

‘One Merchant, One Bullet’: The Rise and Fall of PAGAD

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The public lynching of Rashaad Staggie, a notorious gang leader in Cape Town, and the further killing of 24 drug dealers by members of PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) led to the group being labelled as vigilantes in South Africa. Subsequent bomb attacks in the Western Cape, primarily in the Cape Town area, although not claimed by PAGAD were attributed to the group. This article explores the rise and fall of PAGAD and considers whether the group’s actions constitute vigilantism or terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) emerged as a community response to years of endemic crime, drug abuse and gangsterism in the coloured and mainly Muslim areas of the Cape Flats in South Africa. Since its inception in 1995, PAGAD has targeted drug dealers, individuals involved in gangster-related crime and critics of their actions. Their tactics combine non-violent traditional methods of protest, for example public demonstrations and marches with violent methods such as bombings and drive-by shootings. These violent tactics have brought the group into conflict with the state. Subsequently, police personnel have been injured in confrontations with the group and courts hearing cases involving PAGAD members have been bombed. This article traces the development of PAGAD in terms of its establishment, organisation, activities and support base. Furthermore, the article will also consider whether the PAGAD phenomenon constitutes vigilantism or terrorism.

THE CAPE FLATS

The Cape Flats refers to an area just outside Cape Town in South Africa’s Western Cape province and is comprised of six districts: Mitchells Plain, Manenberg, Phillipi, Bishop Lavis, Bellville South and Elsies River. These districts are home to the province’s coloured community. Coloureds constitute

more than half of the Western Cape's 4.5 million population¹ and are predominantly Muslim in terms of their religious affiliation. The Cape Flats are also characterised by high levels of gangsterism and crime. The province has a long history of gangsterism² and it is estimated that there are in the region of 80,000 active gang members in the Cape belonging to some 137 gangs.³ In the six months between the beginning of October 1994 and the end of March 1995, the police recorded 253 murders in the Cape Flats and attributed half of these in addition to half of the attempted murder charges as being gang related.⁴ Crime including murder, rape and drug-abuse are daily experiences for the people living and working in this area. Residents talk of 'the community being on hold', dictated to by the gangs, and how it is 'the innocent who are behind bars'.⁵ Commentators note that drug abuse and dealing have diversified in recent years and are now more common in the middle-class coloured suburbs while internecine gang violence remains an everyday working-class problem in Manenberg and Mitchells Plain.⁶ Indeed Jeppie suggests,

The middle-class drug consumer market and gangster activity are connected and overlap. Peddlers (or 'dagga merchants' as they are known locally) are actually the 'contracted' distributors for much bigger drug-lords who are gang bosses. Petty crime such as burglaries and car thefts are often the result of indebtedness to a 'merchant', or the result of having to procure substances to satisfy a bad habit.⁷

Community action against gang activity on the Cape Flats is nothing new. Previous responses include the 'Peacemakers', a group, which operated in the period 1973 to 1976 and used violence against gang members suspected of committing crimes in the local area. Due to political developments in other parts of the country, the Riotous Assembly Act was passed and subsequently the activities of the 'Peacemakers' were halted.⁸ In more recent years local neighbourhoods have entered into peace agreements with gangs that operate in their area. Some of these have lasted while others have not. Special events such as the Western Cape Anti-Crime Forum's 'Taking Back Our Communities' campaign of 1998 is one such example. This campaign consisted of sporting events organised locally and involved various groups within the community including the police. The event ended with the showing of *Bafana Bafana's* (South Africa's national soccer team) final match live on big screens in community halls. One organiser noted that the event had successfully brought together the various gangs and had allowed the community to reclaim the streets albeit for a short period of time:

Everybody sitting under one roof because everybody was supporting *Bafana Bafana* irrespective of which gang you belonged and yes,

we could actually walk the streets, nine, ten o'clock at night, which we can't do now.⁹

Past community actions have been relatively short-lived and have been affected by the socio-economic and political conditions prevalent at that time. The special events and activities, which have been organised by local groups, are one-off events and although reducing crime and gang violence at the time of the event do not impact on gang activity on a daily basis.¹⁰ It is against this background of continuing crime, rising drug abuse and gangsterism that a new community response – PAGAD – has emerged.

ORIGINS OF PAGAD

With the first multi-racial democratic elections in 1994, the formal ending of the apartheid era was complete and the 'new' South Africa was born. The new government promised improved housing, employment opportunities and a decrease in crime. Many new houses have been built but South Africa still has high levels of unemployment¹¹ and increasing crime rates. Nationwide police figures show increases in rape (23 per cent), assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (12 per cent), housebreaking (7 per cent) and robbery (4 per cent) while the rate of murder decreased by 8 per cent in the period between 1994 and 1997.¹² In the Western Cape, police figures reveal rises in murder (17 per cent), rape (24 per cent), housebreaking of residential premises (16 per cent) and business premises (10 per cent) for the same period. However, the number of reported cases of robbery with aggravating circumstances fell by 20 per cent.¹³ As Schönteich notes,

only 23 per cent of offenders are caught by the police. Even fewer receive any sort of punishment from the criminal justice system. Crime pays, as a mere 5 per cent to 8 per cent of crimes committed in South Africa result in the conviction of the criminals involved.¹⁴

A survey conducted in the Cape Flats by the Institute for a Democratic South Africa (IDASA) found that 55 per cent of those surveyed disapproved of the police's overall performance and 75 per cent believed that there was 'some' level of corruption in the force. Furthermore, 52 per cent disapproved of the courts' performance and a similar amount expressed the view that 'some' judges and prosecutors were corrupt.¹⁵

In light of the continued increase in crime together with the perceived inability of the police and judicial system to effectively deal with this increase, concerned community members in areas most affected by crime and gangsterism began to mobilise. In July of 1995, 10 members of the coloured community met to discuss the problem of gangsterism and drugs in their

community. More meetings followed with greater numbers of the community becoming involved. Subsequently the group known as People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) emerged, a term coined in December 1995, at the suggestion of Ebrahim Francis: ‘We are ordinary people and we are against gangsterism and drugs. So why not call ourselves People Against Gangsterism and Drugs?’¹⁶ The group has formulated a number of stated aims and objectives, these are:

- to propagate the eradication of drugs and gangsterism from society;
- to co-operate with, and to co-ordinate the activities of similar minded people and groups;
- to encourage the incorporation of these people and other groups into PAGAD’s campaign;
- to generate funds to realise their stated aims.¹⁷

Thus PAGAD can be viewed as an organic, grass roots community response to the problem of crime, drug abuse and gangsterism in the coloured community of the Cape Flats.

ORGANISATION

Commentators note that although PAGAD claims to be a multi-faith group, its members and supporters are overwhelmingly Muslim and that the group is an entirely South African Muslim phenomenon.¹⁸ Its symbols and rhetoric rely heavily on Islamic sources, supporters wear green bandannas and Palestinian style scarves, meetings are held at mosques, and cries of *Allahu Akbar* meaning God is the Greatest are chanted at all PAGAD marches and events.¹⁹ Initially, the group had no formal structure, constitutional code of conduct or organisational administrative procedures. As a member of PAGAD explains,

We had the situation where ... 30,000 people crammed into a stadium [for a meeting] and the next day people decided no more Pagad – [if] the leadership decided they’re not going to organise another mass meeting – everybody would ... grumble, ‘When is Pagad going to have [another] meeting?’ But ... there was no infrastructure to make it happen, to continue anything, because it was *ad hoc*, it was loose. There were thousands of people, but there was no structure.²⁰

PAGAD’s early leadership was comprised of Farouk Jaffer (national co-ordinator), Nadthmie Edries (organiser/head of security) and Ali ‘Phantom’ Parker (head of operations/chief commander). This leadership has changed since PAGAD was first established and was due in part to a split in the organisation over the influence of Qibla and the adoption of more militant

methods in October/November 1996. Qibla was formed in Cape Town in the late 1970s/early 1980s to promote the Iranian revolution and the adoption by South African Muslims of the strict Islamic principles associated with it.²¹ From its inception it has been under the leadership of Achmat Cassiem and the group played a militant part in the anti-apartheid struggle. Commentators note that the group has been the driving force behind PAGAD's more militant activities.²² Since the split between the moderates (Jaffer, Edries and Parker) and the more radical faction associated with Qibla under the leadership of Abdus Salaam Ebrahim in the latter part of 1996, a paramilitary wing called G-Force (Gun Force) has been established. This wing is comprised of small cell structures organised at a neighbourhood level, which undertake covert actions against drug dealers and gangsters and are well trained and armed.²³ According to former G-Force members, religious Muslim terms were used as secret codes between PAGAD members to plan attacks and issue instructions to G-Force members. For example, a planned attack was referred to as a *thikr*, a term used for a religious gathering, an *aqaan* (call to prayer) meant a pipe bomb attack and a *monafiq* was the term employed to brand a member a traitor thereby condemning them to punishment by death.²⁴ PAGAD has also shown a willingness to join other Muslim protest groups such as Muslims Against Global Oppressions (MAGO) and Muslims Against Illegitimate Leader (MAIL) in marches outside the Israeli embassy, in pickets at the Waterfront (popular Cape Town tourist attraction) and demonstrations against the British Prime Minister Tony Blair.²⁵

Following the split in 1996, PAGAD has developed a more formal internal organisational structure including a national executive, a secretariat, legal department, social welfare department, security department, finance department, media and PR, medical unit and education department.²⁶ Although primarily concentrated in the Western Cape, PAGAD branches have been set up in other parts of the country, for example in KwaZulu-Natal and in Guateng. These branches have, however, not displayed the same levels of militancy as their Western Cape counterparts.

METHODS OF PROTEST

Initially PAGAD embarked upon an intensive awareness campaign, lobbying local churches, mosques, civic groups, youth clubs and community radio stations for support. They held candlelight vigils, distributed pamphlets and went door-to-door with their message. As their support grew, house meetings gave way to large-scale public meetings and protests. In addition to educating the community, PAGAD entered into consultation with the government and its various departments. On 11 May 1996, 3,000 PAGAD supporters marched to Parliament and delivered an ultimatum to the Minister of Justice, Dullah

Omar. They demanded the government take action against the drug lords and gangs within the following 60 days. This action was to include the reintroduction of the death penalty for drug dealers, the confiscation of their assets, bail to be set at R10,000 (approx. US\$1,600) for drug users and denied to drug dealers, first time offenders were to be dealt with more severely and that greater control measures be introduced at harbours and airports. If however, no such action was taken then PAGAD would be prompted to take the law into their hands.²⁷ Following this, 'ultimatum marches' were undertaken to the homes of alleged drug dealers and gangsters. These marches culminated with a 24-hour warning or ultimatum to the individuals concerned to stop dealing in drugs and/or to desist from gang-related crime or 'face the mandate of the people'.²⁸ It was after one such march on 4 August 1996, that PAGAD members were captured on film shooting and then setting alight the 'Hard Livings' gang leader, Rashaad Staggie. According to police figures, PAGAD undertook 54 'ultimatum marches' between 4 August and 26 December 1996.²⁹

The organisation has been accused of involvement in drive-by shootings, petrol and pipe bombings and other shootings, allegations that it strenuously denies. Its members have been charged with a range of offences including sedition, murder, attempted murder, possession of illegal firearms, malicious damage to property and public violence. A leaked military intelligence report suggests that between March and July 1998, PAGAD targeted 86 alleged drug dealers and succeeded in killing 24.³⁰ In July 1998, two PAGAD members were killed when a pipe-bomb exploded in the vehicle they were travelling in.³¹ Furthermore, the police attribute 188 out of the 667 violent attacks recorded in Cape Town in 1998 to PAGAD, and arrested 28 suspects with links to the organisation.³² In December of 1999, Dawood Osman became the first member of the group to be convicted and sentenced for murder. He was found guilty on four counts of murder and two of attempted murder following a shooting incident at the Waterfront involving members of the Junior Mafia gang.³³

Attacks have not been confined to drug dealers and gang members, individuals who have dared to criticise PAGAD's methods have also been targeted. For example, Dr Ebrahim Moosa, an academic at the University of Cape Town, had his home bombed after criticising their vigilante tactics on the Muslim radio station Radio 786. He has since left South Africa and is on extended sabbatical. The media have also been targeted as a result of their reporting of PAGAD activities. In November 1996, both the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus* were threatened with a boycott while the news agency Reuters suspended its Cape Town operations in October 1999 after staff received death threats.³⁴ The police and the courts have also been subject to PAGAD's attentions. PAGAD allege police collusion with drug dealers and gangs, and

complain that the courts release them on easy bail terms.³⁵ The relationship between PAGAD and the police has further deteriorated following a police clampdown on their activities. For example, in December of 1996, the police tried to stop a protest march at Cape Town's international airport, violence ensued and gunfire was exchanged between protesters and the police. Furthermore, five policemen were shot and wounded by PAGAD supporters at Bellville Magistrate's Court during a bail hearing for protesters arrested at the airport.³⁶ In January 2000, a pipe bomb exploded at Wynberg Magistrate's Court where two PAGAD members were due to appear at a bail hearing.³⁷ A magistrate who had been hearing cases involving PAGAD was assassinated at his home and witnesses due to give evidence against PAGAD members have been killed.³⁸

PAGAD continued to operate a dual strategy of non-violence and violence. Despite the deaths of a number of their supporters as a result of gang reprisals and police actions, PAGAD continued to hold public meetings and undertake often-violent actions against drug dealers and gangsters.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Initially PAGAD had the support of large numbers of the community on whose behalf it claimed to act. From its starting point of 10 concerned community members in July 1995, support grew to the 6,000 mark in May 1996 and by 1997 the organisation claimed the support of 100,000 people.³⁹ Its anti-crime rallies attracted crowds of between 10,000 and 40,000 people.⁴⁰ IDASA's survey of the Cape Flats found 29 per cent of those asked supported the organisation while 64 per cent of Muslim respondents said that they supported PAGAD compared to only 18 per cent of Christians.⁴¹ Commentators note that as levels of violence increased the organisation began to lose some of its support:

When they initially established themselves to go on this crusade, they had broad public support and they were operating with public backing for the notion that they must take active steps against gangsters and drugs ... but that was alienated to such an extent that they are a small group without a community mandate.⁴²

A victim survey conducted in Manenberg (June 2003) found that of those people living in the Cape Flats when PAGAD was an issue, only 34 per cent of respondents expressed support for the organisation. Furthermore, 25 per cent of those who had supported PAGAD withdrew their support due to the violence used by the group, especially the violence directed at others within the community.⁴³ PAGAD believes that it still maintains community support for its actions but that the nature of this support has changed due to a number

of factors outside of its control. These include state repression, media misrepresentation and the threat of revenge attacks by gangsters. For example, the government has introduced legislation banning demonstrators from covering their faces. This law allows for the identification of PAGAD supporters by members of the police and gangs alike. As a PAGAD member explains the law

is a method of reducing the numbers ... because people ... can't afford to risk their lives. Not all of them have cars, they have to travel by bus, they have to go via the gangsters and so on ... But now you go to a march, your face is on television.⁴⁴

The organisation has also been criticised by progressive and liberal Muslims, academics and scholars in the Western Cape. In November 1996, 19 academics and eight Muslim organisations including the dominant Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) in a joint statement expressed concern at PAGAD's increasing levels of militancy and its adoption of a confrontational and intolerant approach to opponents.⁴⁵ The MJC has also called on PAGAD to suspend its activities in light of the bomb attack on Dr Moosa's home in July 1998. A spokesperson for the MJC said,

it's unacceptable that pipe bombs are being thrown at people's homes. The issue Pagad is fighting for is a noble cause, but people can't just take the law into their own hands. I think it would be wise for them [to call a halt], to sit with other people and to think out other methods.⁴⁶

PAGAD has not heeded the MJC's call and continued to operate in the Western Cape. Although its support base has declined and its membership is now smaller they are more committed.

STATE'S RESPONSE

As noted earlier, PAGAD entered into consultation with the state. Meetings were held between the organisation's leaders and both the Minister for Justice and National Police Commissioner George Fivaz to discuss the possibility of co-operation between PAGAD and the South African Police Service (SAPS). However, such meetings were not particularly fruitful and the relationship between PAGAD and the police deteriorated during 1996 to such an extent that the acting National Commissioner Zolissa Lavisa publicly stated 'as far as the SA Police Service is concerned, Pagad has degenerated into just another gang, and is now firmly part of the crime problem and not the solution in the Western Cape'.⁴⁷ Throughout 1997 violence on the Cape Flats increased following attacks and counter-attacks involving PAGAD and the various gangs they targeted. Between January and August 1997, 111 incidents were

attributed to PAGAD while gang-to-gang violence only accounted for 75 incidents.⁴⁸

Leonard Knipe, the Western Cape violent crimes police chief, suggests that gangsterism had risen by some 37.5 per cent since PAGAD had been established and that police resources and manpower usually concerned with routine gang conflict have been diverted to deal with PAGAD-related activities. This rise in violence together with PAGAD's targeting of police stations, SAPS personnel and the judicial system has resulted in the police and the South African National Defence Force initiating a number of special operations aimed at curbing the escalating violence involving gangs, drug dealers and anti-crime groups such as PAGAD.⁴⁹ As part of these operations, PAGAD was successfully infiltrated by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA). In February 1999, Ayub Mungalee, (PAGAD's Guateng co-ordinator) revealed he was an NIA agent following his arrest and former PAGAD leader, Farouk Jaffer was assisting intelligence sources with their investigations prior to his murder in July 1999.⁵⁰ According to Percy Sonn, head of the Scorpions (a FBI-style police unit), at the beginning of 2000, 110 people with PAGAD links were facing charges in connection with 55 urban terror cases.⁵¹ Forty-two members and supporters of PAGAD have been convicted of urban terror-related crimes including intimidation, possession of explosive devices, attempted murder and the illegal possession of ammunition. A further 14 members/supporters have been acquitted. Suspected G-Force members have been charged with 43 counts of murder, 100 counts of attempted murder and several counts of illegal possession of explosives and bombs.⁵² Convictions have been secured against Faizel Waggie and Ismael Edwards for the bombing of the Lansdowne police station in January 1998 and Ebrahim Jeneker and Abdullah Maansdorp for their 'reign of terror against drug merchants', which left three people dead in April 1999.⁵³ The organisation's leadership has also been successfully prosecuted. For example, Abdus Salaam Ebrahim (national co-ordinator) received a five-year custodial sentence for public violence related to the public lynching of Rashaad Staggie. The organisation's spiritual leader, Abdur Razaq Ebrahim, was jailed for three years for the same offence.⁵⁴

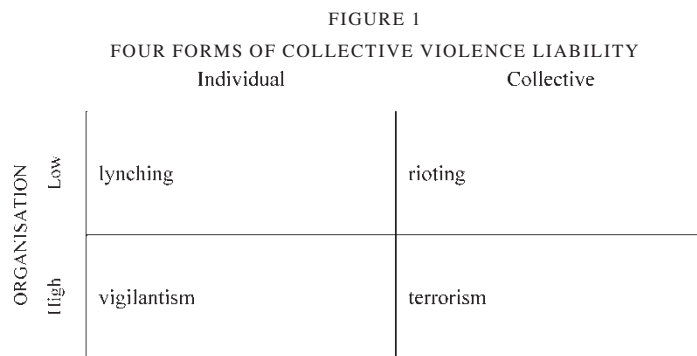
In addition to the targeting of gangsters, drug dealers, police personnel and members of the judiciary, PAGAD has also been accused of conducting a campaign of 'urban terrorism' in the Western Cape. Throughout 1998 to 2000, a number of bombs exploded in and around Cape Town including the Planet Hollywood Restaurant attack at the Waterfront, a pipe bomb explosion outside St Elmo's Pizzeria (Camp Bay) and a bomb explosion at Cape Town International Airport. These attacks led the Minister of Safety and Security, the late Steve Thswete to conclude that 'we in the government are at war with Pagad. We are at war with people who use instruments of terror . . . We must

nip this terrorist element in the bud'.⁵⁵ To this end, new security legislation was proposed in the form of a draft anti-terrorism bill, which proposed a very broad definition of terrorism, detention for anyone suspected of involvement with terrorism, a 14-day detention period for the purpose of interrogation and the provision of mandatory sentences.⁵⁶

VIGILANTISM VERSUS TERRORISM

PAGAD and its supporters have been labelled as both vigilantes and urban terrorists by members of the South African government, the United States Department of State, the media and general public alike. Both of these labels are contentious in themselves. Vigilantism is a problematic concept in that there has been little serious attempt to conceptualise it. As Johnston notes, 'the problem is that everyone has an opinion on what vigilantism is, but no one has taken the trouble to define it'.⁵⁷ For some scholars such as Black and De la Roche vigilantism is merely a synonym of social control.⁵⁸ According to Black, some activities, which are regarded as criminal by the state are often modes of conflict management involving the pursuit of justice and may entail punishment, even capital punishment. Thus vigilantism can be viewed as both social control and self-help. For Black, social control refers to any process by which individuals or groups define or respond to the deviant behaviour of others. It can involve a variety of phenomenon ranging from a frown or scowl to a verbal reprimand, to physical expulsion from a group, to violence. Self-help is defined as the handling of a grievance or dispute by unilateral aggression. In many tribal and traditional societies it is the primary mode of social control and would include assassination, feuding, fighting, maiming and beating. When similar actions are taken in modern societies they are labelled as crime but can still be understood nevertheless as social control and self-help.

De la Roche argues that collective violence, when unilateral and non-governmental, occurs in four main forms: lynching, rioting, vigilantism and terrorism. Each form can be distinguished from the others in terms of liability (individual versus collective) and degree of organisation (low versus high). In cases of lynching and vigilantism, only the person responsible for the grievance is held accountable or liable. In contrast, in instances of rioting and terrorism, a group or members of a group or other social category such as a religion or political party, are collectively held liable for the conduct of an individual or group. Furthermore the level of organisation involved can differentiate the various forms of collective violence. Lynching and rioting have a relatively low level of organisation while vigilantism and terrorism involve a high level of organisation. This can be seen in Figure 1.



Source: De la Roche, 'Collective Violence as Social Control', *Sociological Forum*, Vol.11, No.1 (1996), p.10.

For others, vigilantism represents a sub-category of political violence. Rosenbaum and Sederberg attempt to explain vigilantism as violence designed to maintain the established socio-political order and subsequently label it as establishment violence. They argue that 'vigilantism is simply establishment violence. It consists of acts or threats of coercion in violation of the formal boundaries of an established socio-political order which, however, are intended by the violators to defend that order from some form of subversion'.⁵⁹ Using this wide-ranging and over-inclusive definition they construct a typology of ideal types of vigilantism based upon the intended goal of the action: crime-control, social-group-control, and regime-control. Crime-control vigilantism is directed against those individuals who are suspected of committing acts that would be punishable by the formal system but who are not punished due to inefficiencies, corruption or leniency within the formal criminal justice system. Examples of this type of vigilantism would include the elimination of suspected petty thieves or drug dealers by groups of private citizens. Social-group-control vigilantism is undertaken by a communal group who feel threatened by another group advocating or seeking a redistribution of resources or values. The catalyst for such vigilantism 'is usually the attempt of a low-ranked group to rise above its socially prescribed position'.⁶⁰ The early activities of the Ku Klux Klan can be seen as social-group-control vigilantism. The final ideal type is that of regime-control vigilantism. Unlike the previous two types of establishment violence, which involve the use of violence to preserve the status quo and are aimed outward at threatening elements within society, regime-control vigilantism is concerned with altering the regime for the better, for example *coups d'état*. Thus vigilantism is seen as a conservative phenomenon undertaken by groups and is basically negative given that its essential aim is to suppress or in some cases to eliminate, any threats to the status quo.

Vigilantism is also considered to be a conservative and group phenomenon. Brown defines vigilantism as referring to 'organised, extralegal movements, the members of which take the law into their own hands'.⁶¹ Abrahams while conceding that vigilantism is not an easy concept to define, constructs an 'ideal type' thereby identifying general characteristics of the phenomenon. He suggests that vigilantism,

Typically emerges in 'frontier' zones where the state is viewed as ineffective or corrupt, and it often constitutes a criticism of the failure of state machinery to meet the felt needs of those who resort to it. It is a form of self-help, with varying degrees of violence, which is activated instead of such machinery, against criminals and others whom the actors perceive as undesirables, deviants and 'public enemies'.⁶²

Although acknowledging that vigilantism is a form of self-help, Abrahams contends that it is conceptually quite different from self-help of the 'simple oppositional kind' such as feud, revenge or vendetta, in that these occur between structurally equal individuals or groups.

A key criminological contribution to this debate is made by Johnston who provides a definition of vigilantism as,

a social movement giving rise to premeditated acts of force, or threatened force, by autonomous citizens . . . Such acts are focused upon crime control and/or social control and aim to offer assurances (or guarantees) of security both to participants and to other members of a given established order.⁶³

Johnston argues that it is possible to draw a distinction between two modes of vigilantism: one having a focus on 'crime control', the other being concerned with 'social control' or the maintenance of communal, ethnic or sectarian order and values. Paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, he suggests, may undertake dual forms of vigilante engagement – 'punishment' attacks against those accused of criminal deviance (for example, joyriding and burglary) and those accused of communal deviance (for example, breaching paramilitary organisation rules). Importantly, Johnston notes that vigilantism is a reaction to real or perceived deviance, distinguishing it from mere 'establishment violence'. Hence he represents the actions of paramilitaries involved in 'punishment' squads in Northern Ireland as vigilantism, whereas the actions of the same groups involved in shooting Catholics/Protestants, soldiers, police and bombing buildings is described as acts of political (establishment) violence, which 'have no direct function in the internal regulation of social deviance'. Johnston concludes that vigilantism is a subject awaiting criminological analysis and draws attention, *inter alia*, to the need for research on the relationship of vigilantism to other forms of policing.

The suggestion from scholars thus far is that vigilantism is either a sub-category of political violence or must be differentiated completely from violence that is politically motivated.

Given the above discussion it is not surprising to learn that little consensus exists regarding the exact meaning of the term 'terrorism'. Subsequently, there is no universally accepted definition of the term, either among academics or government authorities.⁶⁴ However, there is agreement within the literature on terrorism as to the core characteristics of the phenomenon.⁶⁵ These are:

- the use or threat of use of violence;
- the existence of a political motive;
- the targets selected are representative of a target category;
- the aim is to terrorise;
- the goal is to modify behaviour;
- the method employed may be extreme and/or unusual;
- the act of terrorism is an act of communication.

Terrorism is seen as involving the actual or threatened use of violence in an attempt to achieve a change in, or the maintenance of, the status quo. Violence, however, is also an extremely ambiguous term and its usage can be somewhat arbitrary. In labelling an act as 'violent', one is not only applying a descriptive term, but also making a judgement regarding the act's legitimacy. Any attempt at definition will be predicated on the assumption that some classes of political violence are justifiable, whereas others are not. For the purpose of this article, the term 'violence' will be taken to mean 'the illegal use of force or the threat of such force, against person or property'.⁶⁶

An act of terrorism is one that has been carried out for a political purpose; it is a deliberate means to an end. It is the existence of this political motive, which differentiates terrorism from 'normal' crime. As Rubenstein states, 'mere criminals rarely purport to act on behalf of an entire nation, class, religion or ethnic group, nor do they ordinarily accept martyrdom'.⁶⁷ Often immediate targets are symbolic of a larger target audience that share a common targetable identification. If this identification does not exist within the target audience the violence will lose its effect. The aim of terrorism is to instil fear or to terrorise. As Schmid and Jongman note terrorism, 'consists in the calculated production of a state of extreme fear of injury and death, and, secondly, the exploitation of this emotional reaction to manipulate behaviour'.⁶⁸ The goal, therefore, is to modify behaviour. This is reinforced by the message imparted by the perpetrators of acts of terrorism that violence will cease when the (larger) target audience has complied with the demands of those undertaking the action.

VIGILANTES OR TERRORISTS?

From the discussion above, the formation of PAGAD and its early activities are characteristic of vigilantism. Concerned individuals living in an area blighted by crime, drugs and gangsterism came together and formed a group who were willing to take the law into their own hands. The formal state system PAGAD argued was ineffective, corrupt and lenient thus they resorted to self-help in the targeting of drug-dealers and gangsters. In addition to this violent strategy, PAGAD also undertook measures aimed at raising awareness of their cause at a local and national level. This involved educating the public, for example by lobbying churches, mosques and civic groups and by engaging in dialogue with the state including meetings with the minister for justice and the national police commissioner. The vigilantism exhibited by PAGAD conforms to Black's idea of social control in that PAGAD operates in opposition to the perceived deviance of others, namely drug dealers and gangsters. PAGAD's actions are also characteristic of self help in that PAGAD believes its action would have an effect on the behaviour of those targeted, namely drug dealers and gangsters would desist from their deviant activities. Thus PAGAD can be cited as an example of what Rosenbaum and Sederberg term as crime-control vigilantism. PAGAD exist because of the perceived ineffectiveness and corruption of the state machinery in dealing with crime. Their response to criticism (including death threats against Reuters staff and the targeting of Dr Moosa) can also be understood in terms of vigilantism in that they believe their actions to be right, subsequently any form of dissent can in itself constitute deviancy.

PAGAD's clashes with the police and judiciary and the numerous bombings in Cape Town have led to the group being labelled as terrorists. Indeed PAGAD has been classified by the US Department of State as a terrorist group since 2001.⁶⁹ The question is to what extent do the activities of PAGAD conform to the core characteristics of terrorism already discussed. As noted earlier, PAGAD has been accused of drive-by shootings, petrol and pipe bombings, other shootings and the public lynching of Rashaad Staggie. Members of the group have been found guilty of murder, attempted murder, intimidation, possession of explosive devices and illegal possession of ammunition. Thus one can suggest that PAGAD has in the past either threatened violence or used it. There is much debate as to whether PAGAD possesses a political motive. As Dixon and Johns note,

despite some inflammatory comments by Chief Commander Ali Parker about declaring jihad or holy war on gangsters . . . Pagad [does not] have any political agenda beyond the elimination of gangsterism and drugs. Although some of its activists were also members of radical Islamic groups such as Qibla, Pagad was – and remains – a broadly based group

with no political programme beyond the 'eradication of drugs and gangsterism from society'.⁷⁰

Tayob, an expert in Islam at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town concurs with this. He suggests that while some of the group's members may have initially possessed a political agenda, the response from the community and the state has 'ensured a commitment to an anti-crime pressure group'.⁷¹ Others including Chandler and members of the South African government contend that PAGAD's stance against drugs and gangsterism is merely a cover for a more subversive agenda of challenging the authority of the state. The Intelligence Minister Lindiwe Sisulu stated that PAGAD remains a threat to South Africa's security.⁷² Chandler believes that PAGAD is a threat to the democratic process in South Africa as they had been 'hijacked' by Qibla who want 'to turn South Africa into an Islamic state'.⁷³ The bombings of gay nightclubs, synagogues, tourist attractions and American-associated restaurants such as Planet Hollywood symbolise sexual freedom, the Judeo-Christian tradition, America and the West. Thus, it can be argued that they are representative of a target category and are collectively liable for the conduct of that target category. However, no group has claimed responsibility for the bombings in Cape Town. Indeed, PAGAD has publicly condemned such attacks on soft targets such as shopping malls. Furthermore, PAGAD has directly targeted those it suspects of drug dealing or gansterism, which involves the attribution of individual liability, this according to De la Roche is characteristic of vigilantism not terrorism. The aim of terrorism is to terrorise. According to Leggett, (now a senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies, South Africa) the bombings in Cape Town are not the work of PAGAD and as such the Minister of Safety and Security 'is barking up the wrong tree' in blaming them. Leggett contends that 'if Pagad truly wanted to overthrow the government, it is doing a lousy job of it' and that 'if they were truly trying to generate "terror", the body count is pathetically low – thus far, there have been only three deaths in 18 bomb blasts. It rather looks like whoever is setting these bombs is going out of their way to avoid taking life'.⁷⁴ Indeed, he points out that a sniper targeting a local bus company in the summer of 2000 killed more people and caused more disruption to the essential workings of the Western Cape than the urban terrorism campaign did. Observers have suggested that there are a number of possible candidates behind the bombings in Cape Town who are taking advantage of a situation where whatever happens PAGAD will be blamed. Such candidates include anti-gang militants, rogue elements in the security services (for example, Dean Mostert a police informer implicated senior Cape police officers in the Blah Bar and St Elmo's pizzeria bombings) and gangsters settling old scores or acquiring new turf.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

PAGAD can be viewed as an organic, grass roots community response to the problem of crime, drug abuse and gangsterism in the coloured community of the Cape Flats. From the discussion above the activities of PAGAD are more characteristic of the phenomenon of vigilantism than terrorism although members of the South African government, the US Department of State and sections of the media believe they were behind the bombings in the Western Cape between 1998 and 2000. The state's response to the group resulted in a clampdown on their activities and led to PAGAD members being charged with a range of offences including murder, attempted, illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. The various operations taken against the group can be seen to have been successful as the number of recorded incidents fell from more than a hundred in 1997 to 22 in 2000 and only nine incidents in 2001.

Although the organisation has been relatively quiet in recent years, there are reports that it still exists in some form in the Cape Flats and has returned to its earlier activities. For example, Leggett found in qualitative follow-up research to his Manenberg victim survey that within one estate (Surrey Estate) there were no drug dealers and this was attributed to PAGAD.⁷⁶ The organisation has recently held (June 2004) public demonstrations with up to 400 marchers protesting against crime and drugs in local neighbourhoods on the Cape Flats. They have also visited several schools in the area and were planning to host a drugs awareness day on Youth Day.⁷⁷ Despite this activity, doubt remains as to whether the organisation will ever recapture its initial community support. Respondents in the Manenberg victim survey were asked the hypothetical question as to whether they would support a movement that drove gangsters out by violent means, only 29 per cent said they would and 55 per cent said they would not.⁷⁸ PAGAD emerged as a result of people living in the Cape Flats being fed up with crime, drugs and gangsterism in their area and the state's inability to do something about it, until these issues are adequately addressed by the state then it is likely that PAGAD will continue to exist in some form or other.

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NOTES

1. According to the most recent census conducted in 2001, coloureds constituted 54 per cent of the Western Cape's population, black Africans 27 per cent, whites 18 per cent and Indians/Asians 1 per cent. Information found at (<http://www.statssa.gov.za>). Coloureds refers to those individuals of mixed race and was a category used during apartheid in

the classification of people into racial groups. The term is still used today in post-apartheid South Africa.

2. For more details see D. Pinnock, *Gangs, Rituals and Rites of Passage* (Cape Town: African Sun Press, 1997).
3. Figures quoted by Superintendent Al Heylinger, commander of the Police Gang Investigation Unit, cited in B. White Haeefe, 'Islamic Fundamentalism and Pagad: An Internal Security Issue for South Africa', *Crime and Conflict*, Vol.11 (Autumn 1998), p.10.
4. Figures cited in I. Kinnes, 'Reclaiming the Cape Flats: A Community Challenge to Crime and Gangsterism', *Crime and Conflict*, Vol.2 (Winter 1995), p.5.
5. Group interview with workers at the Diunefontein Community Centre, Manenberg, 23 November 1999.
6. S. Jeppie, 'Introduction', in R. Galant and F. Gamielidien (eds), *Drugs, Gangs, People's Power* (Claremont: Masjid, 1996).
7. *Ibid.*, p.14.
8. For more information see Kinnes (note 4).
9. Interview with Gaynor Wasser, chair of the Western Cape Anti-Crime Forum, 16 March 1999.
10. *Ibid.*
11. The national unemployment rate according to Statistics South Africa as of September 2003 was 28.2 per cent while the rate for the Western Cape was 20.6 per cent – the lowest rate of South Africa's nine provinces. See Statistics South Africa, *Labour Force Survey* (Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2004) for more details. Research conducted in the Cape Flats suggests that the unemployment rate is approximately 46 per cent and a staggering 61 per cent for those aged under 30 – cited in A. Standing, *The Social Contradictions of Organised Crime on the Cape Flats* (Occasional Paper 74, Institute for Security Studies, June 2003).
12. Figures cited in South African Institute for Race Relations, *South Africa Survey 1997/1998* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1998), p.22.
13. Figures cited *ibid.*, pp.43–8. Robbery with aggravating circumstances includes hijacking, bank robbery and cash-in-transit heists.
14. M. Schönteich, *Unshackling the Crime Fighters* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1999), p.16.
15. C. Africa, R. Mattes, M. Roefs and H. Taylor, 'Crime and Community Action: Pagad and the Cape Flats, 1996–1997', *Public Opinion Service Reports*, No.4 (June 1998), pp.11–16.
16. Quoted on PAGAD's webpage, (<http://www.pagad.co.za/what.htm>).
17. Taken from PAGAD's webpage, (<http://www.pagad.co.za/aims.htm>).
18. F. Esack, 'Taking on the State? Pagad and Islamic Radicalism', *Indicator SA*, Vol.8, No.4 (Spring 1996); and Haeefe (note 3).
19. S. Manjra, 'Battle Plans in the PAGAD Struggle', in Galant and Gamielidien (note 6).
20. Quoted in B. Dixon and L.-M. Johns, *Gangs, PAGAD and the State*, Research Report (Cape Town: Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town, 2000), p.16.
21. For more details see C.J.B. Le Roux, 'People Against Gangsterism and Drugs', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.22, No.1 (June 1997); Esack (note 18); and Haeefe (note 3).
22. Le Roux (note 21); D. Daniels, 'Pagad's True Colours Revealed', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 28 August 1998; and C. Carter, 'Behind Pagad's Jihad Hijackers or Heroes', *City Press*, 18 August 1996, p.17.
23. Le Roux (note 21).
24. 'Pagad Ordered Gang Attack, Court Told', *Mail and Guardian Online*, 4 September 2000; L. Johns, 'Pagad's G-Force Spy Lifts the Lid on Violence', *Cape Argus*, 10 October 2000.
25. *Sunday Times* 'Muslims to Protest', 10 January 1999; C. Erfort, 'Pagad Warns of Anarchy if Protestor Dies', *Cape Argus*, 15 January 1999; and *City Press*, 'Pagad Threats Heats Up Election Battle', 17 January 1999, p.11.
26. A. Botha, 'The Prime Suspects', in H. Boshoff, A. Botha and M. Schönteich (eds), *Fear in the City* (Half Way House: Institute for Security Studies, 2001).
27. Haeefe (note 3).
28. Information found at (<http://www.pagad.co.za/past.htm>).
29. Figure cited in Le Roux (note 21), p.62.
30. Sapa-AFP, 'Intelligence report links 24 killings to Pagad', *Sowetan*, 25 February 1999.

31. S. Hess, 'Pipe Bombs?' *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 7 August 1998.
32. Figures cited in R. Hartley, B. Jordan and J. Heard, 'Grim Warning after Cape Blast', *Sunday Times*, 3 January 1999.
33. Sapa, 'Pagad Man gets 32 Years for Murders', *Independent Online*, 14 December 1999.
34. R. Rossouw, 'Jay Naidoo Condemns Pagad's Threats', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 15 November 1996; and Sapa, 'Reuters Move after Threats', *The Star*, 20 October 1999, p.3.
35. Manjra (note 19); and 'Full-Scale Gang War Threatens the Flats', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 8 August 1996.
36. Le Roux (note 21).
37. J. Heard, 'Scorpions Swoop on Pagad', *Sunday Times*, 16 January 2000.
38. K. MacGregor, 'FBI Joins Cape Town's War on Terrorism', *The Independent* (London), 12 September 2000, p.12; and J. Lovell, 'Tshwete declares war on Pagad', *Independent Online*, www.iol.co.za, 13 September 2000.
39. Haefele (note 3), p.10.
40. Africa et al. (note 15).
41. J. Christie, 'Safety At Any Cost: Community Perceptions of Pagad', *Crime and Conflict*, No.9 (Winter 1997), pp.30–31.
42. Interview with Peter Gastrow, Cape Town Director of the Institute for Security Studies, 5 March 1999. This view that PAGAD was losing support was also advanced by Cherrel Africa of the Public Opinion Service at IDASA, interviewed on the 3 March 1999.
43. T. Leggett, 'No One to Trust: Preliminary results from a Manenberg Crime Survey', *South African Crime Quarterly*, No. 9 (September 2004), p. 33.
44. Quoted in Dixon and Johns (note 20), p.21.
45. For more information see Le Roux (note 21).
46. Sheik Ebrahim Gabriels, quoted in A. Duffy, 'Sheiks Stand Up to Pagad', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 17 July 1998.
47. Quoted in 'Pagad has Become Just Another Gang', *Cape Times*, 17 December 1996.
48. H. Boshoff and M. Schönteich, 'South Africa's Operational and Legislative Responses to Terrorism', in Boshoff, Botha and Schönteich (note 26).
49. For more information on Operations Recoil, Saladin, Good Hope and Crackdown see H. Boshoff, 'The State's Operational Response' in Boshoff, Botha and Schönteich (note 26).
50. For more information see M. Merten, 'Murdered Pagad Leader was Informer', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 23 July 1999.
51. Cited in Heard (note 37). Urban terror refers to PAGAD/gang-related incidents.
52. E. Ellis, 'G-Force suspects face over 40 murder charges', *Cape Argus*, 11 October 2000; and M. Merten, 'Back to detention without trial?', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 15 September 2000.
53. Waggie and Edwards received 15 years for the police station bombing and 15 years for three charges of attempted murder. See SAPA, 'Pagad Bombers Jailed for 30 Years', *Independent Online*, 19 October 2001 for more details. Jeneker and Maansdorp were found guilty of 17 charges including three murders, one attempted murder and five robberies and received three life sentences. For more information see SAPA, 'Pagad G-Force Duo Jailed for Life', *Independent Online*, 20 December 2002.
54. SAPA, 'Staggie Death March Leader Jailed for 5 years', *Independent Online*, 26 March 2002.
55. Quoted in G. Lovell, 'Tshwete Declares War on Pagad', *Independent Online*, 13 September 2000.
56. The draft Anti-Terrorism Bill 2000 defined terrorism as 'any act which does or may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of any person or persons, or causes or may cause damage to property and is calculated or intended to intimidate, coerce or induce any government or persons, the general public or any section thereof; or disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or create unrest or general insurrection in any state'.
57. L. Johnston, 'What is Vigilantism?', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol.36, No.2 (1996), p.220.

58. D. Black, 'Crime as Social Control', in D. Black (ed.) *Toward a General Theory of Social Control*, Vol.2 (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1984); and R.S. De la Roche, 'Collective Violence as Social Control', *Sociological Forum*, Vol.11, No.1 (1996), pp.97–128.
59. R.H. Rosenbaum and P.C. Sederberg (eds), *Vigilante Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1976), p.4.
60. *Ibid.*, p.13.
61. R.M. Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp.95–6.
62. R. Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p.9.
63. Johnston (note 57), p.232.
64. See G. Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); N.W. Provizer, 'Defining Terrorism', in M. Slann and B. Schechterman, (eds), *Multidimensional Terrorism* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1987); and A. Silke, 'Terrorism and the Blind Men's Elephant', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.8, No.3 (Autumn 1996). In contrast, Paul Wilkinson suggests that a consensus on a definition of terrorism has in fact been reached. For more details see P. Wilkinson, 'How to Combat the Reign of Terror', *New Statesman*, 2 August 1996, p.12.
65. For example, Schmid and Longman after content analysing 109 definitions of the term 'terrorism' concluded that there is 'a solid conceptual core to terrorism'; Alex Schmid and A.J. Longman. *Political Terrorism – A New Guide to Actors and Authors, Data Bases, and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Transaction, 1987), p.21.
66. D. Miller, 'The Use and Abuse of Political Violence', *Political Studies*, September 1984, p.403.
67. R.E. Rubenstein, *Alchemists of Revolution* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1987), p.xviii.
68. Schmid and Jongman (note 65), p.21.
69. US Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001* (Washington: US Department of State, 2002); *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002* (Washington: US Department of State, 2003); and *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003* (Washington: US Department of State, 2004).
70. Dixon and Johns (note 20), p.16.
71. A.I. Tayob, 'Islamism and PAGAD: Finding the Connection', in Galant and Gamiieldien (note 6) p.32.
72. J. Michaels, 'Boeremag and Pagad a threat to SA security', *The Mercury*, 19 June 2003, p.5.
73. C. Chandler, 'War on the Cape Flats: An analysis of PAGAD', *Crime and Deviance in South African Cities conference*, 19 May 2000, p.13.
74. T. Leggett, 'Thswete is Barking Up Wrong Tree', *Mail and Guardian Online*, 18 September 2000.
75. For more information see M. Merten, 'Back to Detention without Trial?', *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 15 September 2000; and Leggett, 'Thswete is barking up wrong tree' (note 74).
76. Leggett, 'No One to Trust' (note 43).
77. M. Dlakavu, 'Pagad: One Merchant, One Bullet', *Cape Argus*, 14 June 2004; and 'Children as Young as 10 are Getting Hooked', *Cape Times*, 21 June 2004.
78. Leggett, 'No One to Trust' (note 43).

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