

Figure 2: Environmental Scarcity and Urbanization in South Africa

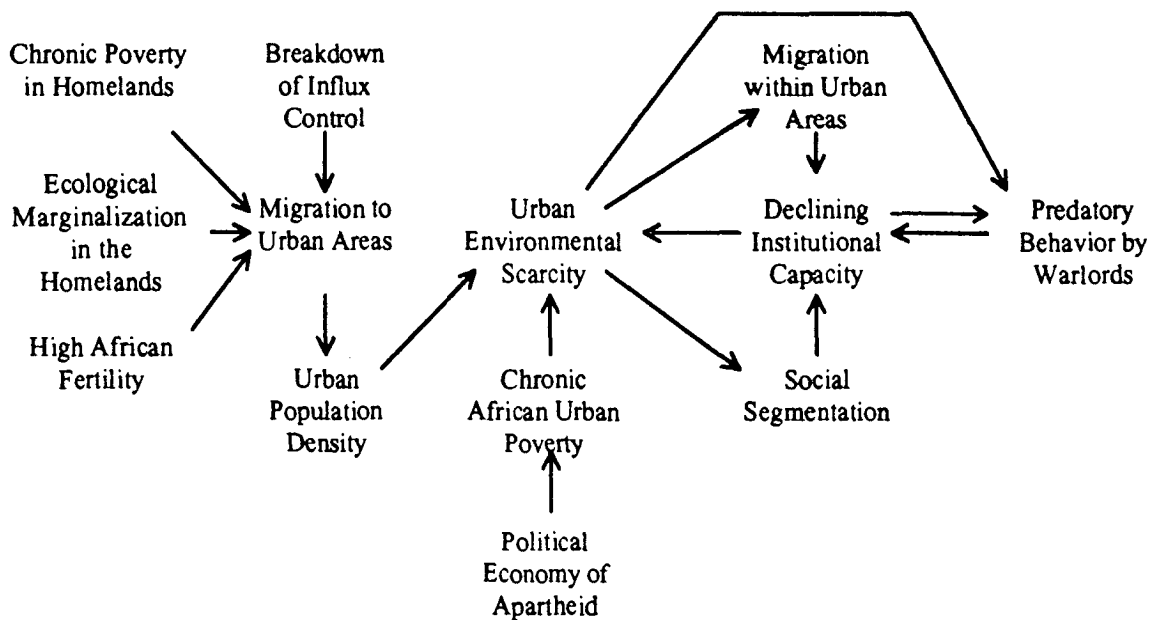


Figure 3 diagrams the surge of violence after 1990 in South Africa. The reform process raised expectations for better socio-economic conditions, while declining state capacity limited the ability of institutions to meet these expectations. Unmet expectations, further frustrated by the poverty endemic to the African community, increased grievances within African society and promoted group cleavages and competition for resources. Opportunities for collective action changed with the transformation of South African politics. Predatory warlords and opportunistic members of the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha took advantage of a weakened state, debilitated local institutions, and an aggrieved population to mobilize group identities and instigate group rivalries. These factors dramatically increased the incidence of violence.

After Nelson Mandela's release in February, 1990, violence became pervasive. From that date until December 1993, political violence killed an estimated 12,000 people — an annual rate more than four times that prior to 1990. In 1992 alone, criminal and political violence together produced more than 20,000 deaths. In July 1990 the so-called Reef Township War began in the regions around Johannesburg. Clashes broke out between migrant workers residing in hostels and residents of townships and informal settlements. In 1992, the annual incidence of violence escalated 133 percent in the Central Rand, the area immediately surrounding Johannesburg. The area south of Johannesburg saw a jump of 200 percent, whereas the region east of Johannesburg witnessed an increase of 84 percent. It is impossible to prove that the upsurge of violence in the early 1990s would not have occurred in the absence of severe environmental scarcity. The data available are simply not adequate for such proof. Yet, as shown above, environmental scarcity