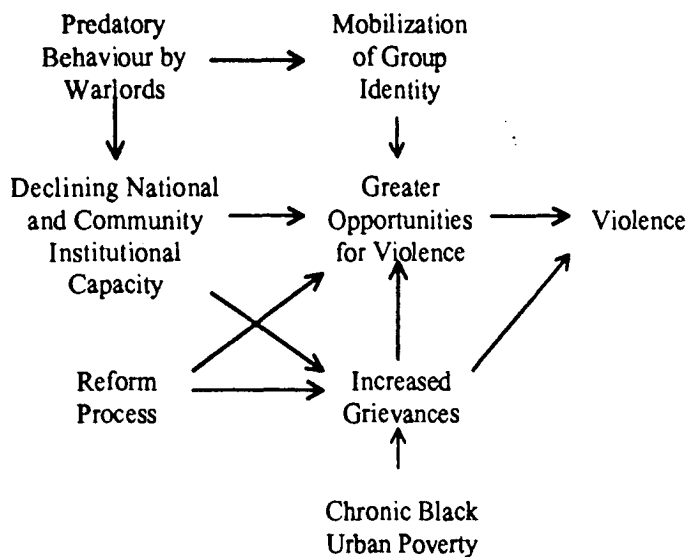


increased grievances and changed opportunities for violent collective action, thus contributing to social instability.

**Figure 3: Outbreak of Violence in South Africa**



To understand the complex links between environmental scarcity and violent conflict, analysts must understand the relationship between state and society. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the demands of South African society on the state increased as thousands of people moved to urban areas, while the ability of both national and local institutions to meet these demands decreased. With the decline of local governments, the apartheid regime lost its already tenuous links to society. Society segmented, and powerful groups married their local conflicts over resource access to the struggle for political control between the ANC and Inkatha.

The election of Mandela has changed the relationship between state and society. State legitimacy has jumped upwards, and political violence has declined dramatically. The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), instituted to manage the transition from apartheid, recognizes the needs of society, and interactions between state and society are now more constructive and vigorous. The government has established forums around the country to discuss local implementation of the RDP — forums that boost civic engagement and generate social capital.

However, for most blacks, living conditions remain dismal. Blacks are not happier because their living conditions have changed; rather they are happier because they think these conditions are going to change. If change is not quickly forthcoming, therefore, the regime will lose legitimacy, and linkages between state and society will once again weaken. Unfortunately, already severe environmental scarcity makes the process of positive change much harder. Social demands on local institutions continue to expand,