due to its communist government and its proximity to South Africa, Mozambique was particularly affected by this strategy. Pretoria provided extensive covert support to the RENAMO rebels, which regularly committed atrocities against the civil population. Moreover, it performed conventional military operations, such as for example the aerial bombing of ANC offices in Maputo's suburb Matola in 1983.

In the first half of the 1980ies, Botha's total national strategy seemed to yield certain, albeit limited, successes at international level. Most importantly, Mozambique was pressured into the Nkomati Agreement of 1984, which, *inter alia*, obliged it to sharply restrict ANC presence on their territory. Moreover, the anti-communist label of its total national strategy somehow calmed the USA, one of South Africa's most important trading partners. President Ronald Reagan, for instance, initially followed a rather mild constructive engagement policy instead of taking a clear stance against the racist regime in South Africa.

³⁵ Davies Robert & O'Meara Dan, "Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy since 1978." In: *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1985), p. 191.

³⁶ For instance, Pieter Willem Botha intended to establish an economic confederation named Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) to draw his neighbours back under South African influence. However, this initiative failed spectacularly as Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe launched the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980 instead.

In the second half of the 1980ies, the regime in Pretoria became increasingly under pressure. In 1986, for example, the US Congress finally voted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which prohibited loans and other investments in South Africa. On its home front, the South African government was confronted with several black-nationalist movements which powerfully claimed their entry into the politic arena. Moreover, with the end of the Soviet Block on the horizon, South Africa was about to lose its role as a capitalist pole in an area dominated by communism. Consequently, Frederik Willem de Klerk, who had become president shortly before, announced the dismantlement of the apartheid state in an historic speech in February 1990.

2.2. Historic context from a Mozambican perspective

European interference into Southeast Africa begun in 1498, when Vasco da Gama set foot on Mozambique Island during his voyage to India. From then on, the Portuguese gradually set up pockets of settlement on the coast in order to support their maritime lifeline to Asia, particularly to Goa on the Indian subcontinent.³⁷ Moreover, they sailed up the Zambezi River in order to gain control over the gold trade.

For most of the following centuries, the territory of what would later be called Mozambique served as an exploitation colony. As Portugal did not have the financial means to invest in its colonies, Mozambique was primarily used for the provision of cheap labour. In the 19th century, this was reflected by high exportation rates of slaves to Madagascar, Cuba or Reunion. In the 20th century, this trend continued with thousands of workers being employed in the mines of the Transvaal in South Africa.

When the wave of independence swapped over the African continent, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, Portugal's authoritarian leader from 1926 to 1974, maintained firm grasp over his colonies. In 1960, for example, Portuguese soldiers killed over 600 workers protesting for independence in the Northern Mozambican town of Mueda. Moreover, he encouraged the emigration of white settlers to Mozambique. To illustrate this statement, the number of white Portuguese settlers rose from 97'000 in 1960 to 200'000 on the eve of independence in 1974.³⁸

Angered by Portugal's refusal to grant independence to Mozambique, different nationalist movements started to develop. In June 1962, the three most influential

³⁷ Interestingly, the Bay of Maputo is still referred to as *Delagoa Bay* ("From Goa Bay") as it served as an intermediary stop for ships sailing from Goa to Europe.

³⁸ Africa Watch, *War, Famine & the Reform Process in Mozambique*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992, p. 14 (hereinafter: Africa Watch, *War, Famine & the Reform Process*).

ones came together to form FRELIMO. Two years later, under the charismatic leader Eduardo Mondlane, the newly found movement started a violent campaign against the European colonisers. As the campaign was met by heavy Portuguese resistance, a weary independence war developed. Only once Salazar was toppled by demoralised soldiers coming from the colonial wars, the situation started to change. In 1974, peace talks were held and a transitional government dominated by FRELIMO was created. On the 25th of June 1975, Mozambique was granted full independence.

Following independence, FRELIMO quickly initiated a socialist nation-building project. Samora Machel, who had succeeded Mondlane after the latter was killed in 1969, eliminated opposition parties by sending their leaders to so-called "re-education camps." Moreover, he started a radical project to transform the countryside. Most importantly, this program included the forced resettlement of the rural population in newly built communal villages. Therein, the government centralised political, health, and educational institutions as well as agricultural production.

In its foreign relations, FRELIMO did not hesitate to take side with other black-nationalist movements fighting for power in neighbouring countries. For instance, it let ZANU operate out of central Mozambique in order to harass Eastern Rhodesia. Moreover, it enacted economic sanctions, which were initiated by the United Nations, against the landlocked Republic in 1976.

The reaction of Rhodesia's white leadership did not wait. As a counterstrategy, the Rhodesian secret service formed an insurgency group out of defected FRELIMO members as well as former members of the Portuguese army.³⁹ Named Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), the insurgent group started to attack ZANU posts and other targets in central Mozambique in 1977. FRELIMO maintained its position as an ally of ZANU and fought back. The Mozambican Civil War had begun.

Two years after its begin, the conflict already seemed to come to an end. Through the Lancaster House Agreement, the white minority regime in Rhodesia was driven out of power and free elections were planned for 1980. With black majority rule on the horizon, the white dominated Rhodesian secret service was not able to support the MNR anymore. Instead of letting the MNR dry out, however, Rhodesia offered to

³⁹ To name the most prominent example, Afonso Dhlakama was a FRELIMO member before he was accused of theft and sent to prison. Having escaped jail, he crossed the border to Rhodesia to join the young insurgent movement. After only a few years in the movement, he replaced their leader André Matsangaissa, who died in an ill-planned attack in Central Mozambique in 1979.

transfer control over the insurgent movement to South Africa. Implementing the “new total national strategy”, Pretoria reacted “enthusiastically”⁴⁰ to the offer and quickly moved MNR equipment and fighters to a rear base in the South African Transvaal region.

Soon renamed after its Portuguese acronym RENAMO, the MNR proved to be a crucial tool for prime minister Pieter Willem Botha to implement his aggressive destabilisation strategy. He regularly provided the movement with war material, strategic advice and intelligence information. Backed up by Mozambique’s powerful neighbour, the insurgents frequently committed savage war crimes, such as mutilations, the use of starvation as means of warfare and the express targeting of civilians.

Despite poor equipment and low salary, the armed forces of the FRELIMO government managed to defend parts of their territory, particularly Maputo, the provincial capitals as well as certain communal villages. In their efforts of protection, the armed forces equally resorted to war crimes, such as indiscriminate killing or forced conscription. According to some reports, they also mutilated civilians.⁴¹ In short, an asymmetric war targeting mostly the civilian population was raging in Mozambique.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict failed. The already mentioned Nkomati Agreement of 1984, which foresaw, *inter alia*, the expulsion of the ANC from Mozambique in exchange for the disconnection of RENAMO from South Africa, failed to appease the region. As the Gorongosa Documents prove, South Africa did not abide by the agreement, while Mozambique is generally known to have followed its terms.⁴²

The height of the war was in the years of 1987 and 1988, when the RENAMO insurgents were pushing into FRELIMO controlled territory in the South. To name the most infamous incident, RENAMO slaughtered 424 patients of a hospital, including children and pregnant women, with machetes as well as automatic weapons in the town of Homóine in 1987.

⁴⁰ Flower Ken, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia into Zimbabwe 1964-1981*. London: John Murray, 1987, p. 262.

⁴¹ Africa Watch, *War, Famine & the Reform Process*, p. 49.

⁴² See, for instance, Minter, *Apartheid's Contra's* p. 45.

As it became clear that RENAMO was not able to drive FRELIMO out of the South, the war reached a stalemate. In this context, first initiatives to negotiate a cease-fire were taken. In 1990, they gained momentum when FRELIMO offered to introduce a constitutional reform leading to free multiparty elections. After two further years of peace talks, during which the civil war dragged on, a ceasefire was eventually agreed on in October 1992.

3. Lessons learned form Angola?

In this chapter, it will be illustrated that bad experiences with conventional warfare encouraged South Africa's turn towards unconventional warfare, such as the covert support of RENAMO's terrorist activities. For this purpose, it will initially be shown that Operation Savannah, the codename for South Africa's intervention in Angola in 1975 and 1976, constituted a negative experience for Pretoria. Later on, it shall be illustrated that the failure of the operation led to what Duvall and Stohl would call a "learning process." Particularly, it will be shown that the learning process led to the establishment of the Directorate for Special Tasks (DST), which is to be defined as a clandestine organism created within the Intelligence Department of the South African Defence Forces (SADF) charged with the covert support of insurgent groups in neighbouring states of South Africa. Lastly, it is to be explained that the DST connects the experiences made in Angola with the atrocities in Mozambique. For this aim, it will be illustrated that the DST played a central role for South Africa's terror support in Mozambique.

3.1. Operation Savannah

As mentioned previously, Operation Savannah opposed the South African troops and its allies, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) with the socialist People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Although limited in its scale, the South African intervention was perceived as a highly negative experience in political and military terms.

In order to illustrate why the operation was considered a failure, it is necessary to subdivide the section on Operation Savannah into three parts. In the beginning, reference shall be made to the initial goals of the operation. Later on, it will be shown that the campaign failed to achieve its military objectives. Lastly, it is to be highlighted that South Africa's efforts to keep Operation Savannah secret led to a political disaster.

3.1.1. The mission

To clarify the goals of Operation Savannah, a closer look shall be given to a top-secret document drafted on the 28th of August 1975 at the army headquarters in Pretoria and destined to the commander of the South African Army. Declassified by

the South African Defence Intelligence in 2012, the document named G/OPS/3/SAVANNAH gives a good insight into the mission in Angola. More precisely, it is divided in 4 main sections entitled “situation”, “assignment”, “execution” as well as “command and control.” In order to establish the goals of the mission, the focus shall be laid on the assignment section. As the document is written in Afrikaans, its text will not be cited. Instead, its content will be shortly summarised.

In mentioned “assignment” section, the document lists four bullet points. Whereas the first two concern the communist threat in Angola, the second two relate to South-West Africa, which at the time was under South African rule.

With regards to the former, the document states that the South African Army shall provide covert help to enable its anti-communist allies reclaim territories lost to the MPLA in Southern Angola. Particularly, it advises them to resist the MPLA through the means of Guerilla Warfare. Concerning the latter, it is stated that Operation Savannah shall enable the anti-communist forces to resist as long as possible against the MPLA in order to create a chaotic situation in Southern Angola. The chaos can then be exploited by South Africa in its war against the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO). To clarify the last sentence, SWAPO was at that time an Angola based movement fighting for the liberation of South-West Africa from South African domination. Moreover, the document states that South Africa should support the anti-communist forces in their fight against the MPLA in order to build up a partnership which can later be used against SWAPO.

Put simply, South Africa intended to provide support to its allies in order to avoid further successes of the communist MPLA in Angola as well as SWAPO in South-West Africa.

3.1.2. The military outcome

Operation Savannah officially started on the 23th of October 1975. At this date, around 1500 to 2000 South African soldiers entered Angola with heavy military equipment. During the first weeks, South Africa as well as its allies advanced quickly towards the north of the country. In fact, they managed to cross the crucial Benguela Railway, which crosses the country from the Atlantic Ocean towards Zaire⁴³ thereby dividing it in a Northern and Southern part.

⁴³ Nowadays the Democratic Republic of Congo.

By the time the Portuguese officially retreated from their former colony on the 11th of November, the South of Angola was thus occupied by South Africa and its allies. The North, however, was still under control of the MPLA. Consequently, two independent Angola's were proclaimed after the departure of the former coloniser. Namely, the communist People's Republic of Angola in the North and the South African backed Democratic Popular Republic of Angola in the South.

Soon after the proclamations of independence, the fight in between the capitalist South Africa and the socialist MPLA was transformed into a battleground of the Cold War. More precisely, the East Bloc intervened by providing the MPLA with Soviet military equipment as well as up to 12'000 Cuban soldiers.⁴⁴ The USA, ultimately, failed to top up its military commitments to South Africa and its allies.

As a result of the unequal international support, the initial military successes of the FNLA, UNITA and South Africa were soon reversed. Afraid of high personal costs, the South African troops abandoned their allies on the frontlines and retreated towards Southern Angola. Left alone on the battleground, FNLA and UNITA were delegitimised through the fact that they had collaborated with the racist white minority regime from Pretoria. Thus, an increasing number of countries recognised the MPLA as the sole legitimate Government of Angola. Admitting their military loss, all South African soldiers eventually retreated from Angolan territory at the end of March.⁴⁵

Moreover, South Africa failed to weaken the position of SWAPO. In fact, its intervention drove SWAPO towards a closer cooperation with the MPLA as both had South Africa and its allies as common enemies.

In short, Operation Savannah constituted, despite initial successes, a clear military failure as the anti-communist movements could not make any territorial gains. Even worse for South Africa, the socialist MPLA emerged as the sole internationally recognised government of Angola.

⁴⁴ Legum Colin, *After Angola. The War over Southern Africa*. New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1976, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Warwick Rodney, "Operation Savannah: A Measure of SADF Decline, Resourcefulness and Modernisation." In: *Scientia Militaria*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2012), p. 376 (hereinafter: Warwick, *Operation Savannah*).

3.1.3. The political outcome

On top of being a military failure, Operation Savannah constituted a political disaster. Before and during the intervention, South Africa had made considerable efforts to keep Operation Savannah secret. According to the memoirs of the soldier Johan du Preez, all South African soldiers had to wear green uniforms without any rank or country insignia.⁴⁶ Moreover, South Africa exhaustively interpreted its laws in order to heavily censure the domestic press. The South African scholar Neris John, who has written a dissertation on the South African intervention in Angola, remarks in this regard that minister of defence Pieter Willem Botha “issued confidential directives to the South African media, banning reports or speculation concerning South African troop movements and activities.”⁴⁷ The English newspaper “The Guardian” accurately summed up the situation by stating that “the British newspaper reader still knows far more about the South African conflict than do the South African families whose men have been fighting there.”⁴⁸

The secrecy surrounding Operation Savannah led to considerable speculations in the South African press. To illustrate this statement, on the 9th of December 1975, the Transvaal based newspaper “die Transvaler” run a lead article entitled “Maybe war over South-West Africa.”⁴⁹ The article claimed that the successful military campaigns of the communist MPLA in the Angolan Civil War might be the “precursor of a military confrontation with South Africa.” In other words, the authors of the article did not know that 1500-2000 South African soldiers were already at war for one and a half months on Angolan territory at the time of writing.

The insecurity amongst public opinion further mounted when news about several South African war prisoners surfaced. On the 19th of December, the Johannesburg based newspaper “Beeld” printed pictures of four captured South African soldiers on its front-page.⁵⁰ In the article belonging to the pictures, it cited the MPLA which had

⁴⁶ Du Preez Johan, *Operation Savannah – The battle of the casualties of the war*. Via: <https://www.businesswriting.co.za/operation-savannah-the-battle-of-the-casualties-of-the-war/> (26 February 2018).

⁴⁷ Nerys John, *South African Intervention in the Angolan Civil War, 1975-1976: Motivations and Implications*. Capetown: University of Capetown, 2002, p. 84.

⁴⁸ Unknown author and title. In: *The Guardian* (27 January 1976). Via: https://www.newspapers.com/search/#query=british+newspaper+reader+knows&dr_year=1976-1976&t=5077 (16 February 2018).

⁴⁹ Buitelandse Redaksie, “Dalk oorlog oor SWA.” In: *Die Transvaler* (9 December 1975). Available at the archive of the Zuid-Afrika Huis in Amsterdam.

⁵⁰ Unknown author, “Stappe om soldate te bevry.” In: *Beeld*, 19 December 1975. Available at the archive of the Zuid-Afrika Huis in Amsterdam.

stated that four soldiers aged in between 18 and 21 years were captured 700 kilometres away from the South-West African border. Furthermore, the newspaper mentioned that the leader of the MPLA movement, Lopo de Nascimento, as well as another high ranking MPLA official joined two of the four war prisoners to a press conference on their capture. On top of the four captured soldiers, the newspaper reproduced claims of the MPLA that it had taken another 50 South African war prisoners.

Hence, instead of being presented with news on the glorious establishment of an Apartheid-friendly regime in Luanda, the South African domestic audience was confronted with wild speculations about the potential disappearance of 50 young South African soldiers. To make things worse, two of the captured soldiers were triumphantly presented by the MPLA leader as a living proof of South African military involvement deep inside Angola. Thus, it is safe to say that Operation Savannah ended in a PR disaster for the South African government.

3.2. The consequences of Operation Savannah

In this section, the two main consequences of Operation Savannah will be illustrated. Firstly, it is to be shown that the Angola intervention led towards a modification of Pretoria's military strategy. More precisely, South Africa incorporated the covert support of insurgency forces in foreign countries as a "central element" of its military strategy.⁵¹ Secondly, it will be highlighted that Operation Savannah led to institutional changes, such as the establishment of the DST.

Concerning the sources used for the analysis of those two arguments, it has to be underlined that South Africa's shift towards the covert support of foreign insurgency groups was, naturally, a highly confidential matter. Hence, secondary as well as primary sources on the general military strategy and the DST remain scarce. Talking about the latter, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission even noted that "[...] all the files on surrogate operations were destroyed by the DST when it was closed in the early 1990s."⁵²

Nevertheless, two sources turned out to be particularly helpful to draw an image of the military decisions made after Operation Savannah. Firstly, the second volume of

⁵¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *TCR Report Volume two* (October 1998), p. 21. Via: <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/index.htm> (18 February 2018), (hereinafter: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Volume two*).

⁵² *Ibid.*

the final report of the TRC, which had access to abundant material provided by the SADF, proved useful to illustrate the shift of South Africa's military strategy towards unconventional warfare. Secondly, the literature of the scholar Kevin A. O'Brien, who specialises in international politics and served for several years as a senior advisor to Western governments, helped to clarify the blurry image of the DST.⁵³

3.2.1. Strategic modifications after Angola

Before illustrating that Operation Savannah led to an increased importance of covert support for insurgency groups, it needs to be underlined that conventional means of warfare remained an important component of Pretoria's military strategy. To name several examples, South Africa continued to openly support the insurgent group UNITA in Angola after 1976 through diverse conventional military missions, such as Operation REINDEER in 1978, SAFRON (in 1979 and SCEPTIC in 1980.⁵⁴ Hence, the present paper rather talks about a "modification", "diversification" or "shift" in South Africa's military strategy instead of a "total change" or "rupture."

To illustrate the modification of strategy, paragraph 90 of Volume II of the final report of the TRC is particularly interesting. In fact, it lists three conclusions which have been drawn by the SADF as a consequence of its failed intervention in Angola. Due to their particular relevance, two of the three conclusions shall be cited. Namely, the second conclusion notes that the failure of Operation Savannah

impressed upon the SADF the need for and utility of surrogate forces as allies. With UNITA regarded as 'one of the few remaining buffers against further East bloc expansion in Southern Africa', it now became integrated as a central component into the SADF's military strategy on its western flank. Assistance took effect on 1 April 1977 with the launch of *Operation Silwer*, the codename by which aid to UNITA was referred until 1983, when it was changed to *Operation Disa*.

After the failed Savannah campaign, the communist MPLA quickly consolidated its power in Angola. In other words, the *cordon sanitaire* in between black-led communist states and white-led capitalist states had melted.⁵⁵ From then on, the strongest remaining buffer was the rebel group UNITA, which operated in the border area in between South-West Africa and Angola. Thus, UNITA had become a vital

⁵³ See, for instance, O'Brien Kevin A., *The South African Intelligence Services: from Apartheid to Democracy*, 1948-2005. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁵⁵ Please refer to chapter 2.1 for further information on the *cordon sanitaire*.

element to be integrated within South Africa's defense strategy. In general terms, the failure of Savannah led to the tight incorporation of foreign insurgency forces within South Africa's modified national defense strategy.

A further component of this strategy is added by the third lesson learned by the SADF in Angola. More precisely, Operation Savannah

made the SADF aware of a need for increased 'intelligence, reconnaissance and a wide spectrum of covert capabilities.' In order to meet this demand it was essential 'to continue with the development of its special forces and their covert and clandestine capability.'

Cited paragraph adds the fact that the SADF needed to increase their covert capabilities. Whereas the first cited paragraph upgrades surrogate forces to a central element of Pretoria's defense strategy, it does not explicitly mention the need to keep the support of such forces covert. Only if the two paragraphs are read together, a clear image of South Africa's modified military strategy emerges. Namely, Pretoria wanted to complement its conventional military aid with a layer of covert support in order to facilitate the operations of foreign insurgency forces.

3.2.2. Institutional modifications after Angola

Having illustrated the implications of the failed Savannah campaign on the military strategy of South Africa, it will now be argued that it led to the establishment of the DST. To recall, the DST is a clandestine organism which was created within the Intelligence Department of the South African Defence forces and charged with the covert support of insurgent groups in neighbouring states of South Africa. Besides giving valuable information on the institutional implications of South Africa's military adventure in Angola, the analysis of the DST is crucial for the next sections as it played a central role in covert terrorism support in Mozambique.

The two main sources of this section, namely the TRC as well as the scholar O'Brien, largely agree on the circumstances of the establishment of the DST. As O'Brien's information on the roots of the DST is more exhaustive, his version shall be cited here.⁵⁶ More precisely, he states that

the Directorate Special Tasks (DST) was established in the mid-1970s by Colonel Breytenbach; it began life as a small office established in Rundu (Namibia) in 1976 following the South African withdrawal from Angola following Operation

⁵⁶ For the version of the TRC, please refer to Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Volume two*, p.21.

‘Savannah’. Its first head was Colonel Cornelius van Niekerk, who served until December 1978.⁵⁷

In his final report, the TRC confirms O’Brien’s information regarding the location and time of the establishment of the DST. Also, they both agree that Colonel Cornelius van Niekerk was its first head. The only notable difference is constituted by the fact that the TRC did not mention that Colonel Breytenbach, an experienced leader of a South African battle group involved in Angola, had allegedly setup the DST. Hence, this information shall be treated carefully in the following paragraphs.

The information on its location of establishment creates a first link in between Operation Savannah and the DST. In fact, the town of Rundu played a crucial role during mentioned operation. Situated on South-West African territory in direct vicinity to the border with Angola, the town served as “headquarters controlling the ongoing war in Angola.”⁵⁸ As stated by Colonel Jan Breytenbach, numerous senior officers of Operation Savannah resided there.⁵⁹ Moreover, Rundu was the base for a great amount of SADF soldiers.⁶⁰ Hence, the DST was created at a place where the experiences and information of Operation Savannah were accumulated and processed. Given the fact that the DST was set up at this location right after the intervention, it seems likely that the experiences made by South Africa in Angola have contributed to the decision to create such secret office.

Similarly, the alleged involvement of Colonel Jan Breytenbach in the establishment of the DST creates a link to Operation Savannah. In its position as an experienced leader of an entire combat group, Breytenbach had fought several months on Angolan territory during Operation Savannah. If it is true that Breytenbach has created the DST shortly after his return, it seems probable that he must have perceived the need for less visible means of warfare during his time in Angola. In other words, he had learned the lesson that covert support of insurgency groups might be an important addition to open military warfare.

To summarize the last two parts, Operation Savannah seemed to have convinced South Africa of the need to add another dimension to its ongoing conventional

⁵⁷ O’Brien Kevin, “Special Forces for Counter Revolutionary Warfare: The South African case.” In: *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 12 (2001), p. 100.

⁵⁸ Breytenbach Jan, *They Live By The Sword: 32 ‘Buffalo’ Battalion – South Africa’s Foreign Legion*. Alberton: Lemur Books, 1990, p. 67.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 68.

⁶⁰ Warwick, *Operation Savannah*, p. 372.

military raids. On strategy-level, this lesson was implemented by the decision to add a covert component to South Africa's aid for foreign insurgency groups. On institutional level, it was set into practice by the creation of the DST.

3.3. South Africa and the Mozambican Civil War

Having established the strategic and institutional modifications in South Africa, the focus shall now be laid on Mozambique. More precisely, it will be illustrated that the SADF undermined the policy of appeasement led by the South African foreign minister Pik Botha in the months before and after the signing of the Nkomati Agreement in March 1984. Particularly, it will be shown that the DST, which was placed within the Intelligence division of the SADF and moved to Pretoria in the early 1980ies, took a leading role in the frustration of any peace attempts made by the South African government.

For this purpose, the Gorongosa Documents, which consist of several notebooks belonging to the personal secretary of RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama, play a crucial role. In order to correctly interpret them, it is necessary to make several methodological remarks. Later on, their analysis will show that Pik Botha was pursuing a policy of de-escalation following the signing of the Nkomati-Agreement in 1984. Lastly, they will serve to demonstrate that the DST acted against Pik Botha's policy by further fuelling the Mozambican war through the provision of strategic advice, war material and top-secret information to RENAMO.

3.3.1. Methodological remarks on the Gorongosa Documents

In the context of the on-going civil war in Mozambique, FRELIMO's armed forces were operating a joint offensive together with Zimbabwean armed forces to expel RENAMO from the Gorongosa region in Central Mozambique. One of their jointly executed raids was destined against the main base of RENAMO, dubbed *Casa Banana*. During this raid in August 1985, several notebooks belonging to Joaquim Vaz, the private secretary of RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama, were captured. Named after their location of discovery, extracts of the Gorongosa Documents were published by the Mozambican government in September 1985.⁶¹

Formally, they consist of three notebooks filled by handwritten entries of Dhlakama's secretary. The first notebook is an agenda including numerous dates in between

⁶¹ Levy Sam, "Broken Promises?" In: *Sam Africa Report* (1 January 1986), p. 77.

December 1983 and October 1984. The second notebook records an exchange of messages in between Afonso Dhlakama and Colonel Van Niekerk, a high-ranking member of the DST. Whereas the first messages in between mentioned persons are not dated, the later messages have all been written in between the 27th of May 1985 and the 2nd of July 1985. Similarly, the third notebook also contains an exchange of messages over several pages in between the same two functionaries. However, those messages are dated earlier, namely in between June and November 1984. All of the described sources are originally written in Portuguese.

The version of the Gorongosa Documents available to the author of this paper is entitled "the origins of armed banditry in Mozambique." On the bottom of the page, the subtitle "Gorongosa Documents, 3rd Edition (extracts)" is mentioned. In line with its English title, the document not only includes copies of the original handwritten source, but it also contains a printed translation of parts of it. Moreover, it encompasses a short introduction explaining the historical context of the Gorongosa Documents. Until now, this version has been owned by the *Eduardo Mondlane Stichting* and the *Nederlands instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika*, which are both located in Amsterdam. In 2012, it had been transferred to the library of the *Afrika-Studiecentrum* in Leiden. The original publishing house of the documents is not indicated. However, a date written by pencil on the cover, namely 15.4.1987, might indicate that the document has already been published on this date. Due to the lack of any further information, it can thus be presumed that the version available to the author formed part of the batch of copies published by the Mozambican government from 1985 on.

As their title states, the source only contains extracts of the Gorongosa Documents. In fact, everything points into the direction that neither the copies of the original documents, nor the translation are complete. For instance, the copies of the first notebook, namely the agenda, lack several days. Moreover, the complete month of April is missing. Additionally, parts of the entries on specific dates are intentionally left blank. With regards to the English translation of the copies, it needs to be noted that they do not encompass all the Portuguese entries made in the notebooks. In short, a pre-selection has been made on the level of translation as well as on the level of the copies of the original documents.

Also, it needs to be mentioned that the timeframe of the published copies was hardly chosen accidentally. In fact, the copies describe the relation in between South Africa and RENAMO during one of its most intensive moments, namely in February and

March 1984. As will be noted later, the South African support for RENAMO was particularly high during this timeframe due to the upcoming conclusion of the non-aggression pact of Nkomati. Hence, it was, presumably, highly advantageous to the Mozambican government to publish extracts treating this timeframe.

To counter the bias of selectivity, it is to be underlined that the documents charge South Africa of having decisively intervened in the operations of RENAMO. Even if South Africa did not support RENAMO at all during the timeframes not covered by the Gorongosa Documents, Pretoria would have heavily contributed to the escalation of the Mozambican Civil War. In other words, Pretoria's activities described in the documents are enough to find South Africa guilty of terrorism support in Mozambique, regardless of what happened before and after the timeframe covered by the primary source. Hence, it shall be enough for the purposes of this paper to focus on the timeframe covered by the Gorongosa Documents.⁶²

3.3.2. Pik Botha and the Mozambican Civil War

According to the secretary of Afonso Dhlakama, the South African government moderated its position towards RENAMO following the signing of the Nkomati Agreement in March 1984. Especially foreign minister Pik Botha intended to comply with the agreement by cutting Pretoria's ties with RENAMO. To illustrate this statement, the author of the Gorongosa Documents summarises a meeting on the 7th of February 1984 in between RENAMO leader Dhlakama, RENAMO Secretary General Evo Fernandes and several South African army generals as follows:

The meeting with the general settled the arms supplies.

Huge for 8 weeks because SA is going to stop giving logistics.

But only the South African military have this strength, while Pik Botha the Foreign Minister is pressuring the South African politicians to abandon RENAMO [...].

To put the first part of the citation into context, RENAMO was well aware of the upcoming conclusion of the non-aggression pact of Nkomati. Hence, it agreed with

⁶² Moreover, nothing points into the direction that South Africa did not support RENAMO in a similar manner outside of the timeframe covered by the documents. In fact, the DST was almost exclusively led by the same agents during the 1980ies. It was headed from 1979 to 1982 and from 1986 on by Colonel van Niekerk. In between 1983 and 1986, it was led by Brigadier van Tonder.⁶² As demonstrated in the next section, mentioned personalities were the main responsible behind the military supply for RENAMO. Hence, it can be speculated that the personal continuity within the DST implied that RENAMO was heavily supported by South Africa over a larger period of time than covered by the Gorongosa Documents.

the South African generals on “huge” military supplies before the agreement as afterwards, South Africa would be bound by the obligation not to “assist the armed forces of any state or group of states deployed against the territorial sovereignty or political independence of the other.”⁶³ Put bluntly, the South African generals created a stockpile of weapons to help RENAMO destabilize Mozambique even after the signature of the non-aggression pact.

More interesting for the analysis, however, is the second part of the citation. In fact, it proves that RENAMO identified the South African foreign minister as a potential danger for its plans to continue waging war against the socialist government in Maputo. More precisely, the last sentence of cited paragraph illustrates the fear that Pik Botha would comply with the Nkomati agreement by ending the provision of war material for RENAMO, which had been continuously supplied with weapons by Pretoria since 1980.

Pik Botha’s attempts to appease Mozambique are further illustrated by diary entries made after the Nkomati Agreement. In an entry dated September the 9th 1984, the secretary noted that General van der West Huizen, who was Chief of Staff of the South African Intelligence Department at the time, had stated that Pik Botha

[...] is a traitor, he even agreed with Chester Crocker’s idea of FRELIMO offering an amnesty to RENAMO members.

To clarify the citation, Chester Crocker was at the time the American assistant secretary of state for African Affairs.⁶⁴ If it is true that Pik Botha consented to an agreement offering amnesty for RENAMO members, it further indicates his commitment to a peace process in Mozambique at the time of the diary entry. In fact, the provision of amnesty could have constituted a powerful incentive for RENAMO fighters to lay down their weapons and surrender. Moreover, his designation as “traitor” demonstrates that his open commitment to peace in Mozambique led him into opposition with the South African military.

To give a last illustration of Pik Botha’s peace attempts, the South African foreign

⁶³ The Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Government of the Republic of South Africa, *Agreement on Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness Between the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Government of the Republic of South Africa* (“Nkomati Agreement”) (16 March 1984), art. 2. Via: <https://peacemaker.un.org/mozambique-southafrica-nkomati84> (20 February 2018).

⁶⁴ Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, *Chester A. Crocker*. Via: <https://isd.georgetown.edu/crocker> (7 March 2018).

ministry hosted several peace talks in October 1984.⁶⁵ *Inter alia*, they led to the establishment of a commission with FRELIMO and RENAMO representatives in charge of the negotiation of a cease-fire. Even though the talks eventually stalled and the commission failed, it can nevertheless be noted that Pik Botha, in line with his stance over the previous months, was further pursuing his attempts to appease Mozambique after Nkomati.

3.3.3. The DST and the Mozambican Civil War

Before reconstructing the role of the DST through the Gorongosa Documents, it needs to be recalled that it was a secret organism within the South African Department of Intelligence. Consequently, the DST was never mentioned by name in the Gorongosa Documents. Presumably, the author of the documents, namely the personal secretary of RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama, was not even aware of its existence. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace back the involvement of the DST in the support of RENAMO through the diary of Dhlakama. In fact, the TRC revealed the identities of two of the most influential members of the DST in 1985. Firstly, the TRC indicated that the DST was headed by Brigadier “Neels” van Tonder in between 1983 and 1986.⁶⁶ Moreover, it had been established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that the already mentioned Colonel Cornelius van Niekerk was commanding DST’s “Operation Mila”, which encompassed the whole mission of supporting RENAMO in its war against FRELIMO.⁶⁷ Hence, attention needs to be paid to these two figures in order to reconstruct the involvement of the DST in the destabilisation of Mozambique.

According to the Gorongosa Documents, the DST regularly undermined Pik Botha’s peace attempts by continuing to support RENAMO. For example, it provided the Mozambican insurgent movement with strategic advice on warfare. To illustrate this affirmation, van Niekerk sent Afonso Dhlakama the following message on the 21st of June 1984:

The political climate here, internationally, is still bad for continuing to supply RENAMO. [...] RENAMO must continue to squeeze Machel but in such a way as to use as little war material as possible. Avoid combat with the FAM [Mozambican

⁶⁵ Minter, *Apartheid’s Contra’s*, p. 135.

⁶⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Volume two*, p. 321.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Armed Forces], giving more attention to destroying the economy, the infrastructure and controlling the population.

To put the cited instruction into its historical context, prime minister Pieter Willem Botha as well as foreign minister Pik Botha had returned one week before the message was sent from a 18-days lasting diplomatic trip during which they had visited eight European countries.⁶⁸ Relying on their newly gained reputation as the “peacebrokers of Nkomati”, this trip represented the first of its kind after many years of diplomatic isolation. In order not to destroy its recently gained reputation amongst European countries, South Africa did not take the risk of providing RENAMO with war material in the direct aftermath of the diplomatic visits in Europe.

However, as the citation shows, this did not mean that the entire South African state apparatus was interested in peace in Mozambique. Rather, the formulation “must continue to squeeze” demonstrates clearly that van Niekerk and the DST wished the Mozambican Civil War to continue even in the absence of weapon supply. Moreover, the formulation “avoid combat with the FAM” illustrates that the DST was actively supporting RENAMO through military advice.

From August 1984 on, the provision of war material to RENAMO gained again centre stage at the offices of the DST. Its inner circle, namely Van Tonder and Van Niekerk, gathered with Afonso Dhlakama on the 16th of August 1984 and replied to his request for further military means as follows:

As regards war material, AK-47 ammunition, we have this for you, and they said they will send it but at the moment there are transport difficulties. Since we can no longer use the C130 aircraft, as these aircraft are under Air Force control, nor can we use the Navy as there might be an information leak as well as involving many people. And in the event of doing this when we were caught out this would imply a heavy sentence for General Van Der West Huizen, Brigadier Van Tonder Colonel Vanikerke, as it would constitute a serious violation of the Incomati Accord, which is vital at this moment for our South African Government.

The Brigadier went on to say:

To overcome this difficulty we are going to use civilian aircraft that will land. So Colonel Vanikerke will go to Gorongosa on the 22/8/84 to meet the President of

⁶⁸ Markham James, “Europeans give Botha a frosty visit.” In: *The New York Times* (10 June 1984). Via: <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/06/10/weekinreview/europeans-give-botha-a-frosty-visit.html>. (5 March 2018).

RENAMO so as to organise landing strips to make it easier to use civil aircraft that can land and not drop parachutes so as to avoid under-using capacity.

At the time the message was written, the Nkomati Agreement was only several months old. Moreover, Pik Botha pursued its strategy of de-escalation as described above. Hence, any news on secret weapon supply by the South African military would have created considerable damage to the Nkomati Agreement as well as to the South African government.

As the first part of cited extract shows, certain agents within the South African Armed Forces were prepared to supply RENAMO with war material despite the unfavourable political circumstances after Nkomati. Moreover, the fact that neither the air force, nor the navy was to be involved leads to the theory that the mission was organised by a very limited amount of functionaries. More precisely, the statement “when we were caught out this would imply a heavy sentence for General Van Der West Huizen, Brigadier Van Tonder Colonel Vanikerke” points to the fact that mentioned persons were the main driving force behind the mission. To recall, Van der Westhuizen was the Chief of Staff of the Intelligence Department which supervised, *inter alia*, the DST led by Van Tonder as well as Van Niekerk. Hence, it can be concluded that the weapon delivery promised on the 16th of August 1984 was planned in great parts by the DST.

Additionally, the second part of cited text extract shows that the mission was not only planned by the DST, but it was also executed by it. In fact, DST member van Niekerk even travelled to Mozambique on the 22nd of August to prepare the arrival of the delivery. As the diary entry of the 23rd of August, which is not cited here, confirms, the delivery had successfully arrived at its destination. Amongst others, it included “25 cases AK47 ammunition.” In short, the DST had achieved its mission to provide RENAMO with further war material – within one week and without the knowledge of big parts of the South African Armed Forces.

Typically requested from van Niekerk, many similar supply missions were noted in the Gorongosa Documents in between December 1983 and October 1984. Their frequency, however, varied drastically. At the peak of South African support, namely during the three weeks before the signing of the Nkomati Agreement, eight deliveries were listed. According to the documents, they comprised, amongst others, a total of 4279 boxes of ammunition as well as 1739 AK47 rifles. In between mid-March and

August 1984 not a single delivery was noted in the documents. Nevertheless, the Mozambican government accused South Africa of having sent a “total of 14 aircraft full of war material to RENAMO” in May, June and July 1984.⁶⁹

Besides strategic advice and weapons, RENAMO was also supplied with confidential information by the DST. As an illustration, reference shall be made to the diary entry of the 17th of September 1984. Namely, it states that

they will install microphones in the negotiating room to listen on the talks between Pick Botha and the Mozambican delegation; it will be very advantageous for us. In this way we will know Pick Botha’s plan and FRELIMO’s, this was guaranteed us with Vanikerke, SS [Secret Service] colonel in SA.

Regarding its context, it has to be noted that it does not become clear from the Gorongosa Documents to what talks the cited extract is referring to. Presumably, it is linked to the previously mentioned peace talks hosted by the South African ministry of foreign affairs in the beginning of October. Such assumption seems likely as Pik Botha served as an “interlocutor” in between RENAMO and FRELIMO during the talks. In order to anticipate the course of the negotiations, it might have been of great advantage to RENAMO to be able to follow the conversations in between Pik Botha and FRELIMO.

More important than the context, however, is the fact that van Niekerk did not hesitate to wiretap the conversation of the foreign minister of its own government. This capacity of gathering top-secret information from high-level South African government agents demonstrates the reach of RENAMO. Additionally, it creates considerable doubts about the allegiance of the DST. In fact, it leaves the impression that the directorate was more attached towards RENAMO, who has been its close military ally since 1980, than towards its own government.

To compile the last two parts, the analysis of the Gorongosa Documents has shown that the DST continuously supported RENAMO through strategic advice, top-secret information as well as weapons. Even in between March and October 1984, when foreign minister Pik Botha was allegedly prepared to abandon RENAMO, van Niekerk as well as van Tonder did not cease to support the insurgent movement in Mozambique. In other words, the DST preferred to undermine the policy of its own foreign minister instead of ditching its longstanding military ally in Mozambique.

⁶⁹ Vaz, *Gorongosa Documents*, diary entry of the 9th of August 1984.

Hence, it cannot be denied that the DST played a crucial role in the military support of RENAMO. As a result of the policy of the DST, RENAMO terror did not dry out and the Mozambican Civil War dragged on for another seven years.

3.4. Summary

To conclude this chapter, Operation Savannah ended in a military as well as political failure. The initial military successes of South Africa were quickly compensated by the extensive support of the MPLA provided by the Soviet Union as well as Cuba. As a result, South Africa's allies UNITA and FLNA were defeated and the socialist MPLA emerged as the only internationally recognised government of Angola. With regards to the political impact, the secrecy surrounding Operation Savannah led to an outcry of the domestic press once news on the intervention emerged. As a consequence, South Africa complemented its ongoing conventional military interventions with constant covert support to foreign insurgency forces in neighbouring countries. In order to facilitate such support, it created the DST which started as a field office in South-West Africa and was later placed under the Intelligence Department in Pretoria. As the Gorongosa Documents have shown, the DST subsequently fuelled the Mozambican Civil War. In 1984, for instance, it provided RENAMO with strategic military advice, weapons as well as top-secret information. In short, the DST is the connector in between in between the experiences made in Angola and the Mozambican Civil War. Or, to put it in the words of the title of this chapter, it proves that South Africa had learned its lessons from Angola.

4. The features of the target population

In this chapter, it shall be examined whether the target group of RENAMO terrorism can be classified as a “socially marginal group” and as not being integrated in the “dominant social fabric.”⁷⁰ To recall, Duvall and Stohl argued that terror is a particularly efficient means of warfare if directed against marginalised targets. To measure the degree of marginalisation or integration, this chapter looks at the relationship of the target group with the socialist government. The closer the link of an individual to the government, the better it is integrated in the dominant social discourse. The looser the relationship, the more marginalised the individual is from mainstream society.

To describe the link between the government and the terror targets, this chapter is divided in three sections. Initially, the paper looks at the terrorism from a “macro” perspective. For this purpose, it compares the location of terrorist attacks with the strength of the FRELIMO support in the same region. Later on, it analyses RENAMO terrorism from a “meso” perspective. More precisely, the paper will identify the main target types of RENAMO with a particular focus on the question whether they can be attributed to the public or private sector. Lastly, it will define the target group through a “micro” perspective. For this end, it will try to circumscribe the victims as closely as possible.

With regard to the sources of this chapter, it needs to be underlined that RENAMO only published a very limited amount of documents. Apart from several leaflets distributed in Mozambican towns, one of the few papers to be mentioned in this context is RENAMO’s “Manifest and Programme” which allegedly appeared in early 1982.⁷¹ Even though the entire document could not be located for the purposes of the present paper, its main content can be re-established through a summary published by the well-recognised scholar Alex Vines, who has been UN election officer for Mozambique. According to his summary, the document mostly contains dispositions on a liberal Mozambican state. To name an example, it calls for a “free economy based on private enterprise” and the creation of a “multi-party and democratic

⁷⁰ Duvall & Stohl, *Governance by Terror*, p. 258.

⁷¹ Vines Alex, *RENAMO: From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?* York: Centre for Southern African Studies, 1996, p. 77 (hereinafter: Vines, *From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?*).

state.”⁷² However, no information is given on the purposes of RENAMO terrorism and the audience the insurgent group intended to reach through it.

Due to the illustrated lack of primary sources, this chapter is mainly based on secondary literature. Particularly, Jeremy M. Weinstein, a senior fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, provides helpful statistics on the nature, frequency and extent of RENAMO massacres. Similarly, the Global Terrorism Database established by the University of Maryland offers exhaustive and reliable information on the terrorist attacks committed by RENAMO. Lastly, the case studies written by the Canadian Otto Roesch, who had obtained a PhD in social anthropology at the University of Toronto, as well as by the Frenchman Christian Geffray, director of the Research Institute on Development in Marseille, served as valuable illustrations of the statistics.

Concerning the methodology, it will be attempted to trace back the target audience through the deeds of RENAMO. As mentioned, as much information as possible will be collected on the location, target type and individual characteristics of victims of RENAMO terrorism. Through this information, it will then be established whether specific groups of people suffered more often than others from RENAMO. If it turns out that the vulnerability of a specific group was particularly high compared to other components of the Mozambican society, it is likely that such group constituted the target audience of RENAMO.

Naturally, this approach bares certain analytical risks. Namely, the victims of terrorist attacks do not always constitute the target audience. For example, RENAMO might have killed civilians in order to put pressure on the Mozambican government to change its socialist policy. In such a case, the civilians could be defined as collateral damage while the government would be the actual target group. Due to the described lack of primary sources, however, it is impossible to precisely establish whom RENAMO intended to address through its attacks. Hence, this paper defines the target group as being the RENAMO victims.

Moreover, a re-establishment of the target audience through an analysis of the terrorism victims counts every person who was injured or killed by RENAMO. Hence, it also includes individuals which were accidentally killed by RENAMO and did not form part of their target. To illustrate this statement, Weinstein describes the case

⁷² *Ibid.*

of a Portuguese priest who was accidentally killed after RENAMO had ambushed his car.⁷³ If such incidents had happened more often, it would need to be concluded that RENAMO terrorism targeted priests and maybe even Western Christians in general. In reality, however, RENAMO presented itself as an ally of religious practitioners in their fight against the socialist government which repressed every form of religion.⁷⁴

To counter the bias described through the last two examples, a conservative interpretation of the statistics is to be recommended for this chapter. Hence, a target audience can only be established if there is strong evidence illustrating that a certain group of people has been subject to RENAMO terrorism particularly often.

4.1. Macro perspective: the South under pressure

In order to be able to discuss the spread of RENAMO terrorism from a larger perspective, it needs to be pointed out that Mozambique is commonly categorised in three different geographic regions. Firstly, it is constituted by “the South”, which is delimited by South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and the river Save. Secondly, it includes “the Centre”, such as defined by the river Save, Zimbabwe and the Zambezi stream. Thirdly, it is constituted by “the North”, which is limited by the Zambezi as well as the countries Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania.

Following most academic scholars, Southern Mozambique was particularly affected by RENAMO. According to one of Weinstein’s graphs, for instance, more than 400 RENAMO “massacres“ have taken place in the south as opposed to 180 in the centre and 80 in the north. Unfortunately, it becomes not clear in his book how he defines the term “massacre.” In fact, he does not make any remarks on the term besides noting that they are “easy to measure and identify.”⁷⁵ Hence, it is not clear whether all of the counted massacres could actually be defined as acts of terrorism. Nevertheless, most of them could, presumably, be seen as such as the term massacre presupposes the existence of a certain level of cruelty.

In order to smoothen out this slight imperfection of Weinstein’s statistic, it is necessary to consult other sources to confirm that most of RENAMO’s acts of terrorism have been committed in the south of Mozambique. For instance, several

⁷³ Weinstein Jeremy M., *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgency Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2007, p. 238 (hereinafter: Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*).

⁷⁴ Hall Margaret, “The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo): A Study in the Destruction of an African Country.” In: *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (1990), p. 47 (hereinafter: Hall, *The Mozambican National Resistance Movement*).

⁷⁵ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 201.

maps published by Alex Vines picture the geographical and temporal evolution of “RENAMO attributed atrocities.”⁷⁶ Despite using the term “atrocities” instead of “massacre”, Vines’ maps paint a similar image. While RENAMO atrocities were confined to the central border area of Mozambique and Zimbabwe during 1979 and 1981, they soon spread towards the South of Mozambique. Particularly, the maps illustrate that almost all atrocities causing the death of 50 or more people were located in this region.

The GTM, which counts acts of terrorism instead of “massacres” or “atrocities”, confirms this statement. According to the database, 8 out of the 10 deadliest terrorist attacks committed by RENAMO during the Civil War in Mozambique were perpetrated in the South of the country. Hence, it can safely be concluded that the South was especially affected by RENAMO’s terrorism.

This conclusion is all the more striking as the South was considered a FRELIMO stronghold during the whole civil war. Vines, for instance, gives a good account of the socialist dominance in the South. Basing himself on data from the timeframe 1990-1993, one of his published tables emphasises that only 8.9% of the territory of the three Southern provinces, namely Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane, was controlled by RENAMO. As a comparison, the average surface of territory controlled by RENAMO in Mozambique amounted to 18.8%.⁷⁷

The first free elections in Mozambique in 1994 reveal a similar image. More precisely, RENAMO, which was transformed into a political party following the cease-fire of 1992, secured merely 4 parliamentary seats in the three provinces mentioned above. FRELIMO, however, obtained a staggering 40%.⁷⁸

The secondary literature supports the fact that the South was largely FRELIMO dominated. For instance, Elizabeth Lunstrom, an associate professor at the Department of Geography at York University, emphasises in her case study of two

⁷⁶ Vines, *From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?*, p. 98.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, *Election Update 2004*. Via: <https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/eumoz200401.pdf> (8 July 2018).

To be sure, it is controversial to use the election results after the civil war as an indication of FRELIMO support during the war. In fact, it is also thinkable that FRELIMO adherence was much smaller at the time RENAMO started his terror campaign in the south. Following this logic, it can be argued that FRELIMO support only grew towards the end of the war as a counter-reaction to RENAMO terrorism. This scenario would greatly alter the conclusion as, in such a case, RENAMO would have started a terror campaign within a constituency which was less influenced by the mainstream socialist ideology from Maputo. However, the academic body of secondary literature emphasises with unanimity the fact that the South was largely FRELIMO dominated during and after the war. Hence, the theory described in this footnote is to be rejected.

villages close to the South African border that much of the Southern Gaza province was FRELIMO dominated.⁷⁹ Moreover, William Minter, a leading American specialist on the Southern African region, underlines that there was a “fairly consistent rejection of RENAMO in the South.”⁸⁰ In fact, even RENAMO itself admitted the strong bond between “Southerners” and FRELIMO. For instance, they explained potential recruits in central Mozambique that FRELIMO was dominated by Southerners which were marginalising the rest of the country.⁸¹

If the findings of the last paragraphs are taken together, one could be led to the conclusion that there was a positive correlation in between RENAMO terrorism and FRELIMO support. Put simply, the higher the support of FRELIMO in a certain region, the greater the risk of RENAMO attacks. However, such assertion needs to be further examined. In fact, it could also be thinkable that there was simply a correlation in between the distance to South Africa and the scale of RENAMO terrorism. In other words, the closer the potential RENAMO terrorist was to South Africa, the easier it might have been for him to get access to weapons to commit his deed. Hence, the more likely he was to cause a violent terrorist attack.

Only by examining the geographical distribution of RENAMO terrorism, it is not possible to confirm a definite link of causality in between increased terror activity and FRELIMO allegiance. The body of secondary literature, however, seems to be of the opinion that such link indeed existed. Roesch, for instance, argues that

the fact that the worst RENAMO atrocities against civilians have been carried out in southern Mozambique is [...] a result of RENAMO's recognition of its limited success in winning popular sympathies in the south of the country.⁸²

Particularly, the term “result” emphasises that the lack of popular support caused the high levels of atrocities. In fact, it suggests that the RENAMO inflicted its worst terrorist attacks on the South because of the lack of political support of its target population.

⁷⁹ Lunstrum Elizabeth, *Terror, Territory, and Deterritorialization: Landscapes of Terror and the Unmaking of State Power in the Mozambican “Civil” War*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2009, p. 888 (hereinafter: Lunstrum, *State Power*).

⁸⁰ Minter, *Apartheid's Contras*, p. 216.

⁸¹ Hanlon Joseph, *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire*. London: Zed Books, 1984, p. 217 (hereinafter: Hanlon, *Revolution Under Fire*).

⁸² Roesch Otto, “Renamo and the Peasantry in Southern Mozambique: A View from Gaza Province.” In: *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1992), p. 477 (hereinafter: Roesch, *Renamo and the Peasantry*).

Thus, it can be concluded that RENAMO inflicted more frequent and more cruel acts of terrorism in regions dominated by FRELIMO. Probably, those acts were committed due to the lack of political support for RENAMO in those regions.

4.2. Meso perspective: the entire society as a target

In order to establish the type of targets aimed at by RENAMO terrorism, the already mentioned database of the University of Maryland serves as a good source. As this paper treats the question why strong states support terrorism, only the period during which South Africa supported RENAMO matters. According to several sources, the first known financial aid of South Africa to RENAMO took place in “early 1979.”⁸³ Hence, this chapter analyses the terrorist attacks having been perpetrated by RENAMO in between 1979 and October 1992, when South Africa’s support ceased together with the entire civil war.

During defined period, the database lists 171 incidents. However, when specifying how many attacks have taken place against each target type, the same source lists 177 incidents. Presumably, this incoherence could be explained through the possibility that several incidents have been included twice because they belonged in different categories of target types at the same time. As the total of attacks is relatively large, this incompatibility does not fundamentally affect the results of the database.

Out of a total of 22 available target categories, RENAMO has aimed at 13.⁸⁴ To name the four most frequent categories, RENAMO perpetrated 57 attacks against “Private Citizens & Property”, 37 against “Transportation”, 20 against “Business” and 19 against “Military.”⁸⁵

On first glance, the results do not paint a clear target type of RENAMO terrorism. Rather, the fact that it aimed at 13 out of 22 different target types indicates that its terrorism perpetrated large parts of the Mozambican society. For instance, attacks on categories such as “Educational Institution” and “NGO”, suggest that RENAMO’s terrorism did not spare young children as well as foreign aid workers.

⁸³ Emerson A. Stephen, *The Battle for Mozambique: The Frelimo-Renamo Struggle, 1977-1992*. West Midlands: Helion & Company, 2014, p. 72.

⁸⁴ All categories as well as other remarks on the methodology of the database can be found here: University of Maryland, *Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables* (July 2017). Via: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>. (15 July 2018).

⁸⁵ The specific search request for the present analysis can be found here: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?start_yearonly=&end_yearonly=&start_year=1979&start_month=1&start_day=1&end_year=1992&end_month=10&end_day=4&country=137&perpetrator=490&dtp2=all&success=yes&casualties_type=b&casualties_max (12 July 2018).

Despite the diversity of target categories, one finding is nevertheless striking. When looking at the four most frequently attacked target types, it becomes clear that only the last category, namely “Military”, is directly attributable to the government. Two of the other categories, namely “Private Citizens & Property” and “Business” are typically associated with the private sector. “Transportation” might, on first glance, include both, public transport offered by the government as well as private traffic in cars or other vehicles. Can it thus be concluded that RENAMO terrorism did not target the Mozambican government in particular?

Notwithstanding the results of the databank, several aspects indicate that targets associable with the communist government were a primary victim of RENAMO terrorism. To name an example of such targets, reference shall be made to the so-called “communal villages.”⁸⁶

Mentioned villages were a product of the hand-over of power from the Portuguese government to the communist FRELIMO in 1975. In fact, they constituted the main pillar of FRELIMO’s ambitious project to reorganise and reshape the Mozambican countryside. Throughout the years following 1975, the regime in Maputo erected thousands of newly built villages where it not only provided houses, but also health care facilities for the farmers. Moreover, it constructed schools in those villages to teach the children in line with the socialist position of the government. Additionally, it set up cooperatives in the villages to centralise the agricultural production, which until then was scattered over the whole countryside. In short, the villages were the main vehicle of FRELIMO’s nation-building project.

While the cities constituted rather safe havens for FRELIMO, the communal villages were at the centre of the civil war. Geffray, for instance, notes in his case study on the Northern province of Nampula that the process of “villagization” profoundly changed the social hierarchy of the local populations. In fact, it created a new ruling class amongst the people who owned the territory where the village was constructed. Others, however, lost their power by abandoning their fertile fields and moving into the newly born villages. RENAMO sought to exploit this tension by recruiting new members amongst the peasants who were forced to abandon their old properties. For them, the looting and subsequent destruction of the villages became an attractive way to avoid their resettlement and therefore, their loss of property. The pattern which thus

⁸⁶ In Portuguese: *Aldeia communal*.

emerged was characterised by terrorist attacks from marginalised peasants on communal villages created by the Mozambican state.

In his case study on the Southern province of Gaza, Roesch detects a similar mechanism. Noting that RENAMO intended to disrupt agricultural production, he states that

the pattern which emerged was one of RENAMO incursions from its bases in the hinterland regions of the province, against the existing communal villages in the river valley areas.⁸⁷

He thus confirms that the terrorist attacks originated from rather isolated places, which were presumably outside the reach of the dominant FRELIMO government. Moreover, he asserts that the typical target were communal villages.

Lunstrom presents comparable findings in her case studies on two communal villages in the South of Mozambique. According to her, the communal villages were the main instrument to build a “modern, revolutionary and unified nation.” Consequently, the villages served as a “prime target” for Renamo to “dissolve the power” of the new Mozambican state.⁸⁸

To cite an example from central Mozambique, Weinstein emphasizes that RENAMO militias would destroy communal villages “even though it had unfettered access to people in the fields.”⁸⁹ In other words, RENAMO attacked the communal villages despite the presence of potentially easier targets, such as lone farmers. Hence, it is safe to say that RENAMO terrorism focused on communal villages and was not completely indiscriminate.

Consequently, a slight incoherence emerges when comparing the results of the Databank to the secondary literature. While the former lists “Private Citizens & Property” as its main target, the latter leads to the conclusion that RENAMO particularly aimed at government-related targets, such as communal villages.

This alleged incompatibility can be explained through the relatively broad definition of the category “Private citizens & Property.” In its explanations of the Databank, the University of Maryland states that mentioned category

⁸⁷ Roesch, *Renamo and the Peasantry*, p. 468.

⁸⁸ Lunstrom, *State Power*, p. 885.

⁸⁹ Vines, *From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?*, p. 236.

contains a number of attacks against students. If these attacks are not expressly against a school, university or other educational institution (...), these attacks are coded using this value.⁹⁰

The same reasoning could be employed to explain the high number of attacks against “Private citizens & Property” in Mozambique. As RENAMO did not have a very elaborate ideology, it would not officially recognise that its attacks were directed against communal villages in particular or the national building project of FRELIMO in general. Presumably, those attacks fall thus under mentioned category despite also targeting the government.⁹¹

Similar relativisations might also be applicable to the other categories. Ambushes on “Transport” might not only have aimed at private cars, but also at trucks delivering food on behalf of the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during the year-long famines of the war.⁹² Attacks on “Businesses” might not only have aimed at private shops, but also at companies maintaining the national railway network. Without going into further detail, it shall thus be noted that the database is not able to give a precise image of the target types of RENAMO. Hence, it cannot be deduced from it that RENAMO terrorism did not target the Mozambican government in particular.

Rather, it can be concluded from the database that RENAMO attacked a wide range of targets affecting both, private and public components of the Mozambican society. The example of communal villages adds to this conclusion that government related institutions constituted a particularly frequently hit target.

4.3. Micro perspective: the civilians under fire

In order to assess the target population on an individual basis, it would be best to know features, such as political allegiance, occupation, religion, gender or age of the terrorism victims. Unfortunately, however, there are very few statistics which give a

⁹⁰ University of Maryland, *Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables* (July 2017), p. 35. Via: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>. (15 July 2018).

⁹¹ Mentioned conclusion is confirmed when examining the categorisation of the deadliest RENAMO attack. In fact, the already mentioned slaughter of 388 patients of a hospital in the Southern Mozambican town of Homoine was categorised as an attack against “Private Citizens & Property” despite the fact that it not only aimed at the patients in particular, but also at the institution of the state-owned hospital in general.

⁹² For instance, the NGO Africa Watch notes “that between 1984 and 1987, RENAMO destroyed 25 trucks and damaged another 50 providing famine relief. 15 drivers were killed and 450 tons of food and relief supplies were stolen or destroyed.” It continues by stating that in 1988, 40 trucks were destroyed and in 1989, 37. (Africa Watch, *War, Famine & the Reform Process*, p. 123).

reliable account of such data. The previously consulted Database of the University of Maryland, for instance, does not go beyond identifying the target type and the amount of injured as well killed individuals. Weinstein seems to be the only one who published statistics on the occupation of the RENAMO victims. Hence, his findings will be discussed first. Later on, it shall be examined through the body of secondary literature whether the rebels particularly targeted government officials.

Basing himself on newspaper articles, Weinstein reaches the conclusion that “75 percent of RENAMO attacks were perpetrated against victims who could not be identified as anything other than a peasant.”⁹³ In his statistic, he differentiates in between categories, such as government workers, political officials, local leaders, teachers, religious leaders or private businessmen. If none of the categories are applicable to the terrorism target, it is simply classified as “peasant.” Hence, the declaration as peasant implies that the individual is unrelated to the government as it did not qualify as government worker or political official.

Admittedly, Weinstein’s methodology is not waterproof at all. To name a deficiency, newspapers might not be aware of the exact identity of victims or they might not even report a terrorist incident. Additionally, his statistic does not reveal whether RENAMO specifically targeted government officials. To make such affirmation, it would be necessary to weigh the amount of killed individuals related to the government against their initial number while doing the same calculation for individuals unrelated to government activities. Thus, the only affirmation which can be made through his statistics is that a majority of victims were peasants which were not related to the government.

While there is a certain insecurity surrounding Weinstein’s methodology, it is beyond any doubt that a great amount of victims were not part of the armed forces of the government. In other words, there is a consensus on the fact that most of the targets of RENAMO terrorism were civilians. Vines, for instance, writes that “RENAMO’s attacks on civilians are an important contribution to the movement’s military success.”⁹⁴ Weinstein states that the abuse of non-combatants was a “distinguishing characteristic” of the RENAMO violence.⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch confirms this impression by stating that RENAMO saw civilians as “legitimate targets.”

⁹³ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 215. Unfortunately, he does not give an indication of the affiliation of the remaining 25 percent of the victims.

⁹⁴ Vines, *From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?*, p. 90.

⁹⁵ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 230.

When selecting a target amongst civilians, the rebels did not follow a uniform pattern. There have been numerous incidents of both, indiscriminate as well as discriminate attacks on civilians.

As an illustration of indiscriminate attacks, the frequent use of landmines serves as a good example. In fact, they kill whoever steps on it. Hereby, it does not matter whether the victim was a teacher, government official or peasant. Moreover, this weapon has a psychological dimension. The sight of people who lost parts of their body due to landmines has a terrorizing effect on the fellow population as it reminds them on a daily basis of the atrocities of the civil war.

RENAMO regularly used landmines to deny civilians the access to fields, water sources and fishing ponds.⁹⁶ Moreover, they laid them at strategic locations of destroyed villages in order to render the return of the former inhabitants impossible.⁹⁷

Furthermore, they mined roads to destroy vehicles and its passengers.

In addition to landmines, RENAMO used other indiscriminate means of warfare. To cite an example, it was common practice for the insurgents to ambush cars, buses or lorries, seal them off and build a fire underneath. As a result, all persons inside would burn alive.⁹⁸ In a similar fashion, RENAMO rebels were known to machinegun buses or trains in order to kill as many passengers as possible.

However, there were several attacks discriminating amongst civilians. With regards to the looting and destruction of communal villages, for instance, secondary literature reveals with unanimity a bias towards the killing of government officials. To cite one scholar, Gersony states that RENAMO forces would typically gain intelligence through the arbitrary abduction of inhabitants before attacking a village. When assaulting the village, RENAMO was thus able to specifically look for government officials, such as the secretary of the village or the boss of the cooperative. Once they were located, they were the first ones to be mutilated or executed, often under the eyes of all inhabitants. After the elimination of state representatives, the villages were

⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Still Killing: Landmines in Southern Africa*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997, p. 69.

⁹⁷ Interestingly, it took Mozambique 23 years to remove all 171000 landmines placed on its territory. However, it needs to be pointed out that those landmines were set by RENAMO as well as FRELIMO. For more information, please refer to: Ruysen Calvin, "How we made Mozambique mine-free." In: *The Guardian* (22 September 2015). Via: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/sep/22/mozambique-land-mine-free> (13 July 2018).

⁹⁸ Hanlon, *Revolution Under Fire*, p. 288 and Hall, *The Mozambican National Resistance Movement*, p. 53.

looted and the population abducted. Alternatively, the other civilians were killed as well.⁹⁹

This practice seems to be the result of precise “guide lines.” Documents, which were allegedly captured in 1985 at a raid of a RENAMO base in central Mozambique, instruct the rebels as follows:

When destroying communal villages, a group must by all means not use ammunition. Use fire to burn the village, use knives and axes to cut the throat of FRELIMO agents and use fire arms and ammunition in case of enemy counteraction.¹⁰⁰

In cited extract, the brutal execution of FRELIMO agents is explicitly ordered. Hence, there is no doubt that they represent a primary target for FRELIMO.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, it needs to be underlined that cited instructions aimed at reducing war material consumption. If the amount of ammunition allowed for it, civilians other than FRELIMO agents would have, presumably, been aimed at more directly.

Moreover, it is to be underlined that the term “FRELIMO agents” seemed to be interpreted rather exhaustively. The American author and journalist Hilary Andersson, for instance, argues that teachers were amongst the most frequently targeted civilians as well. According to her, “400 teachers are known to have been mutilated, killed or kidnapped” while 7000 are “known to have been affected by the war.”¹⁰² Similarly, she underlines that relatively large numbers of health workers were killed “because of their profession.”¹⁰³

In short, there is no uniform pattern with regards to RENAMO attacks. There is evidence for both, indiscriminating and discriminating attacks. The overall impression points into the direction that arbitrarily selected civilians were the “default target.” In other words, if there was no individual related to the government in sight, “normal” civilians were killed. If there were government functionaries available, they were amongst the first to be murdered or mutilated. In reality, however, most of the

⁹⁹ Gersony Robert, “Summary of Mozambican Refugee Accounts of Principally Conflict-Related Experience in Mozambique”, In: *Mozambique - a tale of terror*. Edited by Hansma Tamme. Unknown location: African –European Institute, 1989, p. 65. Also, Geffray C. & Pedersen M., “Nampula en guerre.” In: *Politique Africaine* (1985), p. 37.

¹⁰⁰ Vines, *From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?*, p. 90.

¹⁰¹ To be sure, this statement is not contradictory to Weinstein’s finding that 75 % of the victims were not related to the government. Instead, the conclusion above merely says that FRELIMO agents were proportionally often affected by the terrorism. If the initial number of FRELIMO agents was less than 25% of the total population, Weinstein’s statistics as well as the findings of this paper are completely compatible.

¹⁰² Andersson Hillary, *mozambique: a war against the people*. London: MacMillan, 1992, p. 90.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

civilians simply seemed to be peasants without any link to the government. Hence, as Weinstein indicates, they absorbed great parts of the violence.

4.4. Summary

To fit the last sections in the theoretical framework, Duvall's and Stohl's third argument cannot explain South Africa's support of RENAMO. None of the three perspectives indicated that RENAMO focused on marginal groups as their primary target of terror. Rather, it targeted on the South, which constituted the stronghold of the FRELIMO government. Moreover, it attacked communal villages, which were established by the socialist state, more frequently than other targets. Lastly, it killed FRELIMO officials before every other civilian. Put in more general terms, RENAMO focused on targets closely related to the mainstream socialist society in Mozambique. If no such targets were available, which was often the case, terror was inflicted arbitrarily.

Conclusion

Initially, it was asked why South Africa, the leading state of the region, supported RENAMO's terrorism in Mozambique. To recall, the predominant academic opinion, which describes terrorism as a weapon of the weak, fails to explain the employment of terror warfare by South Africa. The scholars Duvall and Stohl, however, proposed an interesting and innovative theory which helped to give an answer to the question above.

Particularly their first argument, which states that a "process of learning" might contribute to the employment of terror, explains South Africa's military stance towards RENAMO. Namely, the failure of the conventional military intervention in Angola in 1975 and 1976 led to a shift in South Africa's policy. Instead of running into another defeat on open terrain, it was decided to covertly support foreign insurgency movements to terrorise the enemies of Apartheid. To implement this modified military strategy, the Directorate of Special Tasks was founded. According to the Gorongosa Documents, the leading members of mentioned institution subsequently developed a close relationship to RENAMO. Most importantly, this connection served to support the rebels with strategic advice, top secret information and weapons. As a result, terror in Mozambique did not dry out and the civil war dragged on until 1992.

Unlike their first consideration, Duvall's and Stohl's third argument, which emphasises that a high vulnerability of the target group enhances the efficiency of terror, failed to explain Pretoria's support of terror warfare. In fact, no evidence could be found that RENAMO expressively targeted socially marginalised groups. Quite to the opposite, if individuals linked to the dominant FRELIMO government could be found, they were amongst the first to be killed or harassed. Similarly, regions with high FRELIMO support and targets related to the government were particularly often attacked. If no targets linked to the predominant socialist government could be found, which was regularly the case, terror was inflicted arbitrarily. Hence, South Africa and RENAMO did not terrorise Mozambique because they thought that it was a particularly well-suited means of warfare to combat vulnerable individuals.

As initially announced, the second argument, which underlines that a belief in the own abilities to control the "process of terror" enhances its likelihood, was not treated in this paper. Intuitively, South Africa's close connections to the RENAMO leaders

and their dependency on weapon deliveries might have indeed led Pretoria to a strong belief in its capacity to control terrorism. However, it is doubtful whether this perception considerably contributed to the decision to support continuous terror in Mozambique. As stated before, South Africa and RENAMO were mainly interested in the destruction of an entire society. Control and de-escalation was hardly paid attention to. However, to give a proper analysis of the second argument, a detailed research is necessary.

As mentioned in the chapter on the theoretical framework, it is irrelevant that not all three arguments were either proven right or wrong. Rather, the validity of the first argument in the South African case adds an important piece to the academic field of terrorism studies. Namely, it illustrates that strong actors do not mechanically reply to military challenges by conventional warfare. Instead, they can become quick agents which adapt to new circumstances and learn of their faults. Thereby, shifts to terror warfare are no taboo at all. In short, this case study has clearly refuted the academic perception that terror is a weapon of the weak.

Moreover, this paper helped to further define the blurry lines of what Richard described as the “ghost of state terror.” In fact, it showed that academic theories, such as Duvall’s and Stohl’s first argument, are able to explain past employments of terror warfare. If their first consideration is further corroborated in other case studies, it might even serve as criteria to predict the use of terror in the future. Generally speaking, it could encourage profound examinations of past military interventions in order to detect learning processes which might, potentially, lead towards terror warfare in the future. In this way, Duvall’s and Stoll’s theory could ultimately contribute to avoid, or at least counter, terror warfare more efficiently.

As a side effect, this study was conducive to a more balanced view on the dichotomy of state and non-state terror. In fact, a more profound knowledge on the largely neglected phenomenon of state-terror helps to rationalise, but not downplay, the heated and omnipresent debates on terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors.

Despite afore mentioned contributions, Duvall’s and Stohl’s theory has certain shortcomings. Most importantly, the American scholars do not differentiate between state terror perpetrated at home and abroad. This lack of distinction might explain why their third argument failed to predict the target group of RENAMO’s terrorism. It is thinkable that, within their own borders, strong states only target vulnerable and marginalised groups to avoid antagonising powerful parts of their society. In foreign

countries, strong states might be able to target less vulnerable parts of the society as the danger of opposition is minimised through the distance as well as their relative powerlessness. To verify this theory, a new research project comparing potential target groups of South Africa's terror at home and abroad is necessary.

To name another option of further research, it may be asked whether the support of RENAMO terror can be defined as a "positive" experience for Pretoria. If this was the case, it could be analysed whether the experiences in Mozambique led to a more expansive use of terror in other battles. For instance, it could be asked whether the lessons learned in Mozambique led to the employment of terror against Apartheid enemies within South Africa. Put simply, Duvall's and Stohl's first argument could be used to explain potential domestic terror campaigns of the Apartheid government.

When answering the new questions mentioned afore, the author would probably encounter difficulties to localise primary sources. At least for this paper, the absence of documents published by RENAMO, the relative scarcity of declassified documents from Pretoria and the lack of statistics on RENAMO victims posed an analytical challenge. However, the largely analysed Gorongosa Documents as well as the great diversity of other sources, such as newspaper articles, the GTM or case studies, helped to overcome this obstacle.

Ultimately, it was possible to shed some light on the reasons behind South Africa's choice to support RENAMO's terrorism during the Mozambican Civil War. Thanks to Duvall's and Stohl's first argument, it was established that Pretoria's lessons learned in Angola led to the inclusion of RENAMO in South Africa's military portfolio. The fact that the third argument of the American scholars failed to explain South Africa's support of RENAMO shows that terror, particularly the one of strong states, remains a phenomenon difficult to grasp. Thus, in order to predict and eventually avoid a situation comparable to the one of Mozambique in 1992, further research needs to be done.

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