

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ETHNIC MINORITY INTERESTS IN A MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITY THE CASE OF THE AFRIKANERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Anthony R. Turton

The purpose of this paper is to provide a macro-political perspective concerning the various ways in which the minority Afrikaner ethnic group employed statutory instruments, in the period before and after the 1994 democratic elections, in order to maintain their ethnic identity in multi-cultural South Africa. The paper specifically examines the different statutory approaches available to minority groups intent on preserving their ethnic identity, both with and without control over state power.

Introduction

The presence of ethnic minorities within several multi-cultural states remains, even in the late twentieth century, an international phenomenon of increasing significance. The presence of ethnic minorities in a heterogeneous, unitary state need not pose a threat to the constitutional order, stability and territorial integrity of that state. Historic case studies such as Malaysia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Pakistan nevertheless (to name only a few) illustrate quite graphically that the non-accommodation of ethnic minority interests, aspirations and especially the quest for ethnic self-determination, could give rise to a myriad of problems and instability in a multi-cultural state. This is particularly true within a Third World context. The situation is often confounded when, as is the case with South Africa, ethnic aspirations converge with racial boundaries; or when ethnic awareness is enhanced by the strains of political and economic development. Historic precedents indicate that, if not sufficiently and effectively managed, problems of

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this nature could eventually threaten the very existence of the state.

Over the past few decades, a multitude of solutions to this dilemma have been drafted by politicians and academics alike. In this regard, the options presently available to those interested in ethnic accommodation, range from the more radical (e.g. partition and secession) to the more accommodative (e.g. federalism, proportional-representation electoral systems, power sharing, constitutional guarantees and consociational democratic models). In the case of South Africa, an attempt was made to solve the problem of ethnic accommodation by means of a policy of racial and ethnic segregation or, as it was better known throughout the world, Apartheid.

The former South African government's Apartheid policy encompassed several dimensions, which ranged in stature from the mundane (i.e. so-called Petty Apartheid), right up to the grandiose (i.e. so-called Grand Apartheid). The legitimacy for most of these measures was provided by an extensive statutory foundation. The Afrikaners, although numerically a minority group, and despite local and international opposition, were initially able to introduce and uphold these statutory instruments for the maintenance of their ethnic interests. This was primarily due to their position of political, economic and military dominance *vis-à-vis* the majority of other ethnic and/or racial groups in South Africa. This favoured position of the Afrikaner has all but disappeared with the onset of South Africa's transformation into a full democracy, since the early 1990s. The new democratic dispensation, which culminated in the acceptance of a representative constitution during 1996, confronted the now relatively powerless Afrikaners, concerned for their ethnic identity, with a challenge - whether to find solace in constitutionally guaranteed individual rights, or whether to search for another solution in the vaguely defined concept of a geographic ethnic state called the *Volkstaat*.

A Brief Chronological Overview

The formative years of statutory Afrikaner ethnic hegemony

For the purpose of perspective it is important to stress the fact that racial and ethnic differentiation in South Africa did not commence in 1948, with the coming to power of the National Party (NP). These issues were already apparent during the colonial era, although there was no comprehensive official policy in this regard. The basic statutory foundations for the separate treatment of the ethnic groups in South Africa were therefore mainly laid after 1910, when the Union of South Africa came into being. Legislation adopted during this time made

provision for separate living areas for Blacks and Whites, influx control from Black to White areas, job reservation and separate amenities for the various race groups (van Vuuren 1988: 109). Geographic segregation between Black and White was regulated by the 1913 Land Act and the 1936 Natives Trust and Land Act, with the Black population being allocated to so-called Native Reserves. These measures were specifically designed to counter the perceived threat posed to White interests by Black urbanisation, a development which by the early 1940s was being referred to as the *oorstroming* (inundation) of White cities by increasing numbers of rural Blacks (O'Meara 1996: 65).

Even at this early stage however, it was becoming clear that the successful implementation of segregationist measures were not practically feasible within the South African context. One of the main stumbling blocks in this regard was the *de facto* economic integration of South African society, a situation that led to the escalating rate of Black urbanisation. This situation was underscored by a huge wartime influx of Blacks to the South African industrial centres, a development which prompted the government-appointed Fagan Commission (1946-1948) to conclude that such urbanisation of the Black population had assumed a permanent and irreversible effect, and that influx control was in essence a futile exercise (O'Meara 1996: 24, 33; van Vuuren 1988: 110).

Fractures in the volk: the conservative/liberal struggle and the rise of rightwing opposition to the NP during the 1970s

In contrast to international opinion, which viewed apartheid in straightforward racist and White supremacist terms, the NP presented apartheid as an ethical policy which would grant to other ethnic groups what Afrikaners demanded for themselves, and as the only way to avoid racial and ethnic conflict in South Africa's *veelvolkige* (multi-ethnic) situation (O'Meara 1996: 66). The notion of 'separate but equal' was thus widely propagated during this period. However, as Esman (1994: 83) has indicated, the atrocities of the Second World War, the emphasis on human rights reflected in the founding Charter of the UN and an unfolding process of decolonisation in the rest of Africa, were gradually undermining these claims as a justification for NP policy. The statutory entrenchment of Afrikaner ethnic interests was therefore modified during the late 1950s and early 1960s in order to make it more morally defensible, under the new guise as the so-called policy of Separate Development (O'Meara 1996: 73; Davenport 1989: 375, 390).

Separate Development was promulgated as a 'liberating and humanising policy', which was supposed to enable each [ethnically defined] community in South Africa to manage its own affairs and to evolve its own distinctive social and

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political institutions according to the dictates of its own culture (Esman 1994: 84). This policy, which later also became known as the so-called 'Homeland' Policy or 'Grand' Apartheid, added a distinct ethno-geographic dimension to the already existing racially based Petty Apartheid legislation (van Rooyen 1994: 16).

According to O'Meara (1996: 73) the policy of Separate Development rested on the 'convenient proposition' that there was no African (Black) majority in South Africa and, in fact, that the Black population were not even South Africans, but rather belonged to a number of ethnic minority groups. The Homeland Policy's basic aim was therefore to turn Whites into a majority in South Africa by rigidly partitioning the various [Black] ethnic groups present in South Africa into specific geographic areas (i.e. making all Blacks citizens of 'independent' homelands, where they could exercise their political rights and aspirations without endangering White Afrikaner hegemony in the rest of the country) (van Rooyen 1994: 17, 66; Davenport 1989: 390; Esman 1994: 84). The designation of land in terms of this policy was overwhelmingly in favour of White, and more specifically Afrikaner, interests. Blacks, who constituted approximately 70 % of the population, were allotted only 13% of the available land.

The underlying legitimising principle in this regard was that Blacks were foreigners in White South Africa, and that they were acceptable only as 'guests' in White areas. Horowitz (1985: 199) states in this regard that exclusionary groups bent on ethnic hegemony (such as the Afrikaners) often seek to impose a homogeneous identity on the state. Members of other ethnic groups are relegated to the status of 'guests', with the implication that the rules of the 'household' are to be laid down by the 'host'.

From the viewpoint of most Black South Africans, its discriminatory nature alone doomed the Homeland Policy to certain failure. In addition, demographic and economic realities also argued against the successful implementation of the Homelands Policy - the majority of Blacks lived outside the homelands or 'Bantustans' in the urban areas of South Africa where employment opportunities were better, and had no intention of voluntarily moving to the homelands. The homelands were additionally too small, too poor in land and natural resources and too underdeveloped to support large populations. This led to the further mass [illegal] migration of Blacks to White cities in search of employment (Esman 1994: 84). In practice however, and despite widespread local and international opposition, the NP steadfastly persisted throughout the 1960s and 1970s with the Homeland Policy, ultimately resulting in the establishment of 10 independent and self-governing Black 'states', i.e., the Transkei, Ciskei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, Lebowa, Kwazulu, Qwa Qwa, Kangwane, KwaNdebele and Gazankulu (van Vuuren 1988: 111).

Despite the fact that the homelands were domestically rejected and internationally ostracised, the NP steadfastly attempted to confirm their *de facto* and *de jure* existence by a substantial body of parliamentary legislation. This legislation included the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 (which divided Blacks into territorial units according to ethnicity and terminated African elected [White] representation in Parliament), the Bantu Investment Corporation Act of 1959, the Bantu Homelands Development Corporations Act of 1965, the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 (which attempted to attach the citizenship of one or other of the Homelands to every Black in South Africa) and the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971 (which empowered the State President of South Africa to confer self-government on any of the homelands) (Davenport 1989: 390, 407, 413; van Vuuren 1988: 111).

Domestic opposition to these, and other apartheid measures, was met by further security legislation, including the Sabotage Act of 1962, which made provision for long detentions without trial, the so-called 90-Day Act, which suspended much of the legal right to *habeas corpus* as well as the Internal Security Act of 1976 (Schrire 1994: 301-2)

Contradictory to, and amidst the consolidation of, Afrikaner ethnic power through various legal and constitutional means, and the gradual modification of apartheid due to internal and external pressures, embryonic fractures had begun to appear in the apparent monolithic Afrikaner structure by the mid-1960s (O'Meara 1996: 118). These fractures, which could be viewed as the roots of rightwing opposition to the NP, represented the beginnings of what was later to become known as a *verkramptes vs. verligtes* (conservatives vs. pragmatists or enlightened persons) split in Afrikaner circles. This split has influenced Afrikaner politics up to the present day.

By the mid-1970s, it was becoming clear, even in NP circles, that the Homeland Policy was not living up to expectations and that apartheid would once again have to be modernized. The main reasons for this development was continued Black urbanization, coupled to economic interests - the slow growing White labour pool could simply not satisfy the economic demand anymore - hinting at the urgent need to adapt legislation aimed at job reservation. This situation was aggravated by successive economic recessions during the 1970s, coupled with growing Black opposition illustrated by the 1976 Soweto riots (O'Meara 1996: 175; Esman 1994: 84). By the early 1980s, modification of apartheid subsequently again became the order of the day, with P.W Botha (NP leader 1978-1989) instructing Afrikaner's that they will have to adapt to changing circumstances in order to survive in the now celebrated 1979 'Adapt-or-Die' speech.

In essence, conservative rightwing critics such as Dr Albert Hertzog (NP-MP),

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were accusing the NP during the late 1960s and early 1970s (by that time under the leadership of John Vorster), of 'selling out' White interests, bowing to international anti-racist pressure and deviating from the original Verwoerdian apartheid policies in favour of a more liberal approach. Vorster, for example, relaxed certain Petty Apartheid laws affecting segregated sport, access to hotels and the admittance of foreign Black diplomats to South Africa. These changes were viewed by the *verkrampes* as a betrayal of Afrikaner nationalism and the dilution of White supremacy (van Rooyen 1994: 18; Davenport 1989: 424; Esman 1994: 85).

Continued conservative criticism ultimately led to the establishment in 1969 of the *Herstigte Nasionale Party* (HNP) [translated literally as the Reconstituted National Party], which intended to pose a parliamentary rightwing opposition to the NP, and in 1973 of the *Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging* (AWB) [translated literally as the Afrikaner Resistance Movement], which intended to pose an extra-parliamentary opposition to the NP (Davenport 1989: 454). However, neither of these two parties was successful in wresting away Afrikaner support from the NP in significant numbers.

The NP's dominance of Afrikaner politics was not to remain unchallenged for long. By the early 1980s a new rightwing opposition party was formed, following another split in the NP. The main cause of this split was a number of constitutional reforms introduced by the NP under the leadership of PW Botha. These changes were based on the 1977 reform proposals, and were intended to remove discriminatory Petty Apartheid measures and satisfy the political aspirations of urban Blacks (O'Meara 1996: 197, 200).

Attempts to postpone the inevitable: power sharing and the 1983 constitutional reforms

PW Botha was elected NP leader in 1978 amidst an ongoing internal power struggle between that party's conservative and pragmatic wings. Botha's official position on his acceptance of office was that apartheid was a recipe for 'permanent conflict' (Davenport 1989: 438). This viewpoint was probably based on rising internal opposition to apartheid (e.g. the 1976 schools unrest), linked to an increasingly hostile attitude from abroad in the form of sanctions and boycotts (van Rooyen 1994: 23). Botha was consequently in favor of urgent political reform.

In 1979 Botha announced a so-called 12-point plan (based on an elaboration of the 1977 constitutional proposals) which made provision for power sharing between the White, Coloured and Indian sections of the South African community (i.e. the

inclusion of Coloureds and Asians into the former ‘Whites only’ parliament, albeit in separate chambers). He also committed the NP to the dismantling of racial discrimination while simultaneously re-affirming the basic principles of Grand Apartheid (van Rooyen 1994: 23; O’Meara 1996: 275). In essence the NP attempted to maintain its grip on power through power sharing. No provision was made for Blacks who, under the doctrine of Separate Development, were still expected to fulfil their political aspirations in their respective ethnic homelands (Esman 1994: 86).

Conservative opposition to these proposals finally led to a split within the NP, and the subsequent formation in 1982 of the rightwing Conservative Party (CP) under the leadership of Dr Andries Treurnicht (Davenport 1989: 453; Esman 1994: 86). This party experienced significant growth in the years to follow (approximately 31% of White electoral support) and eventually formed the ‘pivotal axis’ of rightwing opposition against democratic transformation of the South African society until 1994 (van Rooyen 1994: 63, 64). Policy-wise, the CP initially favored Afrikaner hegemony and a return to Verwoerdian Grand Apartheid, based on geographic ethnic partition. Later, in 1990, the CP changed this policy in favor of the scaled down concept of Afrikaner self-determination in a smaller White homeland (van Rooyen 1994: 65).

Rightwing opposition from the CP did not deter the NP from continuing with its reform proposals. In 1983 a referendum on power sharing and the introduction of a Tricameral Parliament was held in South Africa. The new constitution was approved by two-thirds of the White voters (van Rooyen 1994: 123; O’Meara 1996: 277). Although the 1983 constitution was rejected by most Blacks, and only marginally supported by Indian and Coloured voters, its significance was to be found in the fact that it represented the beginning of the end of hegemonic White Afrikaner rule and the dawning of an acceptance concerning the permanence of Black urbanisation and the need to accommodate their political aspirations outside of the homelands - a realisation that struck at the heart of Grand Apartheid.

Power-sharing *via* the Tricameral constitution did not bring about the expected positive results the NP had hoped for, since White hegemony continued to exist virtually unaltered (O’Meara 1996: 322). Unrest, violence, school boycotts, strikes, mass stay-aways, consumer boycotts and sabotage characterised the period following 1983 (van Rooyen 1994: 124). In 1985 the NP, in accordance with its undertaking to dismantle apartheid’s discriminatory side, continued its reform process with the repeal of statutory mechanisms such as the Mixed Marriages, Prohibition of Political Interference and Immorality Acts. These efforts were insufficient, in the sense that it was considered to be ‘window-dressing’ that did not confront the core-grievance of most Blacks - the homeland system, which denied the majority of urban Black’s South African citizenship and

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political rights.¹

The mere removal of discriminatory measures subsequently did not satisfy the political aspirations of most Blacks, resulting in increased political unrest and subsequently, the introduction of a state of emergency. These developments coincided with severe international pressure in the form of large-scale disinvestment and economic sanctions (van Rooyen 1994: 125).

In 1986 the NP finally conceded to the need for more substantive reform by repealing all of the so-called Influx Control measures, originally designed to control the migration of Blacks to urban areas (referred to by O'Meara (1996: 197) as probably the most 'hurtful' aspect of apartheid) - thus striking a significant blow to the essence of the Homeland Policy. Simultaneously, it also renewed the national state of emergency, to quell ongoing Black unrest. Under these circumstances the May 1987 general election took place. The election results indicated the impact of the NP's reform measures as reflected by a significant growth in support for the rightwing CP (official opposition). These tendencies were confirmed by a number of by-elections and the municipal elections in 1988. The NP subsequently opted for a middle-of-the-road strategy, characterised by the drastic slowing down of its reform program and a significant increase in its focus on security issues (van Rooyen 1994:132). These measures could not save the NP from a disappointing turnout in the 1989 general election which, although the NP maintained an overall majority in parliament, was described as the NP's worst electoral performance since 1948 (van Rooyen 1994: 136). The NP now enjoyed more support among English-speakers (50%) than Afrikaners (46%) (O'Meara 1996: 400) for the first time.

The growing risk that the NP government might not survive the combined effects of another rightwing electoral onslaught, economic recession, fear of wide-spread violent Black resistance and international sanctions, led to a reluctant conclusion within the NP that the policy of apartheid was no longer sustainable (van Rooyen 1994: 138; Esman 1994: 105). In view of this the NP opted for an accelerated pace of reform, which included the release of political prisoners in October 1989 and the opening up of beaches to all races. These were followed by the release of Nelson Mandela early in 1990, the formal unbanning of Black liberation organisations {notably the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and South African Communist Party (SACP) which were outlawed since 1960} and the lifting of the state of emergency. In 1991 the NP also repealed the so-called pillars of apartheid - the Group Areas Act, the

¹ See O'Meara (1996: 197) in this regard. Refer also to footnote number 17 for more detail.

Population Registration Act and the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 (Esman 1994: 106).

Rightwing opposition to the NP's reform measures was predictable, and a number of by-elections during the course of 1990/1 confirmed a continued swing to the right among White, and specifically Afrikaner, voters. The NP nevertheless remained committed to its reform program, and formal multi-party negotiations with the ANC, other liberation movements and political parties commenced in December 1991 in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The purpose of CODESA was to agree on the main principles to guide an elected Constituent Assembly in the compilation of a new South African constitution (Esman 1991: 107). During this negotiation process, the NP attempted to secure Afrikaner interests by promoting aspects such as consociational power sharing, White veto rights, guaranteed White participation in government executive organs, a strong federal system, protection of property rights and a market-orientated economy. As opposed to this, the ANC supported a majoritarian parliamentary system limited only by a bill of rights to protect individuals and minorities, a centralised government and far-reaching re-distributive economic reforms (Esman 1994: 107). The final negotiated agreement reflected several compromises. For example, the NP abandoned its demand for minority veto rights and settled for an electoral system based on proportional representation, in order to ensure minority representation in parliament. The ANC conceded a substantial measure of regional autonomy. Both parties agreed to the principle of a judicially enforceable Bill of Rights to protect personal and property rights (Esman 1994: 108).

In view of steadfast rightwing (CP) gains, the NP nevertheless seriously required a face-saving device in order to confirm its credibility and mandate against the background of the ongoing multi-party negotiation process (van Rooyen 1994: 149) that was unfolding within the context of CODESA. For this purpose, a Whites-only referendum was announced in March 1992, during which the electorate was asked to renew the NP's mandate to negotiate, on behalf of the electorate, a new non-racial constitution for South Africa. The results of this referendum were overwhelmingly in favor of the NP (68,6% of voters supported the NP's pro-negotiation viewpoint), signaling the end of the rightwing and the CP's seemingly irreversible electoral advance (van Rooyen 1994: 155).

Attenuation of the 'White Right' as an extra-legal force

The AWB peaked out as a relevant political movement with the abortive attempt to go to the last minute 'aid' of President Lucas Mangope of the Bophuthatswana homeland. This coincided with the transition of South Africa to legitimate

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democratic rule, which resulted from CODESA. During CODESA, the 'White Right' had been actively mobilising, and public displays of a militarised nature were common. This seemed to instil a sense of security within the *volk* and many joined the ranks of the khaki-clad AWB. The transition from the mobilisation phase to the offensive took the form of the deployment of a 'Boere army' into Bophuthatswana, which was soundly defeated by the security forces in its only major action. The deployment of this 'army' was influenced strongly by the threat perception held by its leaders, and was based on the mythical belief that the Afrikaner was a natural soldier simply awaiting the clarion call to action. The public killing of a number of Boer 'commando's', who were lying wounded on the road, pleading for their lives, highlighted the unfortunate incident. The gruesome detail of this killing was captured on videotape by journalists and viewed widely within South Africa and abroad. This event subsequently became the subject of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearing as well. The sight of sobbing men in blood soaked khaki uniforms, grovelling in the African dust, was far removed from the passionate and heroic images that had been conjured up during mobilisation rallies. This sent out a powerful signal to the *volk* that there were serious consequences to their mobilisation, much of which was based on the strongly emotional rhetoric of the charismatic AWB leader, Eugene Terre'Blanche. A marked attenuation of popular support resulted from this series of events. Terre'Blanche has since been found guilty of attempted murder for recently assaulting a Black labourer and has been sentenced to a term in prison. This has further discredited the AWB, as most Afrikaners are extremely sensitive to the negative connotations that naked racism has resulted in during the past. The brutal assassination of Chris Hani, the popular SACP figure, by right winger Clive Derby Lewis and Polish immigrant Janus Walus, has had a similar dampening effect. This was also the subject of a TRC hearing. In the opinion of the author, this has finally reduced the relevance of the extra-parliamentary process of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation and will probably reinstate the relevance of the statutory process that has been embraced by the *Volkstaat* Council.

Stipulations of the Volkstaat Accord

The *Volkstaat* Accord, signed in Pretoria on 23 April 1994, was agreed between the former NP government, the ANC and the Freedom Front (FF), and comprises the following stipulations.

Recognition of the previously unsigned Memorandum of Agreement that was dated 21 December 1993, which was negotiated between the moderate Viljoenfaction of the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF). This Memorandum contained a number of principles according to which deliberations on the *Volkstaat* issue were to be conducted from that stage forward. These included a common commitment

between the AVF and the ANC to a peaceful, non-racial democracy, the acceptance of economic interdependence between the peoples of South Africa, negotiations as the means to establish a *Volkstaat*, a rejection of racism and apartheid and recognition of the fact that many Afrikaners do in fact have a strong commitment to self-determination in a *Volkstaat*.

The *Volkstaat* Accord gives full recognition to Constitutional Principle XXXIV, which stipulates that the right of all South Africans to common self-determination does not preclude future constitutional provision for the right to self-determination by any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage (whether in a territorial entity or in any other recognised way). The final constitution may therefore give expression to any form of self-determination, provided that substantial support within the concerned community for such an option has been proven.

The *Volkstaat* Accord also confirmed the establishment of a *Volkstaat* Council, consisting of 20 members, appointed by the FF. The Council was intended to serve as a mechanism for the pursuance of the *Volkstaat* ideal along constitutional routes. It is therefore entitled to gather and process information regarding any matter relevant to the establishment of a *Volkstaat* (including possible boundaries, powers and functions), make feasibility and other studies relevant to the establishment of a *Volkstaat* and submit presentations and recommendations to the Constitutional Assembly.

The *Volkstaat* Accord finally includes an unmandated definition of self-determination. The definition attempts to strike a balance between the right to self-determination of a minority and the right to national self-determination in a pluralistic society. On the one hand, the popular demand, expressed by a minority community or people for self-determination, as defined in the UN Charter, is therefore recognized. On the other hand, it is stated that self-determination in a pluralistic society, should be implemented with due regard to the rights and aspirations of other citizens sharing the same territory on a permanent basis.

Major Socio-Cultural Forces

Contemporary Afrikaners as a distinct ethnic entity, but not a monolithic unity

Ethnic identity and affiliation are most often determined by ascriptive components such as a common ancestry, shared territorial loyalty, a communal language and a

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shared history². On the basis of these components, it would seem to be a relatively straightforward exercise to define the ideal-type Afrikaner (the word 'Afrikaner' literally means 'African' or 'from Africa' which has given rise to the notion of the so-called 'White tribe of Africa') as someone who is a descendant of 17th & 18th century Dutch, French and/or German settlers, who speaks the Afrikaans language, who shares a number of distinct historical and cultural traits and who considers him/herself as an inhabitant of Africa (i.e. who owes his/her loyalty not to Europe but to the African continent). According to Gurr (1993: 3), the key to identifying ethnic groups is not to be found exclusively in terms of particular traits, but also in the presence of a shared perception that the defining traits, whatever they may be, set the group apart. In this regard, Viljoen (1996: 5) emphasises the existence of a unique Afrikaner ethnic identity when he refers to the Afrikaner's, "strongly developed sense of togetherness because of history and heritage". The essence of Afrikaner ethnic identity cannot be fully understood and analysed without a cursory reference to the term *volk*.

Generally speaking, the term *volk* is often translated into English as 'ethnic group', 'people' or 'nation'. However, within the context of defining the Afrikaner's ethnic identity, this term additionally conveys both a sense of ethnic exclusivity and organic unity, elements absent in what O'Meara (1996: xxi) refers to as, "these paler English terms". Central to this concept is the notion that the individual Afrikaner's identity, interests and existence is subordinate to a larger organic whole (the *volk*). In terms of this concept, individuals can realise their 'true' selves and social potential only against the broader background of identification with, and service to, the larger entity or *volk* (O'Meara 1996: 41; Alden 1996: 14). In the case of the Afrikaners, the question of the *volk's* boundaries has for long been influenced, and to a large extent clouded, by exclusive ascription in the form of the intertwined issues of race and ethnocentrism.³ Ethnocentrism was clearly visible among early Afrikaner nationalists when they came to power in 1948, being particularly reflected in the

² Ascription is, according to Horowitz (1985: 52), quite inseparable from the concept of ethnicity and, as a matter of fact, "ethnic membership is typically not chosen but given" (Horowitz 1985: 56). It should therefore be expected that any definition of an Afrikaner would include several elements of ascription, i.e. represented by linguistic, historical and/or cultural prerequisites.

³ Ethnocentrism occurs when the above-mentioned common denominators or ascriptive elements of ethnic identity are perceived by a people in what van Rooyen (1994: 36) refers to as a "chauvinistic and emotional" way. In essence the term therefore denotes attitudes supposing the superiority of one's own ethnic or racial group (and, by implication, other groups as different and inferior).

notion that Afrikaners were a superior race who had the right to dominate the [inferior] Black inhabitants of South Africa (van Rooyen 1994: 37). These ethnocentric influences were subsequently embodied in various pieces of apartheid legislation, aimed as they were at ensuring continued Afrikaner hegemony over the Black groups in South Africa.

Due to ethnocentric influences, membership of the Afrikaner *volk* has been defined - and statutorily enforced since 1948 - in strict racial terms. Under these conditions, only Whites that fitted the ascriptive norms associated with being an Afrikaner, were allowed membership of the *volk*. This effectively excluded South Africans of mixed race origin (the so-called 'Coloureds' or 'Brown Afrikaners') who, apart from their racial background, shared with their White counterparts, several prominent Afrikaner characteristics such as language, custom and religion. Ironically, 'Brown Afrikaners' are numerically almost as strong as 'White Afrikaners'. These people are currently being wooed by the NP, but the hurt caused by decades of Apartheid, along with the vivid memory of the NP tinkering with the Judiciary in order to remove the franchise that these people used to enjoy, is not easily forgotten. These apparent differences pertaining to membership of the *volk*, which gave rise to the very notion of a so-called Brown Afrikaner in the first place, hint at the existence of a deeper split within White Afrikaner ranks. This split has persistently shaped Afrikaner socio-political dynamics up to the present day, and is often referred to by the Afrikaans term of *tweespalt* (discord within the *volk*).

Though *volkseenheid* (unity within the ranks of the *volk*) has been the ideal of many an Afrikaner nationalist, most observers of Afrikaner history would agree that for the largest part of the Afrikaner people's existence, this would seem to remain an unattainable goal. As a matter of fact, as O'Meara (1996: 84) illustrates, Afrikaners have virtually always been divided, with clashes occurring not necessarily about bottom-line issues (e.g. the promotion of Afrikaner interests), but about the preferred tactics, policies and statutory options with which best to promote Afrikaner interests⁴.

⁴ Such discord and internal divisions are characteristic of many ethnic groups, and is certainly not unique to Afrikaners. According to Esman,

the beginning of wisdom for observers and analysts of ethnic conflict is to recognise that ethnic communities are seldom monolithic actors ... [B]ottom-line issues may unite all factions ...[but] ... beyond these areas of consensus, organised factions within ethnic communities may clash over goals as well as tactics. (Esman 1994: 225)

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These clashes between Afrikaners have given rise to an ongoing and sometimes intense *broedertwis* (quarrel between brothers) within the ranks of the *volk*, often referred to as a struggle between the so-called *verligtes* and *verkrampes* (pragmatists/enlightened and conservatives)⁵. Since the inception of Afrikaner nationalism, this *broedertwis* (quarrel between brothers) has revolved around the primary question of who (pragmatists or conservatives) were the legitimate spokespersons for the *volk*, which individuals constituted the *volk* and most importantly, which group's policies/party was best at serving the interests of the *volk*. Thus, though the Afrikaners could be considered a distinct ethnic minority, a definite fracture has developed in the *volk's* sense of unity. In present times, this fracture is reflected in the existence of two major political groupings, both claiming to represent Afrikaner interests. Within this set-up, the NP, led by FW de Klerk's successor Martinus van Schalkwyk, plays the role of the pragmatists. The role of the conservatives is filled by a number of rightwing parties, of which the most prominent is the FF, led by General Constand Viljoen. These two parties differ sharply in terms of the statutory options they favour for the advancement of Afrikaner ethnic interests. In addition, these differences could be related directly to the primordial driving forces of Afrikaner ethnicity and the various parties' diverging opinions on how best to deal with these forces.

The continuance of the primordial driving forces of Afrikaner ethnicity, when evaluated within a historic-chronological context, means that both the *verligte* and the *verkrampte* wings of Afrikaner politics were, for a long time, influenced and shaped by virtually identical driving forces. Although a myriad of such driving forces could probably be identified during the course of an in-depth analysis of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation, this paper will concentrate on the most primordial, essential and relevant of them all, namely the dimension of fear or, more aptly put, threat perceptions⁶. In this regard, most international observers of ethnic

⁵ As Horowitz (1985: 53-54) indicates, the ascriptive character of ethnic identification is often the one stumbling block which could seriously hamper interethnic compromise in a divided society, due to the fact that those within an ethnic group who might consider some form of compromising settlement, "may be treated with the bitter contempt reserved for brothers who betray a cause". This observation is also reflected in recent Afrikaner history, where democratic reforms initiated by the NP were at some stages seriously threatened by opposition from Afrikaner rightwing parties such as the CP and the AWB, who on more than one occasion accused the reforming NP of being *verraaiers* (traitors) to the *volk*.

⁶ For more detail of the role of threat perceptions, refer to subsequent work that the author has done on this topic (Turton, 1998a).

movements concur that, based primarily on comparative analysis, a causal relationship would seem to exist between an ethnic group's mobilisation and struggle for power on the one hand and the fear of being dominated, subordinated or swamped to the verge of extinction as an ethnic group on the other (Horowitz 1985: 187; Esman 1994: 244). These perceptions of threat are furthermore linked to, and reflective of, the demographic insecurity of the ethnic group in question (Horowitz 1985: 177). In this respect, Afrikaners are no exception having always been a relatively small demographic minority when measured against the broader South African [Black] population (White Afrikaners number approximately 2,5 million out of a total South African population of about 38 million).

The causal relationship between ethnic mobilisation, demographic insecurity and threat is clearly identifiable in relation to the statutory mechanisms employed by Afrikaners (both before and after apartheid) to ensure their ethnic survival.⁷ In order to gain access to such statutory mechanisms, the Afrikaners of 1948 (under the guidance of the NP) foresaw a necessity to obtain control over state power and entrench their ethnic identity with the aid of hegemonic statutory measures. Whereas the NP has progressively loosened itself from the more racist, hegemonic and ethnically-orientated interpretations of these driving forces since the late 1970s, the *verkrampes* (represented by a number of rightwing organisations) still appear to be heavily under the ethnic (albeit not racist) spell these driving forces may cast. In this regard Gen. Constand Viljoen (1996: 6-7) of the FF made the remark that,

[T]he Afrikaner people find themselves in 1996 in a position of a minority, subjected to a majority, which is clearly willing to enforce its majority position, without any reference to a legitimate form of group rights that would ease the apprehensions of the minority group, who sees itself as a distinct formation in its own right ... and who feels strongly about measures to retain its identity.

⁷ The root origins of Afrikaner anxieties are entrenched in more than 300 years of Afrikaner history and the Afrikaner psyche, among others characterised by ongoing, often violent conflict with the Black population (the so-called *Swart gevaar* - Black danger), anti-colonial wars against the British and the active Anglicisation policies of successive British rulers (the so-called *Khaki gevaar* - British danger), fear of Communist expansion (the so-called *Rooi gevaar* - Red danger) and, during the latter years of NP rule, the so-called Total Onslaught against South Africa. During the 1980s the NP, under the leadership of PW Botha, purposefully exploited the 'Total Onslaught' to "generate a war psychosis and consolidate support for the regime" (O'Meara, 1996: 266).

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In addition, the FF is of the opinion that the former apartheid laws (though presently repudiated by this party) had once produced a 'sense of security' within the Afrikaner *volk*. The absence of this legislation has furthermore left the Afrikaner disempowered and in need of some special measures to ensure their survival (Viljoen 1996: 8). Gen. Viljoen's insistence on the need for measures to retain the Afrikaner's minority identity is significant, in that it emphasises the fact that Afrikaner's seem to have grown accustomed to the use of some form of assurance, as the primary method with which to ensure their continued survival in a plural society. Such assurances against *volksvreemde* threats have been historically pursued within the Afrikaner community mainly via statutory instruments⁸.

Afrikaners' use of statutory instruments as the primary means for ensuring their ethnic survival

According to Horowitz (1985: 190), times of transition (such as that experienced by Afrikaners in 1948 and again in 1994) are often times of ethnic tension and apprehensions. Thus, in spite of democratisation - or perhaps because of it - Afrikaner apprehensions and threat perceptions that were present in 1948 are again coming to the fore. Very often, one of the earliest warning signs of this impending ethnic tension is an escalating language struggle⁹. This emphasis on the

⁸ In terms of the *volk* notion, issues, territory, ideas, customs, language, symbols etc., central to the Afrikaner's existence are considered as *volkseie* (the essence/own of the *volk*) or *volkseïendom* (property of the *volk*). These essentials should be protected against hostile threats bent on the *volk's* destruction. In addition, everything outside of the *volk*, or whatever elements that posed a threat to the ethnically defined interests of the *volk*, was to be considered as *volksvreemd* (foreign to the *volk*), and should subsequently be resisted at all costs.

⁹ The protection and advancement of the Afrikaans language has been identified as perhaps the most important *raison d'être* for the NP's existence and activities during the early decades of this century (O'Meara 1996: 125). The language issue has recently come to the fore again, this time over the status that Afrikaans used to have within the electronic media. Afrikaans programming has currently been downgraded to a short transmission time daily, on a channel that is shared with other indigenous languages that are considered, by many Afrikaners, to be of lesser importance, in the overall linguistic fabric of South Africa. This is a far cry from the previous unassailable hegemonic position that Afrikaans held within the electronic media. This is being viewed by some as hard evidence of a conspiracy to destroy the *volk*.

role of language within the context of ethnic mobilisation, may be ascribed to the fact that the use of a language in everyday life, is very often perceived as being reflective of the status and respect accorded to the community it represents. Subsequently, in an ethnically divided society, the relative status of languages can either symbolise ethnic equality, respect and accommodation, or it may become a symbol of controversy, domination and subordination (Esman 1994: 219). When viewed from this perspective, the linguistic struggle of an ethnic minority may therefore actually suggest the possible onset of a more comprehensive struggle for collective ethnic recognition. This happens wherever an ethnic minority believes that not only its language, but in fact its overall status, is being denigrated and threatened by those in authority. Under such circumstances, which are certainly descriptive of the position of most Afrikaners before the NP's take-over in 1948, and increasingly so of many post-apartheid rightwing Afrikaners, the threatened ethnic minority might become restless due to the fact that "the state is not symbolically aligned with those who feel threatened" (Horowitz 1985: 219). Consequently, as was the case with Afrikaners in 1948 - as well as contemporary far-right extremist Afrikaner organisations - control of the state, and particularly its legislative agencies, very often becomes one of the 'main prizes' of ethnic mobilisation (Horowitz 1985: 5 & 187; Alden 1996: 14; Esman 1994: 216)¹⁰.

According to international tendencies, most ethnic movements operating on the basis of a threat perception, tend to produce an ideology, the twin purpose of which is to facilitate mobilisation of the ethnic polity, and to define its collective identity (Esman 1994: 245; Horowitz 1985: 201). Accordingly, the Afrikaners of 1948 also invented an ideology - Apartheid - which was supposed to act as a panacea to allay their collective ethnic fears, and which was embodied in an array of apartheid legislation¹¹. Thus, when the NP assumed power in 1948, it was determined to shape South African society, *via* statutory measures, in the image of its doctrine of White supremacy, racial domination, ethnic segregation and

¹⁰ In tandem to this opinion, O'Meara (1996: 52) postulates that for the Afrikaners after 1948, politics was not so much about position, power or even programs, but that the central issue at stake revolved around the basic question of the survival of the Afrikaans language and *volk*. O'Meara (1996: 136) also quotes Dr H.F Verwoerd (NP leader 1958-1966) in this regard, who as early as 1939 stated that the most effective instrument with which to 'rescue' Afrikaners was that of state power.

¹¹ The NP in 1948 was no exception to this rule. Alden (1996: 15) states in this regard that, "... [the NP] wasted little time in turning the hard-fought victory into legislative action ... [pushing] through what were to become the pillars of apartheid".

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Afrikaner hegemony. Subsequently, this party applied its command over state power to implement policies of Exclusion, Subordination and Preference *vis-à-vis* the majority of South Africa's Black population¹². More specifically, the NP introduced statutory instruments aimed at empowering Afrikaners socially and economically, allaying Afrikaner threat perceptions and ensuring physical safety and legally defining the Afrikaner's separate ethnic identity and regulating inter-ethnic interaction. In short these measures were aimed at creating Afrikaner hegemony in South Africa.

The measures aimed to empower Afrikaners socially and economically. According to Esman (1994: 227, 229), economic values may be vital to mobilised and competing ethnic communities. These include access to higher education, employment opportunities and control of economic assets such as land and capital. When an ethnic group gains control of the state, important economic assets are therefore soon transferred to members of that community. After 1948 the NP was no exception to this rule. Various pieces of Apartheid legislation introduced by the NP during the early part of its reign, were aimed at securing the Afrikaner's economic position¹³ *vis-à-vis*, and at the cost of, other (Black) ethnic groups (e.g. the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 which reserved certain types of work for persons of certain racial groups - see van Rooyen 1994: 34 and Posen 1991: 8)¹⁴.

¹² Policies of preference refer to statutory measures aimed at benefiting only one ethnic community - e.g. employment opportunities, education and contracts (Horowitz 1985: 197; Esman 1994: 221 -2).

¹³ One example of this is the way that legislation began favoring white farmers regarding water allocation. Conley (1997:23) notes that "most water schemes were built to support South Africa's economically and politically influential entrepreneurial sector ... while the underdeveloped [Black] sector, which was largely rural, grew immensely but had fewer services". This is a process known as 'resource capture' by which a strong group increases its power. Refer to Turton (1998b) for more details.

¹⁴ However, it is ironic to note that the NP's policies aimed at the socio-economic upliftment of Blacks through increased spending on education, housing and welfare services during the 1970s and 1980s, largely eroded the remaining socio-economic privileges associated with being White in South Africa. Whites at the lower end of the economic scale were affected the most severely, leading to a rise in support for rightwing parties among these classes because of a belief that reactive rightwing policies, if implemented, would ensure a return to Afrikaner privileges (van Rooyen 1994: 34).

The measures also aimed to allay Afrikaner fears, apprehensions and threat perceptions to ensure physical ethnic survival. Early resistance to apartheid legislation was reacted to by the NP with legislation such as the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Public Safety Act of 1953 (Schiere 1994: 300-1). These were followed up through the years by even more repressive and draconian security legislation, including States of Emergency during the late 1980s, all aimed at dealing with, and suppressing, the ever growing Black resistance to Afrikaner hegemony.

A further aim was to legally define the Afrikaner's separate ethnic identity, subordinate other ethnic groups and regulate all forms of inter-ethnic and inter-racial interaction. In support of this goal, the principal provisions of the apartheid legislation of the 1950s (later to be known as 'Petty' Apartheid) made provision that all South Africans were to be assigned to a racial and/or ethnic category (Population Registration Act of 1950). Any form of interracial marriage or sexual liaison between races was proscribed and criminalised by means of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950. Racial segregation in public facilities and amenities was strictly enforced via the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953. Separate residential areas for each racial category were established and legal provision was made for forced removals and resettlement by means of the Group Areas Act of 1950. Pass laws and influx control measures were strengthened, requiring all Blacks outside reservations to carry passes or reference books, the objective being to limit Blacks in the urban areas to those whose labour was needed by the White South African economy in terms of the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952 (Esman 1994: 83; O'Meara 1996: 69; Alden 1996: 15 and van Vuuren 1988: 111.)

A geographical dimension was also added. As if to confirm the Afrikaners' position of hegemony, the above-mentioned 'Petty' Apartheid legislation was augmented in the late 1950s by a policy of so-called Separate Development. This was, in the NP jargon of the time, supposed to enable each (ethnically defined) community in South Africa to manage its own affairs and to develop its own social and political institutions according to the dictates of its distinctive (ethnic) culture (Esman 1994: 84). This policy, which later also became known as the so-called 'Homeland' Policy or 'Grand' Apartheid, added a distinct ethno-geographic dimension to the already existing racially based Petty Apartheid legislation (van Rooyen 1994: 16)¹⁵

¹⁵ According to O'Meara (1996: 73) the policy of Separate Development rested on the "convenient proposition" that there was no Black majority in South Africa and, in fact, that the Black population were not even South Africans, but rather belonged to a number of ethnic minority groups. The Homeland policy's basic

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At one stage there was a futile and superficial attempt at power sharing. By the late 1970s, it was already becoming clear that the Homelands Policy was fast becoming an immense and unmanageable bureaucratic, administrative and financial nightmare for the NP government. In addition, practical factors such as continued Black urbanisation into South Africa's 'White' areas was continuously undermining the policy's effective implementation. The rise of both domestic and international opposition to apartheid in general, was putting increasing pressure on the NP government to abandon this policy (van Rooyen 1994: 23). Under these circumstances, NP leader PW Botha came to the conclusion that apartheid was a recipe for 'permanent conflict' (Davenport 1989: 438). Botha thus initiated a reform process which saw the implementation of a power-sharing arrangement between the White, Coloured and Indian sections of the South African community (i.e. the inclusion of Coloureds and Asians into the former 'Whites only' parliament, albeit in separate chambers). These reform measures notwithstanding, the NP was at that stage clearly not willing to abandon the Afrikaner's position of ethnic hegemony.¹⁶ The period following 1983 (adoption of the Tricameral Constitution) was subsequently followed by continued unrest, violence, school boycotts, strikes, mass stay-aways, consumer boycotts and sabotage (van Rooyen 1994: 124). This forced the NP in 1985 to repeal statutory apartheid mechanisms such as the Mixed Marriages, Prohibition of Political Interference and Immorality Acts. These efforts were insufficient, in that they were considered to be 'window-dressing' that did not confront the core-grievance of most South African Blacks - the homeland system - which denied the majority of urban Blacks South African citizenship and political rights.¹⁷

aim was therefore to turn Whites into a hegemonic majority in South Africa by rigidly partitioning the various [Black] ethnic groups present in South Africa into specific geographic areas (i.e. making all Blacks citizens of 'independent' homelands, where they could exercise their political rights and aspirations without endangering White Afrikaner hegemony in the rest of the country) (van Rooyen 1994: 17, 66; Davenport 1989: 390; Esman 1994: 84).

¹⁶ According to van Rooyen (1994: 23) and O'Meara (1996: 275, 322), the NP was merely attempting to maintain its grip on power through selective power sharing with groups who [numerically] posed no threat to Afrikaner interests. This observation is attested to by the fact that NP reforms made no provision for the Black majority who, under the re-affirmed doctrine of Separate Development, were still expected to fulfil their political aspirations in their respective ethnic homelands (Esman 1994: 86).

¹⁷ O'Meara states in this regard that,

Eventually the process entailed genuine democratic reform and the loss of political power. The growing risk that the NP government might not survive another rightwing electoral onslaught due to its reform initiatives, coupled to the combined effects of an economic recession, the growing fear of wide-spread violent Black resistance and international sanctions, led to a reluctant conclusion within the NP by the late 1980s that the security, economic and moral costs of maintaining apartheid (in whatever humanized or modernized form) were no longer sustainable (van Rooyen 1994: 138; Esman 1994: 105). In view of this the NP opted for an accelerated pace of reform, which included the release of political prisoners in October 1989. The release of Nelson Mandela early in 1990, the formal unbanning of Black liberation organizations and the lifting of the state of emergency followed these reforms. In 1991 the NP also repealed the so-called pillars of apartheid - the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 (Esman 1994: 106). In December 1991, the NP initiated formal multi-party negotiations with the ANC, other liberation movements and political parties (CODESA), which ultimately led to the adoption of a democratic interim constitution in 1993 and a democratic general election in 1994.

The unfolding of political processes in South Africa since the NP's historic 1948 electoral victory has left the Afrikaner with progressively less political power. This culminated in 1994, with a negotiated democratic settlement, that saw the Afrikaners voluntarily handing over their control of state power, to a democratically elected Black majority government. This voluntary surrender of power was historically unprecedented, so no known model could be followed. As such there were no guarantees as to how things would ultimately turn out. This state of affairs created several uncertainties among many Afrikaners (particularly within the rightwing), due to the fact that all of the statutory entrenchment's which safeguarded their ethnic interests and privileges during the apartheid era, had either fallen completely away, or were being eroded by democratic transformation. This also hints at the deep belief that Afrikaners have in the statutory process – a theme that is consistent throughout this paper. New threats to the Afrikaners' ethnic identity and interests are additionally emerging under the

real Black 'hurt' did not stem from Africans being confined to second-rate segregated park benches. Rather the growing rage of the urban Black youth was provoked by ... the absurd 'differentiation' dogma which held that they were not South Africans but 'nationals' of one or other 'homeland' which few Blacks had ever seen. (O'Meara 1996: 197)

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new political dispensation in the shape of transformation-related issues such as land redistribution, language policy, the TRC and affirmative action. These are threats against which Afrikaners seem relatively powerless when compared to their previous position of statutory hegemony.

As will be indicated below, and as Afrikaners are experiencing at this moment, hegemony over state power has after all proved not to be the only option available for the maintenance of ethnic interests in a multi-cultural society. According to Horowitz (1985: 197), at least two alternatives (apart from hegemony) are additionally available to such communities in the form of inclusion and autonomy.

Mechanisms based on the principle of statutory inclusion

The one political alternative available to ethnic communities or parties not supportive of ethnic hegemony is that of inclusion on a non-discriminatory basis in the body politic. According to Esman (1994: 224-5), two alternatives can be distinguished with reference to this option. The first is inclusion on an individual basis of members of a specific ethnic community to participate fully and equally in the institutions of government and society. As will be seen later, the option of inclusion on an individual, non-discriminatory basis is the alternative presently being pursued by the NP. The second alternative is the inclusion of ethnic minorities as collectivities (i.e. the state is viewed not as an aggregation of individuals, but as a federation of coexisting ethnic communities). Arrangements in this regard (collective inclusivity) may include power-sharing measures and veto powers over vital interests of any participating community - such as those attempted by the NP during its reform initiatives of the 1980s and also unsuccessfully during the CODESA negotiations.

After having tried to maintain Afrikaner ethnic hegemony by means of apartheid legislation, Separate Development and superficial power-sharing arrangements, the NP, since the 1994 elections, seem to have abandoned the idea of a hegemonic Afrikaner *volk* defined in terms of exclusivist race and/or ethnic criteria altogether, in favour of Afrikaner interests defined and protected within a broader and all-inclusive South African nation grounded on a democratic constitution. More specifically, the NP (which does not consider itself to be an exclusive Afrikaner party anymore) presently holds the belief that the Afrikaner is part and parcel of a unified South Africa. For the NP, the continued existence and maintenance of Afrikaner ethnic interests (e.g. language, education, land rights etc.) is to be found in constitutionally guaranteed individual rights, an electoral system based on proportional representation and a system of government based on delegating certain legislative powers to the regions/provinces. Subsequently, the NP is presently attempting to expand its constituency to a membership that will

include Blacks, Coloureds and Indians. The ultimate aim of this transformation process is for the NP to take the lead in the formation of a new opposition movement that (so it is hoped in NP circles) will be able to oust the ruling ANC government in the 1999 general elections. This process has been dealt a severe blow recently with the ousting of Roelf Meyer – the crown prince of CODESA – due to his increasingly progressive thoughts and influence regarding transformation. The acceptability and effectiveness of statutory inclusion as a means to safeguard ethnic interests in a divided society such as South Africa thus remains to be seen. Even at this stage it is obvious that the inclusive approach of the NP is definitely not acceptable to many ethnic-conscious Afrikaners. These individuals, who are mainly supportive of several Afrikaner rightwing movements such as the FF, are subsequently opting to pursue their ethnic safeguards by means of statutory mechanisms aimed at an as yet undefined form of ethnic autonomy.

Mechanisms based on the principle of statutory autonomy

Where hegemony is not feasible, ethnic communities can, according to international practice, opt for autonomy. Three further options may be identified in this regard: separation/secession (political independence and hegemony in a new state); territorial autonomy (self-determination for a geographically concentrated ethnic community in a federal relationship that preserves the boundaries of the state and allows for the existence of two identities, regional and national); and cultural autonomy (where an ethnic minority is not geographically concentrated). This last form of autonomy allows for such communities to operate their own institutions - such as schools - in their own language and tradition (Esman 1994: 224).

A combination of the last two options is what the contemporary Afrikaner rightwing presently seem to be aiming for. The vast majority of contemporary rightwing Afrikaners presently support the idea that the Afrikaner could only maintain its identity if it were to remain a separate ethnic entity within a unified South Africa. In contrast to the 1980s and early 1990s, when some elements within the Afrikaner rightwing (notably the CP) struggled to keep the state and state power exclusively in the hands of the Afrikaner, the contemporary rightwing, under the sobering influence of democratisation and represented by Gen. Constand Viljoen's FF, have re-orientated and scaled-down its policies in favour of ethnically-defined cultural and/or geographic self-determination in a so-called *Volkstaat* (Afrikaner fatherland). Most sectors of the Afrikaner rightwing have also made serious efforts to free themselves and the notion of self-determination from their (in a South African context) racist and oppressive connotations - hence the emphasis on ethnicity, rather than race in most rightwing

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rhetoric¹⁸.

Due to the fact that there is presently no area in which a claim for geographic Afrikaner self-determination can be based (Afrikaners are dispersed throughout South Africa to such an extent that no specific area of exclusive Afrikaner settlement can be identified without comprehensive and extremely creative gerrymandering), the FF, which claims to represent approximately 37,5% of registered Afrikaner voters, is presently promoting the idea of cultural self-determination at local government level within concentrated Afrikaner communities. In this regard, Viljoen (1996: 8) identifies recognition of the following cultural rights as essential for the survival of Afrikaners as a group: language rights; community orientated education in the mother tongue; autonomy in affairs affecting Afrikaner cultural identity and heritage; own organisations and associations; and territorial autonomy with control over own affairs in negotiated areas where majority occupation by Afrikaners could be established through their own initiatives.

For the purposes of furthering these Afrikaner ethnic claims, a statutory council, the so-called *Volkstaat* Council, is conducting ongoing research concerning this topic. The existence and ongoing activities of the *Volkstaat* Council point to the

¹⁸ The majority of rightwing Afrikaners (at present represented in Parliament by the FF) would seem to have committed themselves to the idea of an ethnically defined Afrikaner *volk*, albeit a *volk* without the historical ethnocentrist and racist baggage, and committed to the internationally recognised concept of cultural and/or territorial ethnic self-determination. Only a small minority of far-rightwing orientated Afrikaners, represented by organisations such as the AWB and the Boerestaat Party, still cling to the old racially [i.e. White] defined version of the Afrikaner *volk*, and steadfastly attempt to argue for the restoration of the 19th century *Boere Republics* inhabited only by *real* Afrikaners (or *Boere*, as they sometimes refer to themselves in exclusivist terms). This gave rise to the debate concerning 'Boer' (with a capital letter), vs. 'boer' (with a small letter). The other interesting aspect is that regarding symbols. The South Africa flag, which was adopted in 1910, and which was made up of the Union Jack alongside the flags of the previously independent *Boere Republics*, was openly rejected by so called true '*Boere*'. In an apparent reversal of this sentiment, the 'new' flag of the democratic South Africa is rejected by true '*Boere*' who ironically now claim the old 1910 flag as one of their symbols, often brandished in public during major sporting events. The only other viable rightwing party, though having lost most of its support to the FF, is the CP. While it is presently committed to the notion of a *Volkstaat*, the CP still perceive this concept as based on the 19th century nation-state to which only White Afrikaners will have access.

fact that the FF's promotion of both geographical and cultural self-determination remains firmly footed on a statutory foundation. This foundation is made up of: the 1994 *Volkstaat* Accord, negotiated bilaterally between the ANC and FF, in which agreement was reached that the principles of a non-racial democracy and the concept of Afrikaner self-determination were not irreconcilable; Interim Constitutional Principle 34, which states that South Africa's final constitution may give expression to any form of self-determination provided there is substantial proven support within the community concerned; Act 30 of 1994, the *Volkstaat* Council Act, which provides for the establishment of a *Volkstaat* Council, tasked to investigate and research all issues pertaining to the establishment of an Afrikaner *Volkstaat* as explained above.

Conclusion

For over forty years, since the inception of Apartheid in 1948, Afrikaners have engaged in an often arduous, but ultimately futile endeavour to safeguard their ethnic interests. In this endeavour, they have widely used the concept of statutory ethnic hegemony - Petty Apartheid's racial and ethnic segregation; Grand Apartheid's superficial geographic ethnic partition; and the 1983 constitution's farcical attempt at selective ethnic power sharing. The Afrikaners' position of dominance over South African politics vanished completely in 1994 with the onset of a democratic dispensation and the introduction of the notion of a single, united South African 'rainbow' nation. It would be short-sighted, even politically naive, to hold the opinion that the Afrikaners' loss of political power has simultaneously coincided with the removal of Afrikaner ethnicity as a significant and influential element in the South African body politic.

The continued significance of Afrikaner ethnicity is often attributed to the Afrikaners' (and specifically the Afrikaner rightwing's) dubious status as the 'joker' in the democratic pack of cards. This is due to the assessment that Afrikaners, with their claimed access to military means and confirmed economic power, can either seriously disrupt the peaceful democratisation process, or alternatively assist to consolidate it (Legum 1997). Several divergent elements will probably determine the way in which the future will eventually unfold for Afrikaners as far as these two options are concerned. At this point in time however, it can be argued with a high degree of probability, that the future role of the Afrikaner as either a 'spoiler' or 'contributor', will be determined by the way in which Afrikaner ethnic aspirations, no longer bound by any racist, ethnocentrist or hegemonic entrapments, are to be accommodated and managed in the medium to longer term within a democratic dispensation.

The above projection is based on three broad determinants. First, the evolution of

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Afrikaner history, which shows a highly developed sense of ethnic awareness and identity among Afrikaners, indicates that significant numbers of them will continue, against the background of a united South Africa, to perceive politics from an ethnic perspective. Second, international observations, which indicate that fear and threat perceptions are often the most important causes of ethnic mobilisation, especially in a divided society such as South Africa, where ethnic affiliations might provide a sense of security and, “protection against neglect of one’s interests by strangers” during periods of transformation (Horowitz 1994: 49). Third, the South African road to democratic consolidation, which seems to be strewn with stumbling blocks such as rampant crime, affirmative action, land reform and educational transformation, remains uncertain and unpredictable from an Afrikaner viewpoint. Most of these are persistently fuelling minority fears thus reviving the spectre of renewed ethnic mobilisation.

In the final analysis, it is essential to take note of the fact that the possibility of escalating Afrikaner ethnic awareness should not automatically give rise to alarmist pessimism concerning the overall viability of South Africa’s democratisation process. The FF, which is represented in the South African parliament, has committed itself to the democratic process and is presently following an approach of constructive engagement and ongoing consultation with the ANC government. In addition (as has been noted by various international observers), several methods do exist for the accommodation and constructive management of ethnic conflict within a democratic context (Gurr 1993: 290). The responsibility in this regard for accommodating and managing Afrikaner ethnicity in a democratic South Africa has been embodied in two options, both of which are entrenched in solid statutory principles, namely autonomy (represented by the *Volkstaat* Raad) and inclusion (guaranteed individual rights, represented by the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, a Human Rights Commission and the Constitutional Court). At this point in time, the levels of support and confidence among Afrikaners for both of these options seem to be precariously balanced, with conventional wisdom still being uncertain as to whether the functioning of these mechanisms will bring about the required peace of mind regarding Afrikaner interests in the long term or whether these statutory mechanisms might ultimately evolve into nothing more than mere ‘toy-telephones’, perceived by the owners thereof as impotent, insufficient and/or ineffective instruments when employed for the purposes of safeguarding their ethnic interests.

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