

THE SA
RECONCILIATION BAROMETER
-TRACKING SOCIO-POLITICAL TRENDS-



FOURTH ROUND REPORT: THE SA RECONCILIATION BAROMETER SURVEY

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1. Introduction

This document reports on selected findings from the November 2004 SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey. It has been the fourth in a series of surveys, conducted by *Markinor* for the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), which aims to provide a longitudinal picture of national reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

Over the past two years the survey has evolved to provide the best possible account of the variables that impact on national reconciliation. At its outset in April 2003, its emphasis fell on the nature and measurement of race relations, historical confrontation, dialogue, and cross-cutting political relationships. These are some of the most apparent requirements for reconciliation and it was, therefore, necessary to establish benchmarks for surveys that were to follow. Cognisant of the growing debate around economic justice and its impact on the way ordinary citizens view their relationships with each other and the state, we have consistently added new items to the survey in order to provide a more nuanced picture of the human security facet of national reconciliation. This survey, for example, has provided the second measurement of citizen satisfaction with a range of basic government service delivery items. We intend to continue expanding on this theme in future surveys.

Increasing focus has in recent years been put on the consolidation of key democratic institutions. Such discourse is appropriate at a time when the country has just celebrated its first 10th years of democracy. Today significant pressure on these institutions comes from two quarters. The more palpable of these is the growing demand on service delivery, against the background of significant macro-economic constraints. Less tangible is the need to create a common loyalty to these institutions, in the face of varying expectations. Such expectations tend to be categorized along the lines of the former apartheid racial classifications. This has become particularly evident in the ways South Africans have reacted in recent months to a series of high-profile judicial processes. This is significant, because the rule of law forms the backbone of our democracy. Future surveys will, therefore, engage this aspect more intensively with an increased number of measures that will deal with popular attitudes towards the judiciary.

As has been the case in previous reports, we have attempted to provide responses to as many survey items as possible. In most instances we have only provided a racial breakdown of opinions. This should, however, not be regarded as our only or primary mode of analysis. Constraints on the length of the document did not allow us to go into depth with regard to other demographic variables. While we have reported responses in terms of these variables in exceptional circumstances, we do encourage readers of the report to approach the IJR, should additional information about the impact of such indicators be required.

What is the status of the SA Reconciliation Barometer at this juncture? It is important to note at the outset of this report that we can not claim to have identified particular trends after only two years of research. This period is simply too brief to make statements of this nature. This point has also been made at several instances in this report, particularly when referring to the impact that the April 2004 election appear to have had on responses. It is in the light of this that we have decided to limit the number of surveys to one per year. What we can offer at this stage, are informed snapshots of the state of reconciliation in South Africa. We are confident that, by putting these together as pieces of the larger puzzle, the project will within the next year start to reveal more general patterns of national reconciliation. This prospect is an exciting one, which will provide the project and those who

consult with a more advanced capacity to understand the way in which we as South Africans relate to each other.

2. Approach

When embarking on the task of 'measuring' a process that is as subjective and contested as reconciliation, certain inherent shortcomings have to be accepted. These range from the need to oversimplify certain dimensions of the reconciliation process for the sake of measurability, to having to focus on only a select few facets of this complex and multi-dimensional concept.

The need to conduct rigorous empirical research on the progression of the national reconciliation process exists and, in fact, is greater than the inherent difficulties in embarking this task. But, as is the case with all exploratory research (whether of a quantitative or qualitative nature), a cautionary approach should be employed. The obvious danger of excessive reductionism in translating such a complex process in relation to a handful of critical indicators is recognized. This research by no means asserts that reconciliation is solely composed of these critical dimensions and is no bigger than the sum of its parts. On the contrary, this research recognizes the definitional and contextual ambiguity of the process. It is a first attempt at some necessary comparable quantification of the national reconciliation process.

Additionally it is important to bear in mind that a difference in results between three consecutive public opinion surveys does not necessarily represent a trend. Even in cases where change has been tremendous, three measurements – particularly across quite a short time period - do not provide sufficient evidence to assume the presence of a trend. Such changes should be treated as fluctuations; the absence or presence of trends will be confirmed by data emanating from consequent rounds of the survey.

3. Survey Design

The analysis that follows is based on the results from four national surveys conducted in March-April 2003, October-November 2003, April-May 2004 and November 2004. In all four the exact same sampling methodology, questionnaires and interviewing techniques were used, allowing for maximum comparability.

Markinor undertook the fieldwork for the surveys and the information was obtained by adding a substantial set of questions to Markinor's M-Bus (an omnibus survey conducted on a nationally representative sample of South Africans aimed at measuring socio-political trends). Face-to-face interviews were done with socially and racially representative samples of 3 498, 3 499, 3 498, and 3 499 South Africans respectively. The sample for all three was representative of the entire South African population, 16 years and older, within a 2.3% margin of error.

The survey instrument was first prepared in English and then translated into Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu, North Sotho, South Sotho and Setswana. As a result, respondents were interviewed in the language of their choice. No respondent was interviewed by an interviewer belonging to a different racial group than the one they belonged to.

A formal pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted on a convenient sample of seventy-five South Africans. Soft quotas were utilised to create a sample that closely resembles the probable proportions of these characteristics in the population as a whole. Thirty-five of the interviews were conducted in the Western Cape, whilst forty occurred in Gauteng, with at least 10 interviews

conducted in each of the 7 official survey languages. In light of the pre-test outcome and interviewer feedback, a number of questions were re-worded, others were completely omitted and the order of some questions was changed.

To allow for statistical analysis of interracial differences, four distinct sub-samples, (one for each race group), were drawn by applying multistage stratification procedures. The numbers of completed interviews for blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians were always approximately 2000, 938, 391, and 170 respectively. The samples covered both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, and respondents included people residing in informal settlements, deep rural areas, and those living in multi-member households.

The black African sample was created through a geographical area-probability sampling procedure. The coloured, white and Indian samples were created through area-stratified sampling procedures according to region, town, suburb and community size, with randomly selected sampling points. The smaller size of the white, coloured and Indian samples demanded that the samples at each sampling point be quota controlled for gender, age and working status.

The accuracy of approximately 10% of all interviews was verified through a personal back check, whilst about 20% of the remainder of completed interviews was checked telephonically during each of the rounds of the survey.

Some population groups were over-sampled to provide a large enough number of cases to allow for statistically significant results. Due to the fact that some population sub-samples are not selected proportional to their size in the greater South African population, it is necessary to weight the data after data entry to render it more representative of the population as a whole. The South African Advertising Research Foundations (SAARF) All Media Product Survey data was used to do this.

It should be noted that in making reference to South African racial sub-groups as black, white, Indian and coloured, no approval of the apartheid-era classification system or its underlying theory of race is intended. The nature of present day South African society still bears the scars of its apartheid past, and, as such, substantial differences between the conditions and orientations of the four main racial groups often persist and need to be rigorously analysed.

When reading the analysed data outputs one should bear in mind that each of the data sets have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.3%. To ensure that all changes noted in this report are significant and not the result of some form of measurement error, a difference of 8% or greater has been identified as the cut-off point. Many social scientists only deem changes greater than 10% significant. This longitudinal survey has, however, been designed to reflect both short-term fluctuations and long-term trends and successive rounds of the surveys have a very short lapse time of only approximately six months, rendering the 8% cut-off acceptable.

4. Conceptual Clarity of Reconciliation

4.1. Meanings of Reconciliation

The literature and academic debate on reconciliation in the South African context offers multiple definitions or paradigms of reconciliation, and many of these paradigms are not mutually exclusive. The following offers a brief description of the most commonly used meanings of the concept in South Africa.

The two most prominent meanings of reconciliation promoted in post-apartheid South Africa are those ascribing to the non-racial and multi-cultural schools of thought. The multicultural model is based on the notion that South Africa is composed of a conglomeration of different cultures and histories. As such, the reconciliation process seeks to bridge the past, whilst simultaneously bridging the divisions between different communities. The aim is to create a society where citizens and communities live together in a peaceful and tolerant manner, whilst respecting and even celebrating diversity.

The vision of the non-racial ideology entails “dissolving the racial identities arising from the policies of the past and implores the TRC [*and other such efforts*] to convert people...into non-racial citizens within a harmoniously integrated social setting”.¹ Theoretically this model of reconciliation speaks to disbanding pre-apartheid identities and re-constructing new, non-racial ones.

An additional model is the Human Rights model, which sets the bar far lower. Gerwel, a prominent proponent of this paradigm, argues that reconciliation requires “the institutionalisation of consensus seeking”.² This model suggests that social interaction needs to be governed by the rule of law, largely to prevent the atrocities of the past from being repeated. It involves the creation of the so-called ‘minimally decent society’, where normative and legal boundaries control interaction and create the space for peaceful coexistence.

Whilst the path of the reconciliation process for the human rights paradigm moves from the macro to the micro, another model, the religious model, focuses on an approach that speaks about concentric circles of reconciliation, working from the individual to the societal level. Notions of truth and forgiveness are undeniably central to this model.

Another paradigm is that of *ubuntu*, which asserts that all community members share a common humanity, and by denying the common humanity of others, the community and its members are dehumanised.³ While there is some overlap between the religious and *ubuntu* paradigms, a great deal of emphasis in *ubuntu*, is placed on the inter-connectedness of individuals. The re-integration of perpetrators into the community is seen as an act that restores the entire community to peace.

In some ways the developmental paradigm of transformation is diametrically opposed to the more subjective approach to reconciliation promoted by the *ubuntu* and religious models for reconciliation. The developmental paradigm advocates the remedying of historically induced inequalities, whilst simultaneously advocating a strategy of cooperation for the social and economic development of the nation. This model sees the subjective restoration or reconciliation of relationships as following naturally (or, at minimum, more easily) from a restitution process. This model requires an acknowledgment of past injustice and the willingness to redress the broad-scale injustices that continue to skew advantages in present day South Africa.

The developmental paradigm is quite distinct from the transformation model and is potentially the most ambitious and far-reaching of all the paradigms. Advocates of this interpretation assert that reconciliation requires structural and systemic adjustments, which include institutionalising a new post-apartheid value system, structure and political culture, as well as wide-ranging reparations. This model advocates that reconciliation cannot “develop in a sustainable way if structural injustices

¹ Hamber, B. (2002) “‘Ere their story die’: truth, justice and reconciliation in South Africa” in *Race & Class*. Vol. 44, Iss. 1, Pp. 66.

² Gerwel, J (2000) “Anticipating a Different Kind of Future” in Villa-Vicencio (ed)(2000) *Transcending a Century of Injustice*. The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation: Cape Town. Pp. 122.

³ Tutu, D. M. (1999) *No Future without Forgiveness*. Random House: New York.

in the political, legal and economic domains remain”.⁴ As such, this model prescribes that it is impossible to change the relationships in a post-conflict society if the material, structural and evaluative conditions under which these relationships were created remain unchanged.⁵

4.2. Individual or Political Reconciliation?

Another critical distinction is important. Amongst others,⁶ Borer cautions about the lack of conceptual clarity between differing levels of reconciliation, encouraging a conceptual separation between *interpersonal* reconciliation – between victims and perpetrators, for example- and *national* or *societal* reconciliation.⁷

According to Villa-Vicencio the critical distinction between political and individual reconciliation revolves around the fact that “political reconciliation can forego the psychological and moral challenges that many aggrieved individuals face, but often choose never to deal with in a thoroughgoing manner”.⁸ Political reconciliation provides the process through which to address and confront the issues that continue to impede sustainable peace. Bloomfield places this form of reconciliation at the heart of democratic politics.⁹ Ultimately political reconciliation demands a more socio-economically just and equitable society, characterized by an enduring human rights culture, respect for the rule of law, and trust in political institutions.

5. Unpacking Reconciliation

There is no way of directly measuring reconciliation. As a result the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* research works at two levels, the theoretical and empirical. The theoretical question of how the reconciliation process is unfolding will be inferred on the basis of the empirical evidence contained in the data gathered from the questionnaires. In order to measure South Africa’s progress along the path of reconciliation, this intangible concept was unpacked in relation to a number of critical indicators, each of which will be monitored and its progression regularly benchmarked.

Figure 1 depicts a tabular conceptual overview of the critical indicators. It is hypothesized that when the indicators strengthen or improve, reconciliation is likely to be advanced. The process of distilling a number of key indicators for reconciliation is a tricky undertaking. In this instance the decisions were made by means of a consultative process, and included an analysis of the results of an exploratory national survey conducted in late 2002; numerous critical discussions with academics, researchers, social theorists and practitioners working in the field and an extensive literature review. Some elements of each of the definitions discussed previously were included. The conceptual logic of the inclusion of each of the individual indicators will be expanded on in the relevant sections of the report.

⁴ Huyse, L. (2003) “The Process of Reconciliation” in Bloomfield, D, Barnes, T and Huyse, L. (eds) (2003) *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: Sweden. Pp. 21.

⁵ Esterhuysen, W (2000) “Truth as a trigger for transformation: from apartheid injustice to transformational justice” in Villa-Vicencio, C and Verwoerd, W. (eds) (2000) *Looking Back Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*. University of Cape Town Press: Cape Town.

⁶ Hayner, P. B (2001) *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. Routledge: New York.. Pp. 155; Villa-Vicencio, C. (2003) “The Politics of Reconciliation.” Unpublished paper. Pp. 3.

⁷ Borer, T.A. (2001) “Reconciliation in South Africa. Defining Success.” *Kroc Institute Occasional Paper 20:OP:1*. March 2001.Pp. 9.

⁸ Villa-Vicencio, C. (2003) “The Politics of Reconciliation.” Unpublished paper. Pp. 3.

⁹ Bloomfield, D (2003) “Reconciliation: An Introduction” in Bloomfield, D, Barnes, T and Huyse, L. (eds) (2003) *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: Sweden. Pp. 11.

Table1: Conceptual Overview of Reconciliation Indicators

Hypotheses	Indicators
<p>Human Security: If citizens do not feel threatened, they are more likely to be reconciled with each other and the larger system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical Security ▪ Expanded Economic Security¹⁰ ▪ Cultural Security
<p>Political Culture: If citizens view the Institutions, Structures and Values of the new system as legitimate and accountable, reconciliation is more likely to progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Justifiability of Extra-legal Action ▪ Legitimacy of Leadership ▪ Legitimacy of Parliament ▪ Respect for the Rule of Law ▪ Commitment to National Unity ▪ Commitment to multi-racial Political Parties
<p>Cross-cutting Political Relationships: If citizens are able to form working political relationships that cross divisions, reconciliation is more likely to advance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to more dialogue
<p>Dialogue: If citizens are committed to deep dialogue, reconciliation is more likely to be advanced.</p>	
<p>Historical Confrontation: If citizens are able to confront and address issues from the past, they are more likely to be able to move forward and be reconciled.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acknowledgement of Injustice of Apartheid ▪ Forgiveness ▪ Reduced levels of Vengeance
<p>Race Relations: If citizens of different races hold fewer negative perceptions of each other, they are more likely to form workable relationships that will advance reconciliation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross-racial Contact ▪ Cross-racial Perceptions ▪ Cross-racial Social Distance

The April/May 2004 round of the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* survey included a new dimension of research that will become a standard feature of all consequent rounds of the survey. Although still quite recent and not yet very expansive, there has been an increase in economic research focusing more on people's subjective evaluations of their economic circumstances. This element has been touched upon briefly, but inadequately, in previous rounds of the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* survey by the questions asking respondents whether they expected their economic situation in the future to have improved, deteriorated or to have remained the same as now.

This new addition to the survey instrument is intended to provide more in-depth data on South African's views of their economic circumstances, and includes questions of whether South Africans feel economically threatened, whether they think their welfare is better than that of their parents and whether they believe the government has improved their lot in life?

Both the quantitative and more qualitative research of the Institute have served to once again emphasise the salience of the material side of reconciliation, and in particular there is a need to understand whether South Africa's poor and unemployed think that things will get better, whether they believe that the government will deliver some salvation from poverty or whether they have

¹⁰ The April/May 2004 round of the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* survey included a new dimension intended to provide more in-depth data on South African's views of their economic circumstances.

given up hope all together. From now on the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* can capture some of these views, beliefs and expectations of South Africans of their past, present and future economic circumstances.

6. Human Security

The past decade has witnessed the expansion of the concept of security to encompass the notion of human security. According to the Commission on Human Security *Human Security Now* Report, it involves “creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity”.¹¹ The exact nature of the link between human security and reconciliation still requires a great deal of research, whilst the chain of causality is yet to be empirically proven. There is, however, a great deal of anecdotal hypothesising that a threat to human security is counterproductive for reconciliation in that it retards the capacity of societies to re-integrate in a sustainable manner.

Following this chain of argument, a perceived absence of sufficient human security can be destructive for reconciliation at a number of levels. People who perceive their short- or long- term survival, dignity or livelihood to be threatened, are more likely to be distrustful or suspicious of others. Furthermore, they are more likely to develop hostility towards other groups suspected of being the cause of this threat.

Some conflict mediators, most notably Kraybill, also argue that post-conflict societies need a socially and physically safe environment for people, whether they are a beneficiary, victim, perpetrator or otherwise, to redefine themselves and their future path, before they are ready to attempt to reconcile with others.¹² Thus although no hard empirical proof exists, anecdotal analysis suggests that a perceived threat to human security creates a setting in which reconciliation is less likely to progress.

The *SA Reconciliation Barometer* instrument included a number of items to test this hypothesis. Three specific threats to human security have been selected, the first two respectively representing concerns for economic survival (in light of increasing poverty and unemployment) and personal safety (particularly in light of high levels of crime and a traumatic history of extensive political violence). The third dimension concerns perceptions of increasing threats to minority groups’ cultural, linguistic and religious survival.

6.1. Physical Threat

A recent Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University national poll reveals that more than four in ten South Africans (43%) say crime is one of the most important problems for the government to address. Additionally, a massive 81% of South Africans thought crime is a serious threat to democracy.¹³ Without question, the fear of being a victim has impacted significantly on the way in which South Africans relate to each other.¹⁴

According to an IJR manual, entitled *Learning to Live Together*, there are at least five ways in which crime obstructs reconciliation. It “undermines public trust in nation-building, it creates more victims and more trauma, it reinforces apartheid segregation and socio-economic inequality, it entrenches

¹¹ Ogata, S. and Sen, A. (2003) *Human Security Now*. Report of the Commission on Human Security. New York.

¹² Krog, A (1998) “South Africa: On the Tortured Road to Reconciliation” in the *Cape Argus*, 22 July 2003.

¹³ *Survey of South Africans at Ten Years of Democracy*. (2004) Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University. March 2004.

¹⁴ Legget, T (2004) “Race Risk and Threat in South Africa”, *SA Reconciliation Barometer*, Vol. 2 Issue 1, p. 6.

racial prejudice and it undermines social stability and tolerance".¹⁵ Simpson speaks of the new patterns of violent crime in South Africa as "new vehicles for re-racialising and physically and emotionally re-dividing the 'new' South Africa". According to him crime can also serve as a vehicle for popular outrage, which also hinders social stability and the reconciliation process.¹⁶

The general perception that current levels of physical threat are high is likely to be detrimental to reconciliation. But people may be willing to bear temporary hardship if they expect future improvements. Therefore it is pivotal to monitor whether South Africans expect a deterioration or improvement in their personal and general levels of safety and security.

The latest official crime statistics, released in September 2004, contained data, which suggest that significant headway has been made in the fight against crime.¹⁷ The data pointed to a year-on-year decrease of 8% in murder rates (24% since 1994), a 16% decrease for attempted murder (12% since 1994), and a 6% decrease in car high-jacking (figure since 1994 not available). Although other violent crimes, such as rape and robbery with aggravated circumstances, have risen, their rate of increase has slowed down. Of particular interest to this report, is whether the trends SA Reconciliation Barometer surveys surveys. Is there a perception of increased personal safety amongst the broader populace that match the optimistic figures in the crime report? Put differently, is an 8% dent visible enough to change public perception, when 20000 murders have still been committed in the pas year?

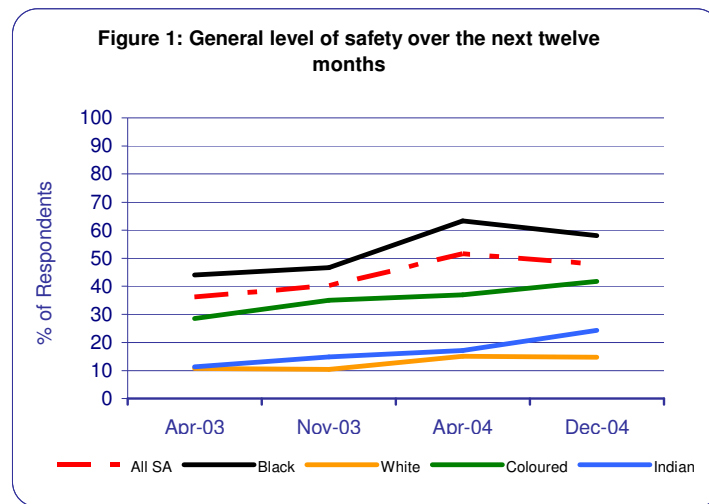


Figure 1 - How do you think general levels of safety will change over the next twelve months?
(Percentage who thought it would get better)

¹⁵ Du Toit, F (ed) (2003) Learning to Live Together: Practices of Social Reconciliation. Rondebosch: The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Pp. 119.

¹⁶ Simpson, G (2002) "Uncivil Society": Challenges for reconciliation and justice in South Africa" Paper presented at the Stockholm International Forum Conference on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Stockholm, Sweden, 23 – 24 April 2002.

¹⁷ Institute for Security Studies (2004), <http://www.iss.co.za/CJM/stats0904/category.htm>, 2 July 2005

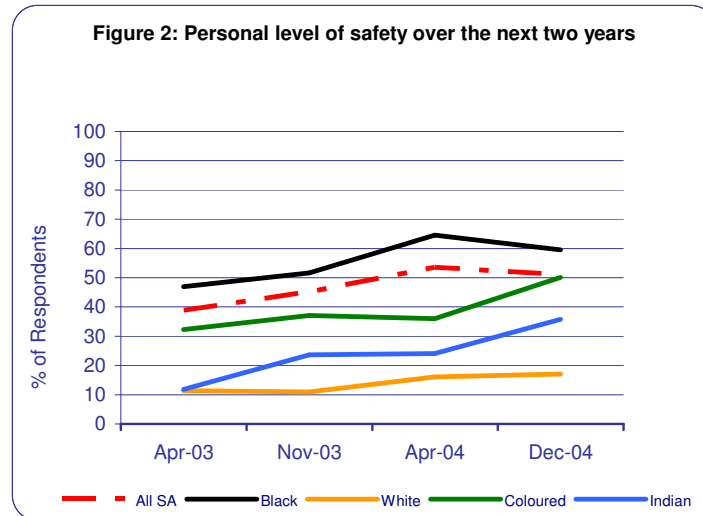


Figure 2: How do you think general levels of safety will change in the next two years?
(Percentage who thought it would get better)

Since 2003 we have been asking respondents to comment on their assessment of general levels of safety in South African over the next twelve months (see Figure 1), as well as the prospects for their personal safety over the next two years (see Figure 2). Our results indicate that at 47%, there has been a slight decline amongst those who felt that general safety levels would improve in the year to come, but this is still about 11% higher than it was in April 2003 when the first SARB survey went into the field. Responses to a similar question, enquiring about general safety prospects for the next two years, virtually mirrors the patterns for the 12 month period. Interestingly, a comparison of Figures 1 and 2 suggest that respondents tended to link general safety to their expectations of personal safety.

A disaggregation of the total sample into different racial groups provides evidence that all groups appear to have gained confidence in the prospect for higher levels of general and personal safety, compared to two years ago. Black Africans remain the most positive on both measurements, while optimism amongst coloureds has also shot up significantly. Indians still record fairly low percentages, but positive evaluation has more than doubled in the measured period. Evaluations on both counts remain low amongst white South Africans. Their assessment of general safety levels has gone down, and although there has been a slight increase in positive perception about personal safety, it is not statistically significant. This may indicate that whites tend to perceive higher levels of physical threat, which in turn may lead to the self-isolation of this community from other South African population groups. This topic has been dealt with at length in the first of our newsletters in 2004.¹⁸

The overall picture, therefore, seem to suggest that South Africans tend to feel more secure in terms of both their personal and general safety in the short to medium term. But to what extent do they attribute this improved state of affairs to government efforts to combat crime?

¹⁸ See SA Reconciliation Barometer, Vol. 2 (1).

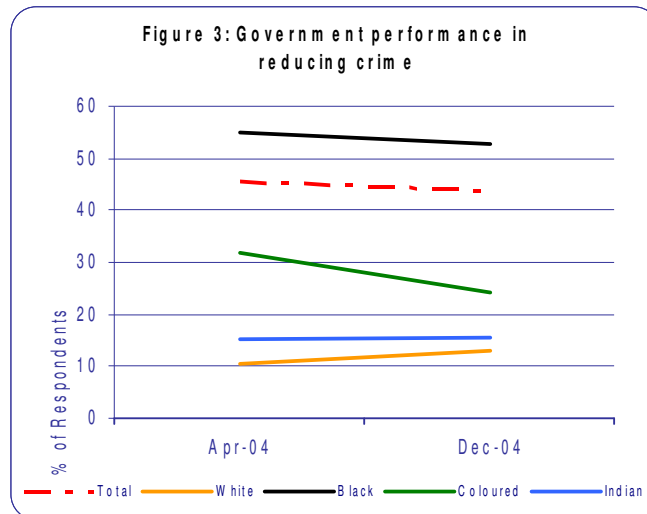


Figure 3: How well do you think government is handling the problem of reducing crime?
(Percentage who thought government is doing well)

During the third round of the SARB we have introduced a series of questions dealing with government performance in key policy areas. One of these asked respondents to evaluate government's ability to reduce crime (see Figure 3). While it may still be too early to make a pronouncement on particular trends in response to this question and its relation to those dealing with personal and general safety, a few aspects need to be pointed out for future reference and investigation.

The slightly downward trajectories that are visible in Figures 1 and 2 for all South Africans and black Africans in the November 2004 survey, are being matched by similar trajectories for these two groups in Figure 3. In the same way, the upward trajectories for whites and Indians in Figures 1 and 2 are matched by upward trajectories in Figure 3. The only group that defies this almost parallel movement has been coloured South Africans. Despite an increase in their positive perceptions about personal and general safety in the short and medium term, their rating for government's performance in combating crime has come down. It would be interesting to see whether this pattern would repeat itself in the fifth survey, which will be conducted in April 2005. Before this, it would be inappropriate to speculate on possible explanations.

6.2. Economic Threat

After almost a decade of fiscal austerity, Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, announced in his 2005 Budget Speech that South Africa's "economic fundamentals were now in place". This, according to Manuel, allowed government to allocate increasing amounts of resources to the country's development needs, especially infrastructural spending. For supporters of government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) this served as vindication for the persistence with a policy that has been highly unpopular amongst the ANC's alliance partners. The proponents of GEAR argued that it managed to provide the platform from which the country could be catapulted into a higher growth trajectory. Its opponents pointed to its devastating effects on employments and social investment.

Despite the spending constraints imposed by GEAR and the jobless growth that accompanied the restructuring of the economy, the South African government has over the past ten years managed to broaden its reach towards more citizens. In its synthesis report on the implementation of its

programmes, *Towards a Ten Year Review*, government, for example cites an increase in expenditure on social grants to the tune of 24.8 billion between 1994 and 2003, with the number of beneficiaries having grown from 2.6 million to 6.8 million.¹⁹ For millions of South African who previously did not have access to these and other forms of government assistance, this pointed to a significant break with the past.

However, a comparison of the 1996 and 2001 censuses in the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation's Transformation Audit 2004, titled *Taking Power in the Economy*, reveals that although access to basic services has improved, income poverty and income inequality increased for the population as a whole over this period.²⁰ This research, based on a comparative analysis of the recently released 10% micro-samples of the 1996 and 2001 censuses by economists Murray Leibbrandt, Laura Poswell and others, suggests that despite the positive impact on well-being of changes in the economy and in service delivery, the financial benefits of the past decade's economic reform have been limited for many of the country's poor.

At the same time, the Transformation Audit shows that despite a return to economic growth, there is evidence that formal sector employment continued its decrease from its 1995 level in the last years of the 20th century. Fortunately it seemed to have reached its low-point in 2000, with the number of formal sector workers rising again in 2001. Since the last census both formal and informal sector employment levels have risen, which may bode well for poverty alleviation, but so has unemployment, driven by a rapid growth in the labour force.

Shortly after the conclusion of the fourth round of the SARB, Statistics South Africa released a set of revised financial indicators which confirmed a belief that was widely held by many market analysts at the time – the economy had indeed been growing at more robust levels than reflected in official statistics. GDP growth for the third quarter reached 5,6%, while the annual growth rate was revised up from 3% to 3,8%. Since then more feel-good statistics, such as new record lows in the inflation rate and small, but significant declines in the unemployment rate followed. Amidst all the positive sentiment, increased consumer spending seems to suggest that many ordinary South Africans have also begun to experience the benefits of the economic upswing so widely reported in the financial sections of our newspapers.

Both the positive sentiment, as well as the actual experience of economic prosperity, has significance for social reconciliation in South Africa. The distribution of new wealth is, arguably, a more effective and socially less disruptive way to narrow wealth gaps between rich and poor, than government-induced measures to enforce the transfer or relinquishment of assets under conditions of economic stagnation or decline. Given the fact that the distribution of economic wealth is still racially skewed in South Africa, increased and more equitably-dispersed prosperity as opposed to inter-group transfers, may, therefore, alleviate interracial competition for resources.

6.2.1 Economic Expectations

Whereas 60% of respondents have indicated during the third round of the SARB that they expected economic conditions in South Africa to improve, the corresponding figure for the fourth round was 55.4% (see Figure 4). This decline corresponds to an almost similar decline amongst the biggest constitutive group of the sample, black Africans. While a decline was also recorded amongst Indian

¹⁹ *Towards a Ten Year review: Synthesis Report on Implementation of Government Programmes.* (2003) Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services (PCAS), The Presidency. October 2003.

²⁰ Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (2004) *Economic Transformation Audit 2004: Taking Power in the Economy*, Pp. 76-98.

respondents, the white and coloured groups have registered increases of 6,4% and 3,8% respectively.

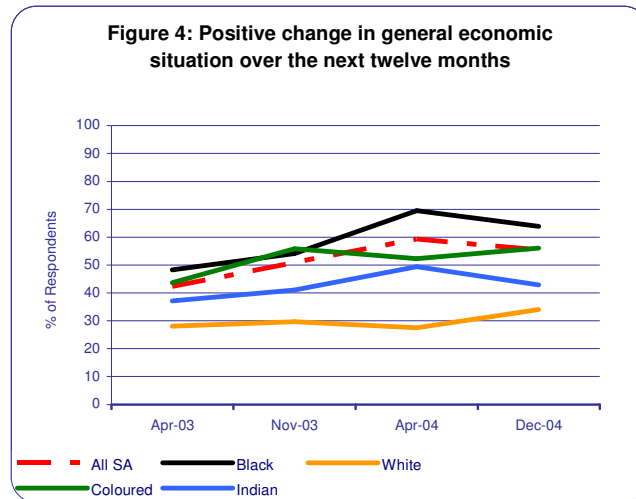


Figure 4: How do you think the economic situation in South Africa will change in the next 12 Months? (Percentage improvement)

Figure 5, which reports on responses regarding the prospects for an improvement in the personal economic situation of respondents, follows a very similar pattern to responses regarding the general economic situation. Here as well a decline of almost 5 percentage points can be found amongst the general population, which, again, is largely influenced by an almost corresponding decline amongst black Africans. Coloured confidence in their personal economic fortunes strengthens by about 8%, while there is little movement in the statistics for whites and Indians.

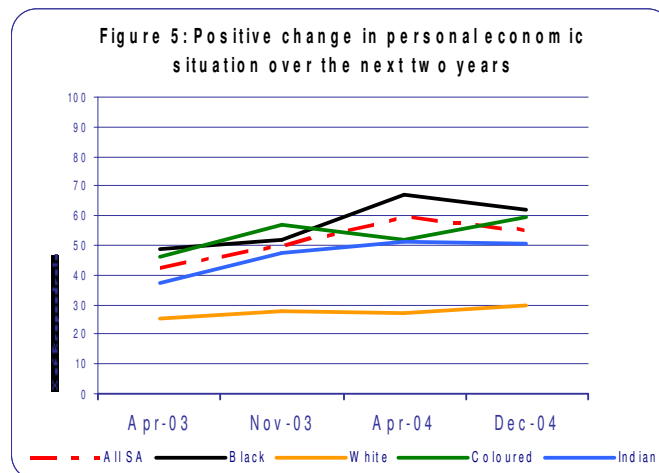


Figure 5: How do you think the economic situation of people like you will change during the next two years? (Percentage improvement).

Despite the general decline in positive evaluations in responses to the above two questions, there still appears to be much more confidence for general and personal economic improvement amongst respondents than two years ago. The same can also be said about the individual population groups that have been surveyed.

The mere comparison of racial groups alone does, however, not do justice to an analysis of perceptions on future economic conditions. It is also important to look at how people from different household income groups perceive their economic prospects.²¹

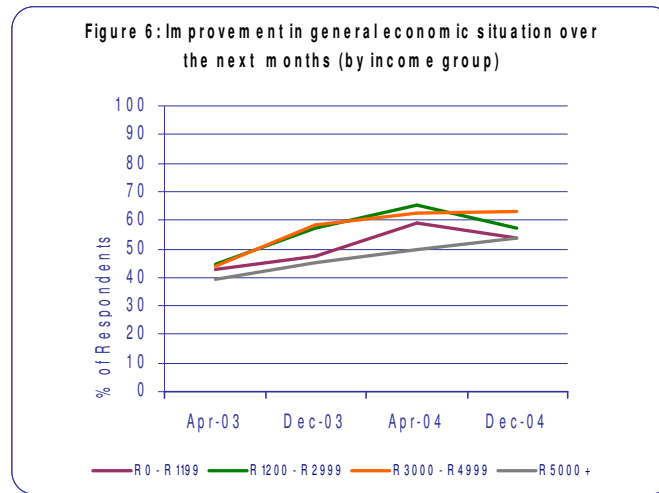


Figure 6: How do you think the economic situation in South Africa will change in the next 12 Months? (Percentage who thought it would get better)

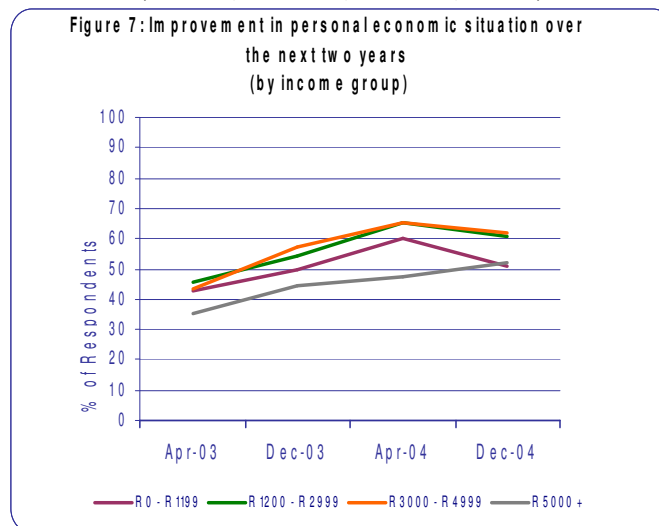


Figure 7: How do you think the economic situation of people like you will change during the next two years? (Percentage who thought it would get better).

All the income categories, with the exception of the R5000+ category, have shown a decline in their prediction for improved general and personal economic conditions. As is the case amongst the different population groups, the evaluations for each of the income categories are nevertheless much more positive than those that were recorded during the first round of the SARB. The decline in the three lower income groups can be attributed to a general decline in confidence for better economic prospects amongst black African respondents in all income categories. However, the continuing rise of confidence amongst the highest income category can be explained by increased

²¹ For the purpose of this analysis we have collapsed the original 19 income categories in the survey into 4 new categories (R0 – R1199, R1200 – R2999, R3000 – R4999, and R5000+). This has been done to enhance the comparative value of the analysis, since almost 80% of respondents fall within the lowest 5 income categories.

confidence amongst white respondents that constitute 50% of the R5000+ group and, to a lesser extent, coloured people that constitute 11%, of this category. This is an important trend to note, given the fact that 85% of all whites fall in this highest category. Their confidence in general economic improvement after the fourth round stands at 37% (up from 29%) and positive evaluation of personal economic prospects at 35% (up from 28%). This is still much lower than confidence levels in the same income category for black Africans (73% and 77% for general and personal prospects respectively), but it still represents a very positive upward trend.

Overall it appears as if race is still a fairly reliable predictor of responses to questions measuring general and personal confidence in future economic conditions. Despite significant disadvantage in the economic sphere, black Africans continue to posit the highest levels of confidence in the improvement of general and personal economic prospects. The reverse is true for white South Africans. Despite their comparative affluence, they generally remain cynical about the possibilities for improvement. There is nevertheless an indication that this distrust may slowly be eroding. The opinions of coloured and Indian respondents on these two questions appear to be more fluid. Further surveys would allow us to come to a better understanding of their response patterns to these particular questions.

6.2.2. Income and Well-being Poverty

In the third round of the survey, respondents were asked for the first time to evaluate their personal financial situation as well as their personal living conditions. Those who completed the survey were requested to indicate how their present disposition for both measures compared to that of a year ago. Given the fact that the latest data was collected only eight months after the third round, it is not surprising that it does not differ significantly from that of the third round (See Figures 8 and 9).

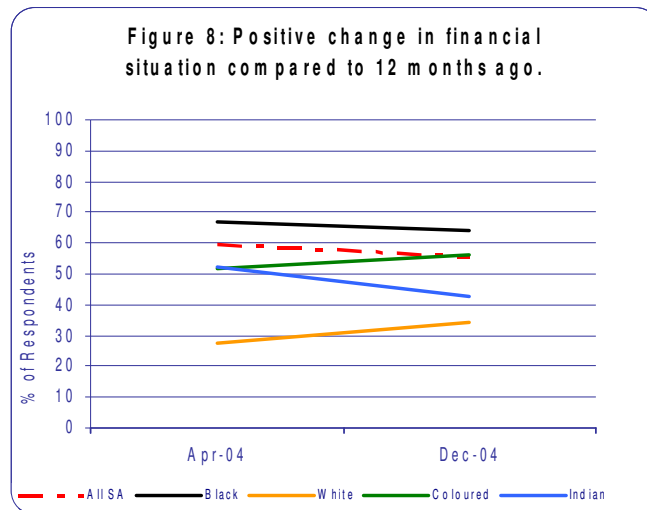


Figure 8: How does your financial situation compare to that of 12 months ago? (Percentage who thought it was better)

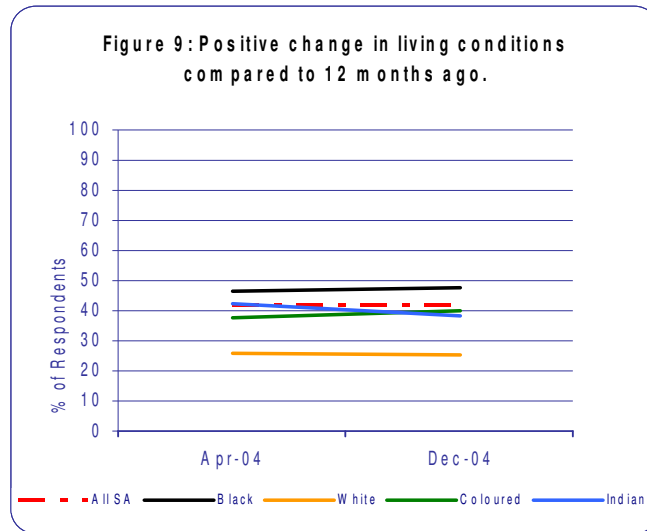


Figure 9: How do your living conditions compare to that of 12 months ago?
(Percentage who thought it was worse).

Nationally there has been a decline of almost four percentage points amongst those who felt that their financial situation was better off than a year ago. Nevertheless, more than 50% of all South Africans still believe that prospects for an improvement in their personal finances look rosy. The decline on the national level is matched by an almost equal decrease amongst black African respondents from 67% to 63%. The biggest decline is registered amongst Indian respondents whose positive responses dropped to under 50%.

Amongst both whites (34%) and coloureds (56%) there has been an increase in confidence that their personal finances may be in a healthier state, come November 2005. While the growth in positive sentiment amongst whites comes from a low base, the increase amongst coloureds is more interesting. The question must be asked how this finding can be reconciled with strong feelings of coloured marginalisation, which have been most strongly articulated by the working class in recent months.

6.2.3. Unemployment

The decline in the number of unemployed South Africans has been another dose of good news in early 2005.²² Statistics South Africa found that in September 2004 the unemployment rate of 26,2% was 1,7% down from the 27,9% a year earlier. Although the decline was modest, it was statistically significant and some upbeat economists remarked at the time that South Africa may at last have turned the corner on the issue.

This survey was conducted in early November 2004 when these employment statistics were made public. The question to be asked is whether the margin of decline in the unemployment levels have been sufficient to impact on popular perspectives on the prospects of finding employment.

²² Statistics South Africa, (2004), *SA Labour Force Survey*, September 2004, p.iv.

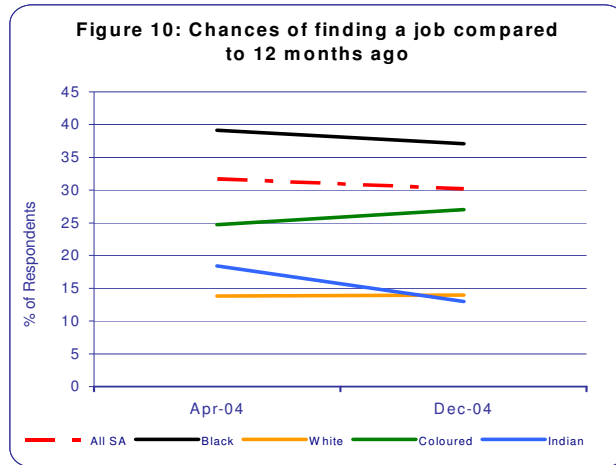


Figure 10: How do your chances of finding a job compared to 12 months ago?
(Percentage that thought it would improve)

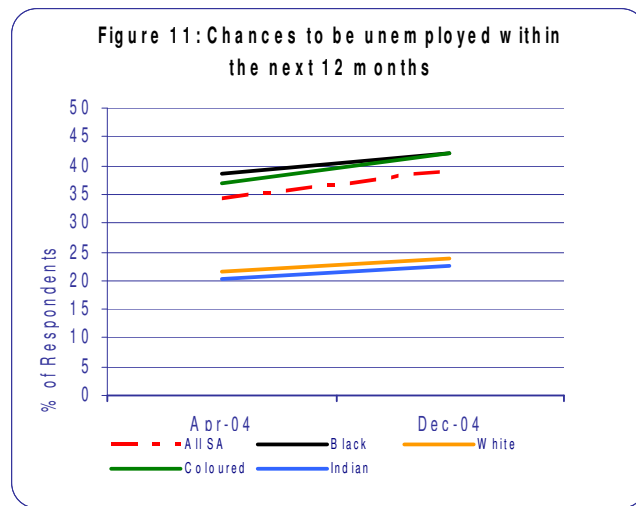


Figure 11: It is likely that you will be unemployed during some stage in the next year?
(Percentage agreement)

Figures 10 and 11 suggest that popular sentiment towards employment creation remains negative. Fewer South Africans were optimistic in November 2004 about the availability of job opportunities than April of the same year. During the same period scepticism about personal job security also increased. With the exception of coloured respondents, who have slightly more optimism about the availability of jobs, all population groups followed the more pessimistic national trajectories on both items. These items were only introduced in the previous round of the survey and comments about particular patterns or trends may be premature. Given the economy's inability over the past decade to create employment at a faster pace than labour market growth, it would be reasonable to assume that public responses to these questions would have been in the same range in 2003 when the first two SARB surveys were conducted.

It is unlikely that there would be any significant changes in responses in the 2005 survey. During the first half of 2005 Telkom has announced substantial retrenchments, while the strength of the rand has also forced the mining- and manufacturing industries to lay off thousands of workers. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers have, as usual, been worst affected by this spate of retrenchments. Our expectation, therefore, is that there may very well be a further deterioration in these figures.

These perceptions do impact on broader social relations. Unemployment leads to poverty, which further exacerbates the country's high levels of income inequality. Insecurity and despair may heighten social tension or even lead to social instability. Given the strong racial cleavages in our society, this may manifest itself in racial tones, but given the growing intra-group disparities within all population groups, as reported in the Transformation Audit, the prospect of stronger class mobilisation can not be excluded in future.²³

Very aware of these dangers, government has signalled its intent to play a more active role in the economy in order to stimulate growth and, particularly, job creation. These would include more direct policy interventions to steer the economy towards a higher growth trajectory. In April and November of 2004 we have asked respondents how they rate government policy initiatives to create employment.

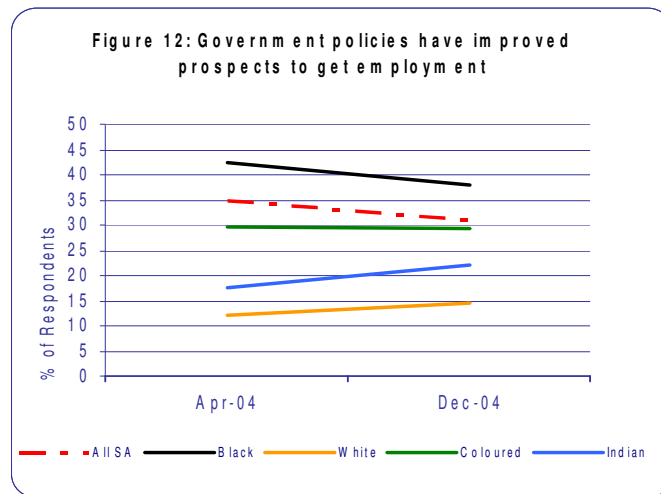


Figure 12: The government's policies over the last 12 months have strongly improved the prospects of people like me to find a job (Percentage agreement).

While aware that government policy alone cannot be held responsible for performance in job creation, this project is particularly interested in the extent to which the broader public and its constituent groups perceive government as impartial purveyor of policy that can regulate and mitigate the impact of other external determinants, such as international markets and the historical structure of the domestic economy.

From April to November 2004 there had been a decline in the overall national approval ratings of government policies to stimulate employment growth. In April satisfaction with government initiatives to create jobs stood at 34,8%, but declined to 31,8% in November. The largest drop occurred amongst black African respondents whose rating for the effectiveness of employment policies dropped from 42,3% to 38,1%. For coloured respondents the decline was marginal from 29,5% to 29,2%. White respondents' saw an improvement in job prospects, signified by an increase in their rating from 12% to 14,4%. The largest increase in approval ratings took place amongst Indian respondents, whose satisfaction with government employment policies increased from 17,7% to 22,1%.

²³ Leibbrand, M. et al (2004) 'South African Poverty and Inequality: Measuring the Changes' in Brown, S. and Fölscher A. (eds.) *Economic Transformation Audit 2004*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation: Cape Town, p. 29.

Two interesting points may be considered when interpreting these findings. The first is the fact that the increases amongst white and Indian respondents have both taken place from a low base below 20%. Their ratings of employment policy initiatives over the past year, therefore, remain low. This is significant, because white and Indian South Africans have the lowest unemployment rates of South Africa's four main constituent population groups, with 5,4% and 13,4% respectively.²⁴ Added to this is an important second feature that should be pointed out. Almost none of the positive evaluations came from unemployed white or Indian South Africans. Those that did approve of government's policies were already employed or not looking for a position. The same cannot be said of black African and coloured respondents. 32,2% of unemployed black African respondents, who were looking for a job at the time, approved of government's policies to create employment. The corresponding figure for coloured respondents was 22,1%. This raises the questions: Why do white and Indian respondents provide poor evaluations, despite their comparative privilege in terms of access to employment, and why are unemployed black African and coloured respondents more upbeat about government policies than other groups. These features need further investigation.

6.2.4. Government Evaluations

Scenes reminiscent of the apartheid era played themselves out in townships across South Africa during the first quarter of 2005. From Harrismith in the Free State to Gugulethu in the Western Cape people were taking to the streets in protests, some ending up in violent clashes between residents and law enforcement agencies. Unlike the eighties, the stones that were hurled at policemen and burning tires that barricaded entrances to these settlements were not in defiance against political oppression, but in protest against a lack of service delivery.

Unlike the internal anti-apartheid resistance of the seventies and eighties these uprisings did not unite the marginalised. It drove a wedge between residents and their elected leaders, but also within communities themselves. In the Western Cape relations between marginalised black African and coloured communities were, for example, also fractured by events such as the Bokmakierie incident in early 2005. At the heart of all these conflicts was the issue of access to social services. Charges of corruption, mismanagement and self-enrichment, which accompanied the violence, all centred either on the control or the distribution of these services.

²⁴ Statistics South Africa (2004) South African Labour Force Survey, September 2004

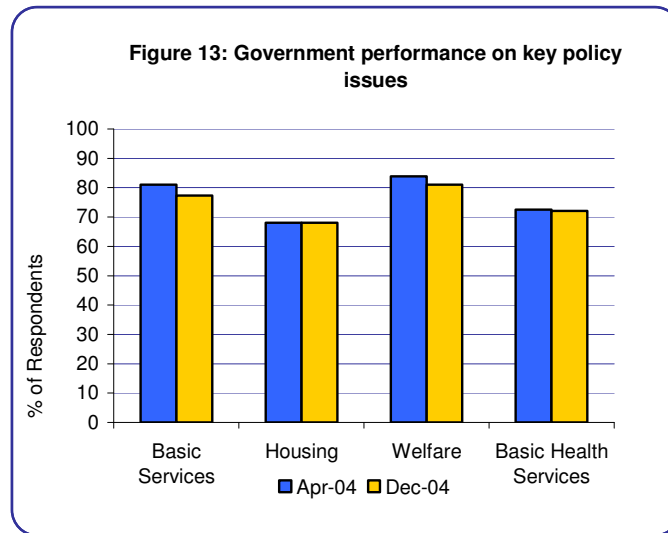


Figure 13: How would you say government is handling the delivery of the following services?
(Percentage approving)

Figure 13 reports on respondent evaluations of all South Africans for selected areas of government service delivery in April and November 2004. The overall picture looks positive. While there has been a marginal decline in approval ratings for the provision of basic services (water and electricity) and the distribution of welfare payments, approval ratings in the region of 80% for government's developmental efforts remain exemplary.

These positive ratings are difficult to reconcile with the increasing occurrence of protests against insufficient service delivery. They do not tell us much about the intensity of frustration and anger amongst the residual group that was not satisfied with government performance. The number and nature of protests to date do, nevertheless, suggest that they pose a challenge to political stability on the local government level. It is significant that several of these protests were marked by lawless behaviour, which may point to a lack of confidence or alienation from existing mechanisms of public participation.

6.3. Cultural Threat

The Institute's ongoing research into the relationship between identity, culture and violence, suggests that perceptions of cultural marginalisation continues to be a worrying aspect for certain South Africans, despite the constitutional entrenchment of rights relating to cultural and religious expression. Such feelings of insecurity abound especially amongst minority groups.²⁵

This is not unusual. A major aspect of addressing past imbalances has been the creation of new institutions, social entities, and values that are representative and endowed with symbolism and

²⁵ See Du Toit, F. (2004) "Religion, Identity and Violence: Proceeds from a conference on religion as justification for violence and inspiration for reconciliation." Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Monograph No 5. (2004); Bekker, S. & Leilde, A. (2004) "Faith in Cape Town: Identity, Cooperation and Conflict." Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Monograph No 6. (2004) and Joubert, P (2004) "For the love of God, Country and Volk – an in-depth look at Afrikaaner Extremism". Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Monograph No 4. (2004).

characteristics that embody the notion of a united nation. For the white minority, and especially Afrikaners, this process has probably been the most painful, given the fact that its cultural symbolism and religion permeated almost all spheres of social life during apartheid. But also for substantial segments of the coloured and Indian population groups the new political dispensation brought uncertainty about their place in a democratic South Africa. Despite their oppression under apartheid, the highly organised nature of the system afforded each a specific standing on the social ladder. Although their position in this socially engineered state was inferior to that of white South Africans, Indian and coloured people did occupy a position superior to that of indigenous African groups. This limited security also disappeared with the demise of the apartheid state. The new political order also challenges black Africans to assert their respective cultures in the aftermath that was left by apartheid phenomena, such as the migrant labour system, which eroded social and community life. Like minority groups, the oppressed majority also has to redefine its identity within the context of the constitutional state, devoid of institutionalised social hierarchies.

It may be asked whether there still is relevance in analysis that emphasise culture and identity if it is our objective to create a broader common South African culture. In their book, "Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion"²⁶, Jim Gibson and Amanda Gouws points out that, based on a 1996 survey, only about 21% of South Africans regard themselves as South Africans first and foremost. A mere 19% of Africans responded that their primary identity was South African. The majority (32%) defined themselves primarily in terms of a specific language group. A further 31% indicated "African" as their primary identity. Amongst whites 28% regarded themselves as South Africans in the first instance, 35% as either Afrikaner or English, and 22% as Christian. 29% of coloureds regarded themselves primarily as South African, "coloured" is the preferred identity for 28%, and another 27% define themselves in terms of religion as either Christian or Muslim. Amongst Indians 31% registered South African as primary identity, 38% as either Christian, Muslim or Hindu, and another 29% as either Indian or Asian. From their analysis it appears as if cultural, and specifically language and religious identities, are key determinants of how South Africans view themselves. This suggests that researchers will ignore culture and identity, as significant social determinants, to their detriment

It is with this context that respondents have been asked in consecutive SARB surveys about the conditions under which they practice their religion or speak their language. Firstly we have enquired about the extent to which respondents experienced respect for their language and religion from other groups. Furthermore, we have asked them to state whether they feel that government support for their particular group will increase in the coming year. Both questions have been asked to establish possible feelings of marginalisation from either the broader society or government in particular.

²⁶ Gibson, JL & Gouws A. (2003) *Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.78.

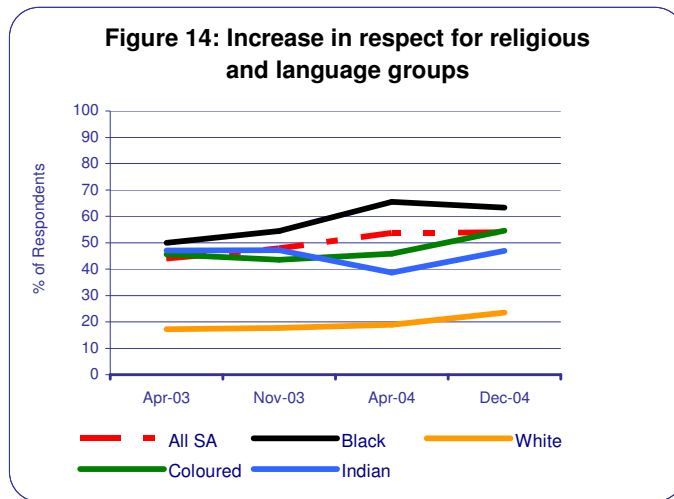


Figure 14: In the next twelve months, do you think other people's respect for your religious or language group will improve? (Percentage agreement)

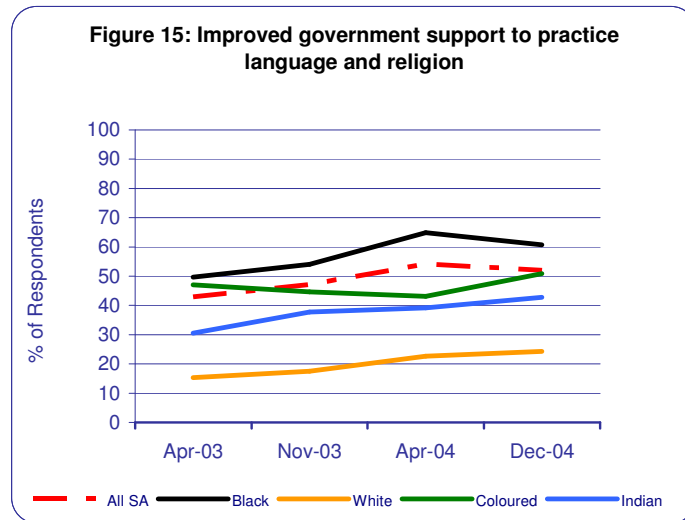


Figure 15: Will government support for different language and religious groups to practice their language or religion improve? (Percentage agreement)

Figure 14 point to notable increases in the way black African, white, and coloured people view other groups' acceptance of their own language or cultural group between the first and the most recent survey. Black African responses have been marginally down in the most recent survey, but it is too early to identify a downward trend. Despite a decline between the first and last surveys, Indian responses have returned to the same levels of April 2003. What these responses may be pointing to is a growing sense of mutual acceptance felt by South Africa's constitutive language and religious groups. This may create a more relaxed environment for interaction across religious and cultural lines.

Equally encouraging in Figure 15 is the increase in positive expectations of government support for communities to exercise their language and religion. Again, the increases amongst the minority groups are significant. It can be argued that they are pointing towards greater confidence in

government's capacity to be a neutral custodian of the rights of religious and cultural groups. The legitimacy that is derived from this type of confidence endows it with social capital that is needed to defuse instances where inter-group tensions do arise.

7. Political Culture

Almond and Verba regard political culture as “the specifically political orientations – attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of the self in the system”.²⁷ This would include notions of social justice, which in a divided society like South Africa, is inextricably linked to the matter of national reconciliation.

Our basic point of departure is that a culture of human rights and the general acceptance of democratic principles are minimal requirements for a successful reconciliation process. It would, however, be fallacious to assume that the new political institutions and the entrenchment of human rights have automatically transformed South Africa into a reconciled society. These institutions and rights should be rooted in a culture of respect and commitment to the ideals of a truly just and reconciled society. The shared allegiance and common trust in democratic institutions as independent purveyors of social justice are important commodities in the building of a reconciled society. However, the use of such institutions for partisan interests can inflict significant damage to a transitional society.

7.1. Leader Legitimacy

The political culture of a state is largely influenced by the leadership style of those who govern it. Each level of reconciliation, whether in a community-, organisational-, or national context, requires the direction and encouragement of some form of leadership, be it political, social, religious or economic. In terms of the broad national political reconciliation process, Van Zyl Slabbert contends that although there is no “magic formula” for becoming a reconciled nation, good political leadership, remains a key ingredient.²⁸

Visionary political leadership that is generally trusted and respected by the majority of citizens is crucial in transitional societies that grapple with a divided past. While the role of leaders in civil society cannot be discounted, it is within the political sphere where the new rules of social interaction and political conduct are being forged. Administrative skill, legislative capacity, and commitment to democratic principles are obvious qualities that citizens require from their leaders. In contexts where national reconciliation has not yet been consolidated, political office also demands moral authority that supersedes historical schisms. Such leadership prioritises the national good above the entertainment of sectoral power struggles, personal enrichment, or patronage in the distribution of resources.

It is an open question whether South Africans are able to make truly unbiased evaluations in this regard. Apartheid has not only succeeded in making them acutely aware of their group identity, but it has also created a perception that the demise or prosperity of an individual is linked to his/her group identity.²⁹ Leadership decisions about economic redistribution or the levelling of the political playing field is, therefore, likely to be interpreted through a group lens. Within this context it may be plausible to contend that individuals will generally choose to entrust their political fate with leaders

²⁷ Almond, GA & Verba, S. (1963) *The Civic Culture*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Pp. 13.

²⁸ *Financial Mail*, 8 September 2000.

²⁹ Gibson, JL and Gouws, A. op. Cit., p.81.

from their own group. This survey does not allow for conclusive answers in this regard. It is, nevertheless, possible to make inferences on the basis of responses to particular statements in the survey.

The survey instrument included two items designed to measure the perceived trustworthiness and attentiveness of political leaders. The first offered respondents the opportunity to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: “The people who run the country are not really concerned with what happens to people like me”. The data reveals that between the April 2003 and the April 2004 rounds of the survey, there was a 13% drop (from 57% to 44%) in the percentage of South Africans who thought that the leaders were not particularly concerned about their electorate’s life circumstances. As these interviews were conducted around the time of the national elections, it was contended in our previous report that this event might have had an impact on responses. As one could expect during an election period, political leaders were on a charm offensive to garner support for their parties. Suits were swapped for open neck shirts and for a brief period citizens were as likely to find politicians at their doorsteps as on the seven o’clock news.

The results of the November 2004 round of the SARB survey seem to have confirmed our assertion about an “election effect”. Figure 16 indicates that after a decline in agreement with the statement in April 2004, both the national and group responses increased significantly again in November. Black African responses suggest a greater belief that the political leadership is concerned about this group’s interests than during the first round of the survey. However, lower percentages of white, coloured, and Indian respondents seemed to believe that this is the case.

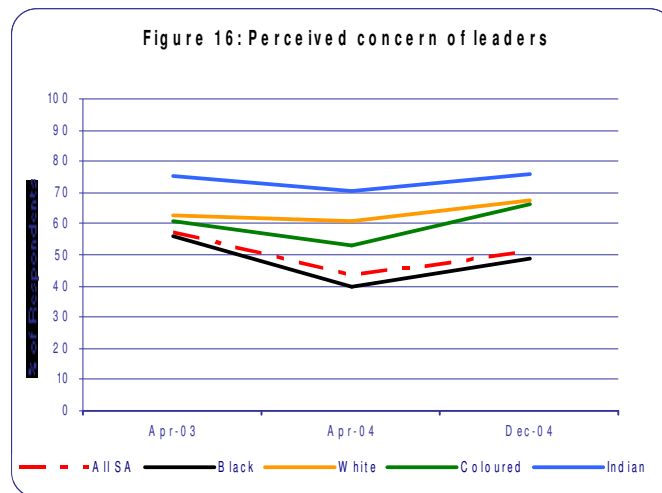


Figure 16: The people who run the country are not really concerned with what happens to people like me (Percentage in agreement)³⁰

Despite the impact of the election, responses to this statement still display a strong racial character. If anything, the “election effect” reinforces this contention. Against the background of Gibson and Gouws’ research on group identity, which suggest that two thirds of South Africans find security in their group identity, and within the context of a black African majority in government, it can be argued that the lower than average response from black African respondents (49%) can be linked to identification with the leadership in government. Conversely, white (68%), coloured (67%) and Indian (76%) responses, may be explained in terms of not belonging to a group that command significant political power. Their identities in this instance do not provide political security.

³⁰ This question was not asked in the November 2003 round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey.

If one accepts this thesis, it is nevertheless interesting that close to 50% of black Africans agreed with the statement that national leaders do not care about people like them. It is also not clear whether the high levels of minority agreement with the statement can be ascribed solely to group identity. There may also be factors, other than group identification, at play when evaluations are made about leadership legitimacy. One such factor, which has been raised in this regard, is South Africa's proportional representation electoral system. A second may be due to a perceived lack of public consultation and participation. Finally, and probably the most obvious, it can simply be due to individual evaluations of government performance.

A second item that was used to measure trust in leadership, has been the statement: "Most of the time I can trust the country's national leaders to do what is right." It is highly unlikely that the general public in any country around the world would trust its leaders unconditionally. Some even argue that a certain degree of distrust of national leaders is necessary, as a viable democracy requires of citizens to keep a watchful eye over its leaders.

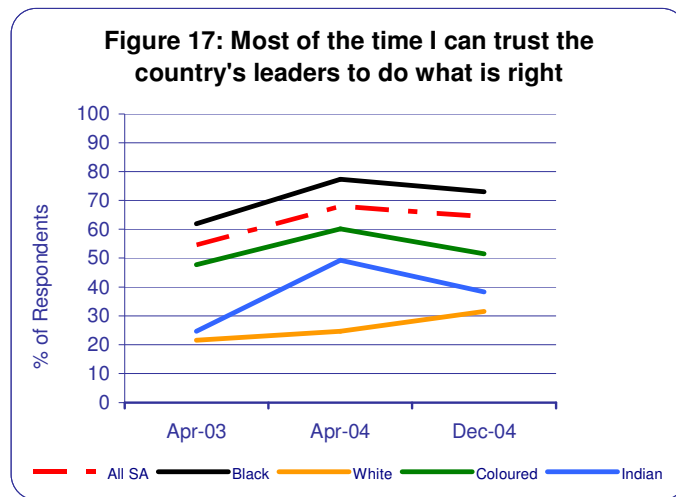


Figure 17: Most of the time I can trust the country's national leaders to do what is right. (Percentage in Agreement)³¹

It appears as if the election campaign might also have impacted on responses to this statement. Similar to the responses reported in Figure 16, levels of trust for all groups, except white respondents, have peaked in April 2004 and declined again in November of the same year. Significantly though is the fact that trust amongst all groups in November 2004 has been higher than it was at the first measurement in April 2003. Also noteworthy is the upward trajectory of white responses, which have not declined since the April 2004 elections. Taken together, it seems as if sentiments pertaining to trust in political leadership are moving closer to each other. This is a positive development.

7.2. Institutional Legitimacy

Unlike the classic Greek democratic model, modern democracies rarely cater for direct participation in the political system. The demands of lobbying and interest groups are simply too diverse to subject it to town hall meetings or referenda. It is the function of democratic institutions to mediate,

³¹ This question was not asked in the November 2003 round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey.

channel, and aggregate citizen participation in such a way that most citizens feel that the system serves their interests most of the time. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that a broad-based national consensus should exist about the impartiality, fairness, and ability of such institutions to regulate society in the best interest of all.

Of particular importance to the reconciliation process are those structures of the democratic system that are important for the institutionalisation and mediation of conflict, as well as those critical for establishing a culture of human rights. Of course citizens should be vigilant in their appraisal of the state, but a distinction should be made between constructive criticism and a lack of intrinsic support for-, and commitment to the democratic institutions, procedures and values they espouse. An absence of these critical requirements has ramifications for whether citizens can be considered “reconciled with the newly implemented democratic system”.³²

Ideally, a further range of institutions should be surveyed, but limited resources restrict this particular survey instrument to one institution, parliament (this will be expanded in the fifth round to the judicial system). In modern democracies parliament carries the responsibility of creating laws that protect and guarantee citizen’s human rights, and therefore has a critical role to play in ensuring a legislative environment that does not tolerate abuse of such rights. To this end the survey included three items to test the extent to which the general public finds parliament trustworthy and fair.³³

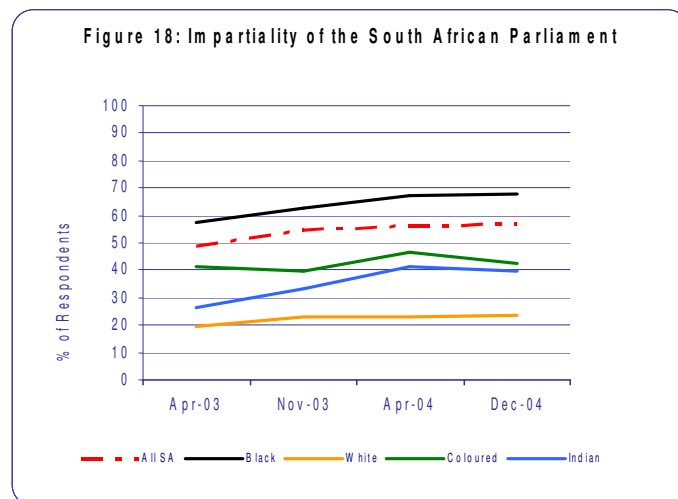


Figure 18: The South African Parliament treats all people who come before it – black, white, coloured and Indian – the same. (Percentage in Agreement)

Figure 18 suggest that almost 60% of South Africans feel that parliament metes out equal treatment to all population groups in the country. Agreement on this item has constantly increased since the first round of this survey. Closer inspection, however, suggests that most within the minority white, Indian, and coloured groups do not concur with this view. Only 23,7% of whites, 39,6% of Indians and 42,5% of coloured South Africans feel that everybody is equal before the country’s highest legislative institution. This contrasts quite strongly with the 67,8% of black Africans who feel that it is the case. Although this discrepancy between the majority group and smaller minority groups may be unfortunate, it is encouraging to see that the general trajectory for responses amongst the minority groups have been upward since the first round of the SARB survey.

³² Gibson, L.J. (2003) “Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?” Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Monograph No.2 . August 2003. P. 7.

³³ These items were developed by James L. Gibson.

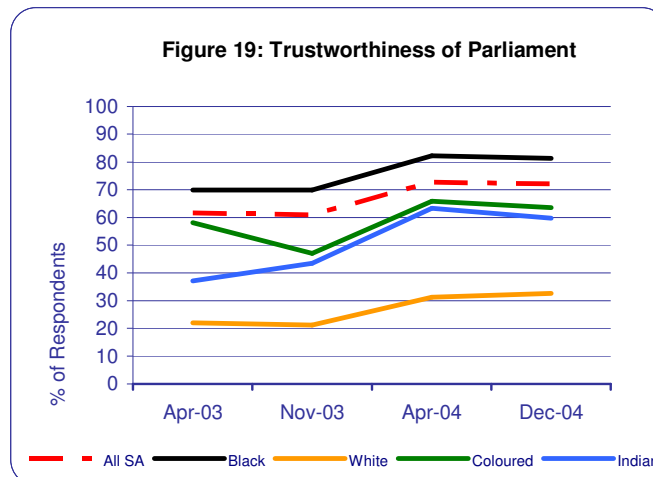


Figure 19: The South African Parliament can usually be trusted to make decisions that are right for the country as a whole (Percentage in Agreement).

Whereas the objective of the previous statement was to elicit responses regarding the extent to which parliament is perceived to treat all citizens fairly, responses in Figure 19 point to sentiments regarding its ability to legislate in a way that is in the common good. While the pattern of responses has been very similar to that of Figure 18, all groups have displayed higher levels of agreement with the statement that “parliament can usually be trusted to make decisions that are right for the country as a whole”. Nationally 72,2% of respondents were of the opinion that parliament can be relied upon to legislate in a way that benefits the country as a whole. It is noteworthy that responses for the individual population groups have also increased considerably since the first measurement in April 2003. Black African responses increased by 11,4% from 69,9% to 81,3%; Indian responses by 22,6% from 37,1 to 59,7; white responses by 10,6% from 22% to 32,6%; and coloured responses by 5,4% from 58,1% to 63,5%.

Much has been written about the withdrawal of minority groups, especially whites, from the political sphere. The comparatively lower levels of confidence amongst these groups in parliament, which is reflected here, may possibly offer a partial explanation to why this is the case. The positive news, however, is that levels of confidence are climbing amongst minority groups, including white South Africans. This growth in positive sentiment may be indicative of a slow, but steady process of normalisation in the political behaviour of minority groups in South Africa.

When evaluating perceptions of parliament it, is important to draw a distinction between its outputs and the intrinsic importance of its existence for the democratic system. This distinction between deliverables and the inherent value of the institution is of pivotal importance. Not only does it provide a framework for lawmaking, it is also symbolic of broad citizen consensus about the values of a nation and the way in which it should be governed. An attack on the institution, therefore, also has implications for national unity.

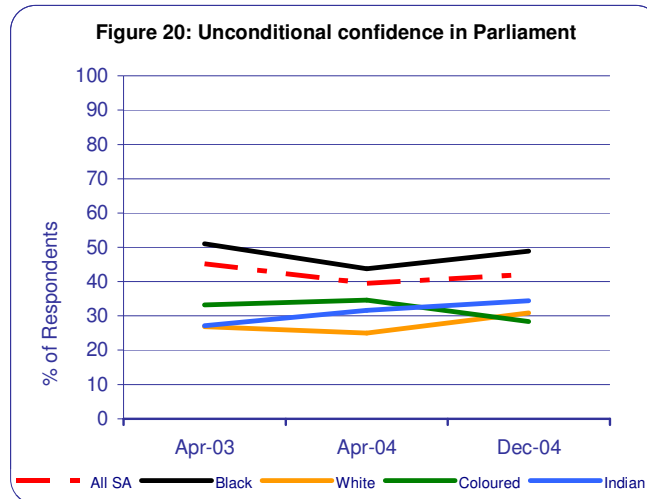


Figure 20: If the South African Parliament started making a lot of decisions that most people disagree with, it might be better to do away with Parliament altogether. (Percentage agreement)

Figure 20 reports on the opinions of South Africans regarding the importance of the institution of parliament, regardless of its outputs. Responses to this statement do provide some cause for concern. When 42,1% of all respondents indicate that parliament is disposable in instances where most people don't agree with its decisions, it suggests that a significant segment of the South African population attach instrumental, as opposed to intrinsic value, to this institution. Given the broader South African context of high levels of unemployment and poverty, coupled with a widening degree of income inequality, it should, however, not be surprising that some citizens may have lost confidence in democratic procedures to address their plight. Many do ask: "What has democracy done for us?"

While the blame for slow levels of service delivery cannot be laid squarely before parliament and its procedures, it remains for many the most tangible symbol of government. Parliament does, however, have the responsibility, through its oversight role, to ensure improve performance where delivery agencies fail. In addition, it has to act mercilessly towards members of parliament that bring the institution into disrepute. The so-called Travelgate saga started to unfold just prior to the November 2004 survey. Since then a number of parliamentarians have been found guilty of defrauding parliament in relation to the use of travel vouchers. Their consequent forced resignation from parliament sent out a positive signal that should boost confidence in the institution. The fifth round of the survey may shed some light on whether it has impacted on the way South Africans view parliament.

7.3. Respect for the Rule of Law

Parliament is the author of legislation, which determines the boundaries of freedom within which we as citizens are allowed to conduct ourselves. The apartheid system has, however, showed clearly that left alone to the whim of politicians, parliamentary superiority can be abused for interests that are not necessarily contingent with the values of the majority of South Africans.

One of the greatest achievements of the new political dispensation has been the entrenchment of the concept of the rule of law. This entails that even the actions of the most powerful in society can be tested against the values and objectives as set out in the South African Constitution. A key feature of the Constitution is that it contains a Bill of Rights, which protects and guarantees the basic

rights of all citizens. This has been a major development, because apartheid did a great deal of damage, not simply in violating human rights, but also in creating an environment in which such rights could be violated with impunity.

Rectifying this situation requires far more than the existence of “a stable political, constitutional and legal framework”,³⁴ it needs the unequivocal commitment and support of all South Africans, regardless of the cost or implications of doing so. James Gibson argues that the “first principle” of such an unconditional commitment to a human rights culture is respect for the rule of law. He contends that such a culture cannot be created, nor maintained, if there is no “commitment to the universal application of law, and especially the unwillingness to set law aside to accomplish other objectives”.³⁵

The survey instrument has employed three different measures to assess sentiments regarding the rule of law. Each of these will be evaluated separately below.

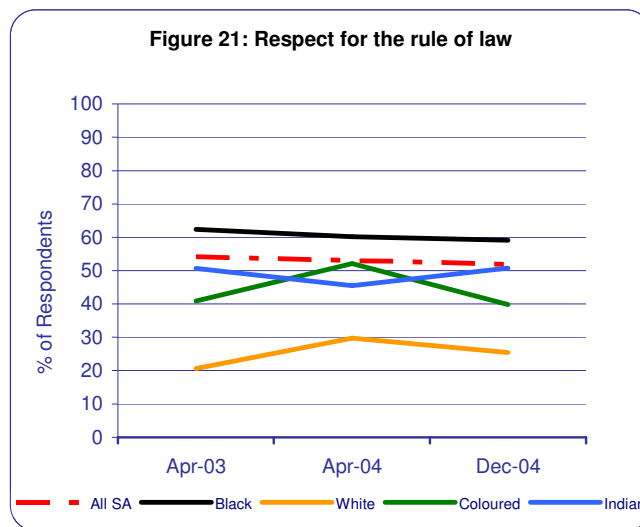


Figure 21: It is alright to get around the law, as long as you don't actually break it. (Percentage agreement)

Respondents have been asked to indicate whether they would circumvent the law, without actually breaking it. The objective of this type of question is not so much to establish whether citizens respect particular laws that affect them, but whether there is a general commitment to the intrinsic value of obeying the law. The responses in Figure 21 show that just more than half (51,9%) of South Africans would indeed use the opportunity to achieve objectives, not necessarily in the common good, but technically within the law.

What should we read in this finding? It would be safe to argue that the impact of a repressive state security apparatus under apartheid may still have an impact on the relationship that many South Africans still have with those who enforce law and order in our society. The only intrinsic value that law enforcement had under this dispensation was the maintenance of a repressive regime at the cost of well-being of the majority of South Africans. Put simply, the term “law and order” may still mean different things to different segments of society. It is within this context that many

³⁴ Gerwel, J (2000) “Anticipating a different kind of Future” in Villa-Vicencio, C. (eds) (2000) *Transcending a Century of Injustice*. Cape Town: The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Pp. 124.

³⁵ Gibson, J. L. (2002) “Empirical Indicators of Reconciliation”. Unpublished document.

commentators make sense of the culture of non-payment that is still present amongst previously disadvantaged groups. While this assertion may hold explanatory value, an analysis of this nature would be incomplete without paying attention to the role of the income variable. In this regard it is interesting to note that the highest levels of agreement with this statement comes from respondents with a monthly household income of less than R3000 per month, while the lowest percentage of affirmative answers are from those respondents with a R14 000 per month and higher household income.

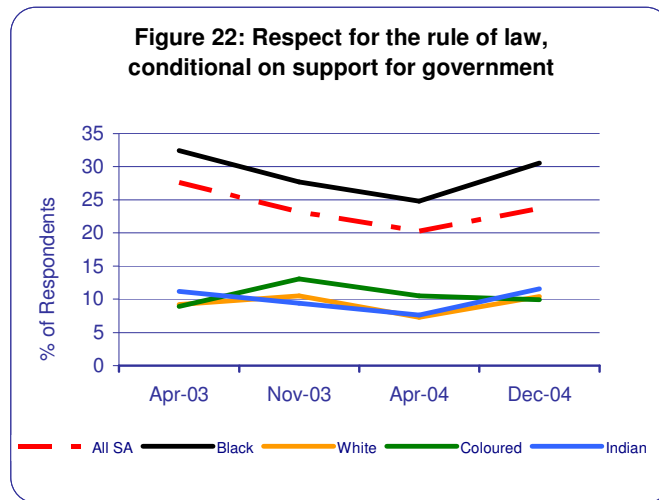


Figure 22: It is not necessary to obey laws of a government that I did not vote for (Percentage agreement)

Democracy is not as much about policy-making as it is about adhering to a set of commonly agreed upon rules that govern political and social life. A key measure of truly consolidated democracies is, therefore, the extent to which citizens are able to detach support for the political system from support for particular political parties. The absence of this quality in a system suggests a lack of confidence in the political system to supersede partisan interests in favour of the common good. Moreover, it presupposes an expectation of patronage, should a particular party gain control of government. Conversely, it suggests that followers of parties that are not in government will feel a sense of alienation that will only disappear once political power has been obtained. Should there indeed be a perception amongst many South Africans that the legitimacy of the law is dependent on the party in power, it does have implications for the broader reconciliation project.

Figure 22 suggests that just less than a quarter of South Africans agree with the statement that respect for the rule of law is dependent on who is in charge of government. The highest level of agreement comes from black Africans (30,5%), while the lower levels have been recorded amongst coloureds (9,9%), whites (10,5%) and Indians (11,4%). Given the current context of a black majority government, it is significant that minority groups do not seem to base respect for the law on whether parties, predominantly supported by these groups, are in power or not. The somewhat higher response amongst black Africans should be read against the background of this group's experience of the National Party's rule until 1994. As the upholder of white supremacy, at the expense of the greater national good, its style of government illustrated the dangers of the blurring between state and partisan interests. This response may not necessarily have indicated support of the principle, but rather an understandable distrust of the *bona-fides* of predominantly white parties.

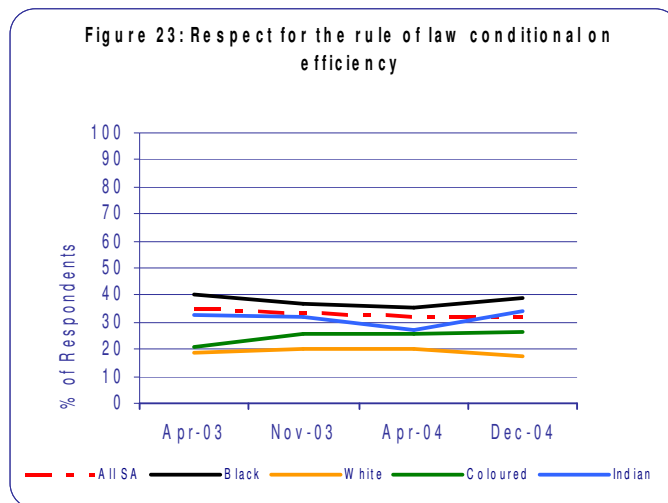


Figure 23: Sometimes it might be better to ignore the law and solve problems immediately rather than wait for a legal solution (Percentage agreement).

The primary function of any state is to administrate and regulate a society for the common good. A key component of this responsibility, and crucial for its legitimacy, is its ability to ensure law and order. South Africa, like many other nations that have experienced political transitions in the latter quarter of the twentieth century, has had to deal with a proliferation of crime in its first decade of democracy. This was the result of a combination of circumstances, which included the restructuring of law enforcement agencies and the judicial system, the opening up of the country's borders, as well as the repositioning of the economy in a global context, which led to the shedding of millions of jobs.

It is against this background that the emergence of vigilante groups like Pagad and Mapogo A Mathamaga proliferated. Also within communities, spontaneous lashings of perceived criminals and other brutal extra-legal enforcement strategies became an increasingly common sight. Such spontaneous actions do suggest a lack of confidence in the capacity of law enforcement agencies to protect and serve, but also has implications for the centrality of the state in society. Should it be seen as just one of a number of law enforcement actors, the state's ability to rally broad-based support for strategies to secure law abidance may be compromised.

The results reported in Figure 23 show that 32% of South Africans agree with the statement that it is better to ignore the law and find personal solutions. Conversely, it suggests that two thirds of all citizens do have sufficient confidence in the rule of law to address wrongs or resolve social disputes. The responses, both nationally and for the individual population groups, have remained stable since the first measurement in April 2003. This is significant and points to a consolidation in perceptions about the importance of the rule of law and role of the state in upholding it.

7.4. Justified Forms of Actions.

A litmus test for any democratic system is its ability to provide effective and legal avenues for the protection, as well as redress, of human rights. In a system where this is not the case, the general public may deem it justified and acceptable to resort to extra-legal means (as referred to above) to protect such rights. These actions would hinge on two important considerations. The first would be the legitimacy of the system itself, and the second, the capacity its institutions to mediate social conflict. The survey, therefore, included a number of questions, designed to determine the

perceived justifiability of various methods by which people can engage the state when their human rights are being infringed upon.

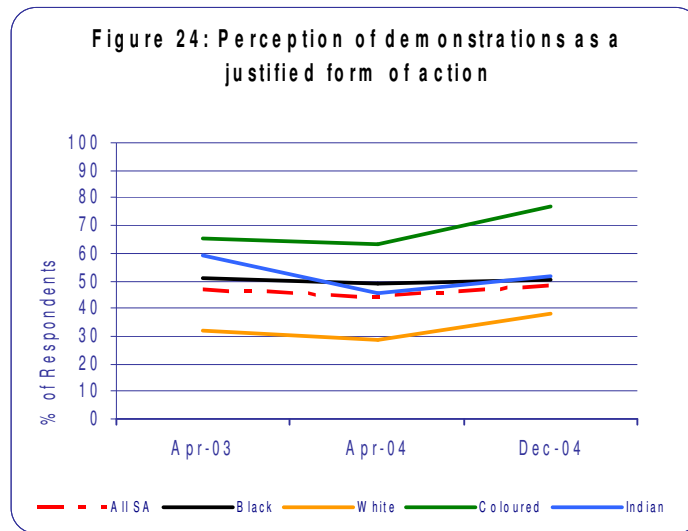


Figure 24: Here are some different actions people could take if government was disregarding or violating or going against their human rights. I would like you to tell me if it would be justified if some people joined in demonstrations (Percentage deeming it justified)³⁶

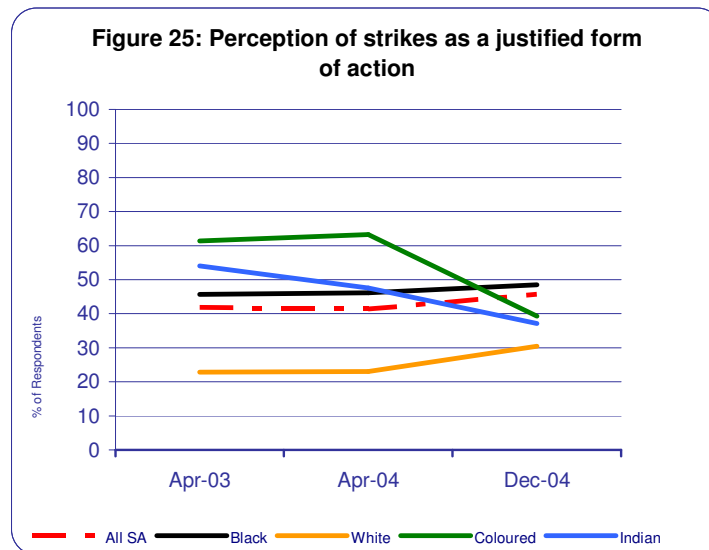


Figure 25: Here are some different actions people could take if government was disregarding or violating or going against their human rights. I would like you to tell me if it would be justified if some people joined strikes. (Percentage deeming it justified)³⁷

Figures 24 and 25 report on the willingness of respondents to engage in legal forms of protest when their human rights are being infringed upon. In both instances just less than half of respondents found demonstrations (48%) or strikes (45,7%) justifiable as a means of protest against human rights abuse. This does not imply that the majority of South Africans are not inclined to protest. Protest may also take on different forms like letters to newspapers, membership of pressure groups,

³⁶ This question was not asked in the November 2004 survey

³⁷ This question was not asked in the November 2004 survey

or consumer boycotts. It does, however, suggest that a critical mass of South Africans approve of, and believe in, the efficiency of these very public forms of protest.

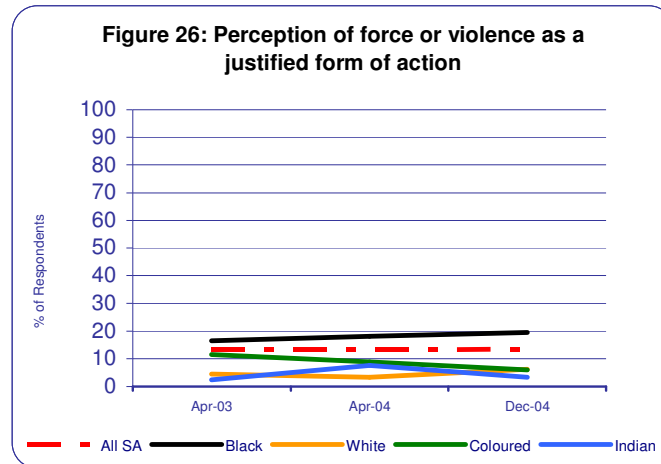


Figure 26: Here are some different actions people could take if government was disregarding or violating or going against their human rights. If these actions did not work, would it be justified if they used force or violent methods, such as damaging public property or taking hostages. (Percentage deeming it justified)

The human rights paradigm of reconciliation contends that in post-apartheid South Africa, as in all transitional societies, social interaction needs to be moderated by a legislative and normative framework. In instances where violence is being regarded as a remedy for human rights abuse, it may point to failure on the part of the state to provide institutional guarantees for protection to those who feel themselves vulnerable in society. A breakdown in trust in institutions should, however, not be confused with conscious challenges to the authority of the state, which is aimed at the weakening of state authority to promote the proliferation of alternative centres of power.

The results reported in Figure 26 suggest very low levels of approval for any form of violent protest, even if it is done in defence of the violation of human rights. Nationally only 13,4% of respondents indicated support for such action. This figure has remained virtually unchanged since the first measurement. Reported results for the individual population groups have also remained very stable. Amongst black African respondents there has been a marginal increase of 13% to 19,5% since the first measurement, while the increase amongst whites was a mere 1,8% to 6,4%. Coloureds and Indians registered scores of 6% and 3,2% respectively in the most recent survey.

8. Cross-cutting Political Relationships

Cross-cutting cleavages are, arguably, one of the most pertinent prerequisites for democratic consolidation in societies that have had a history of division along ethnic and cultural lines. This concept refers to social interests that are shared across historical faultlines. Within the South African context, Giliomee and Schlemmer propose that cross-cutting-, instead of superimposed social relationships, will be most conducive to the country's consolidation process.³⁸ Such relations are important for reconciliation as they hold the potential for the formation of a more fluid political society

³⁸ Giliomee, H and Schlemmer, L. (1994) "Overview: Can a South African Democracy become Consolidated?" in Giliomee, H. (ed) *The Bold Experiment*. Johannesburg: Southern. Pp. 181.

that can address issues that transcend racial, religious, class and linguistic boundaries.³⁹ They challenge South Africans to view salient social issues from a different perspective.

This survey has since its inception been investigating national unity and racially-mixed political parties as tentative indicators of the existence of cross-cutting social relationships.

8.1. National Unity

The prospect of national reconciliation is inconceivable in the absence of some degree of national unity. Settlement patterns in South Africa are still largely racialised and, consequently, so are social interests. This legacy may take decades to undo, but at this juncture a minimum requirement for the forging of greater national unity should be a commitment to the principle. Accepting the fact that there may be little consensus about what eventually should constitute the most basic element of such unity, it remains important that there is a recognition of its virtue.

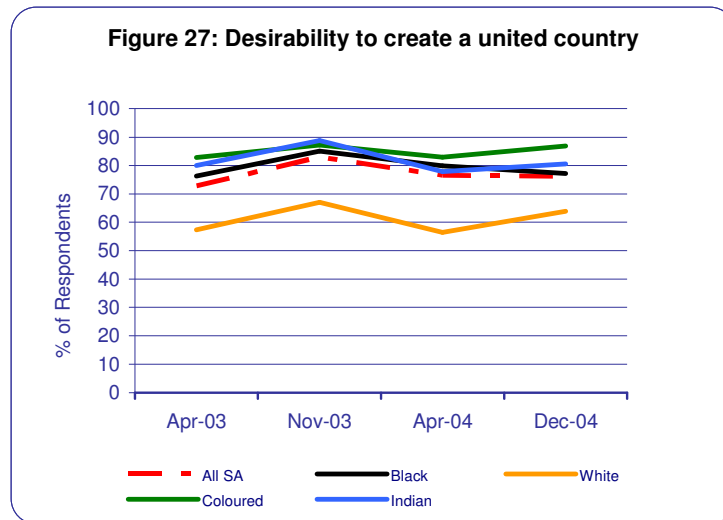


Figure 27: It is desirable to create one united South African nation out of all the different groups who live in this country. (Percentage in agreement).

Between the April and November 2003 rounds of the survey there had been a positive growth from 72,8% to 83% in the portion of South Africans deeming it desirable to promote the idea of one nation. Since then, this figure has once again subsided by just over 6% to 76,5% in November 2004. The November 2004 data reveals that the different population groups, with the exception of white respondents, show very similar levels of support for the principle of national unity. Approximately 80% of black African, Indian and coloured South Africans subscribe to the idea of a united nation. White South Africans, however, registered a lower level of agreement of 57% on the same measurement. April 2004, therefore, saw a return of most responses to what they had been a year earlier.

Responses to the fifth round of the survey, which marks the third year of measurement, would probably assist in finding out whether a discernable pattern of responses has been established over

³⁹ Villa-Vicencio, C. (2003) "The Politics of Reconciliation." Unpublished paper; Chapman, A.R. (2002) "Approaches to Studying Reconciliation". Paper presented at the Conference on Empirical Approaches to Studying Truth Commissions. Stellenbosch, South Africa. November 2002. Pg. 15.

this period. At this stage it appears as if the April 2004 election, or events around it, might have impacted on the responses of all groups.

8.2. Racially mixed Political Parties

A great deal of scholarly speculation in the run-up to South Africa's 2004 national elections focused on whether it would be possible to discern clear voting patterns for the country's different population groups. As this had been the case in the past, the assertion has been made that South African elections are nothing more than a racial census. This has unleashed an intense debate between those who did regard it as such and others who have attributed it to simple rational voting decisions.⁴⁰ With the exception of the Independent Democrats that managed to attract a cross-section of supporters, the majority of voters in the 2004 general election preferred to support parties where their racial group constituted a majority or a significant segment of the party.

For the past three years the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* has gauged the extent to which South Africans are open to the idea of belonging to multiracial political parties. In consecutive surveys respondents have been prompted to indicate their agreement with a statement: "I could never imagine being part of a political party, made up mainly of people from another population group". The objective with this statement is to establish the extent to which citizens prioritise racial allegiance above issue-driven politics to achieve political social ends. Disagreement, on the other hand, points to confidence in the capacity of the system to resolve issues, based purely on their merit.

The overall national agreement with this statement, as reported in Figure 28, has remained stable since its first measurement, increasing only slightly from 40,2% in April 2003 to 43,9% in the most recent survey. This suggests that for the majority of South Africans the question of race is not a decisive factor when it comes to their choice of political party. Agreement amongst black Africans remained the highest at 48,4% and is 4,1% higher than the first measurement of 44,3% in April 2003. White South Africans also register a fairly high 36,8% agreement rate, while coloured (18,3%) and Indian (9,1%) respondents appear to be least averse to the idea of joining political parties where their groups do not constitute a numerical majority.

⁴⁰ For some examples see Du Toit, P (1999) "The South Africans voter and the racial census" in *Politeia*. Vol. 18, No. 2.; Lodge, T. (1994) "The South African General Election, April 1994: results, analysis and implications" in *African Affairs*. Vol. 94.; Southall, R (1994) "The South African elections of 1994: the remaking of a dominant-party state" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 32. Iss. 4.; Mattes, R.; Giliomee, H and James, W. (1996) "The elections in the Western Cape" in Johnston, R.W. and Schlemmer, L. (eds) (1996) *Launching Democracy in South Africa. The first Open Election, April 1994*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

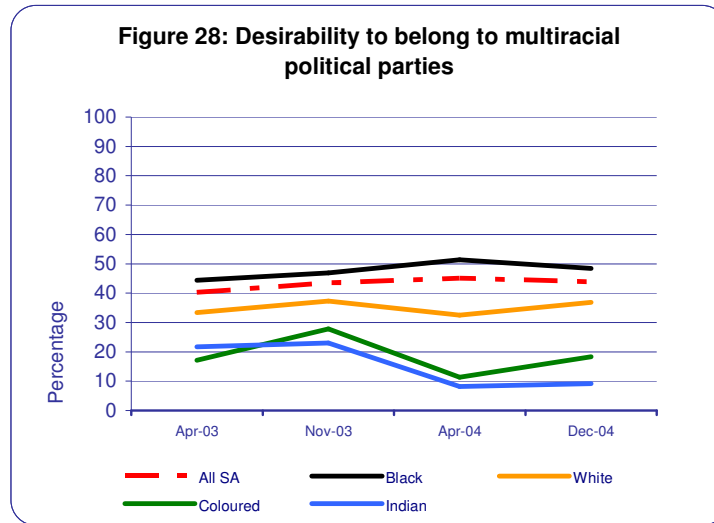


Figure 28: I could never imagine being part of a political party made up mainly of people of another race.⁴¹ (Percentage in agreement)

Events around the April 2004 election seem to have had an inverse effect on majority- and minority group responses. While minority group agreement declined around the time of the election and increased again in November, responses by the black African majority group increased around the election, but declined again in November 2004. This may point to a differential impact of particular political events on responses to the statement. Once again, the fifth round of the survey may assist in clarifying this assertion.

9. Dialogue

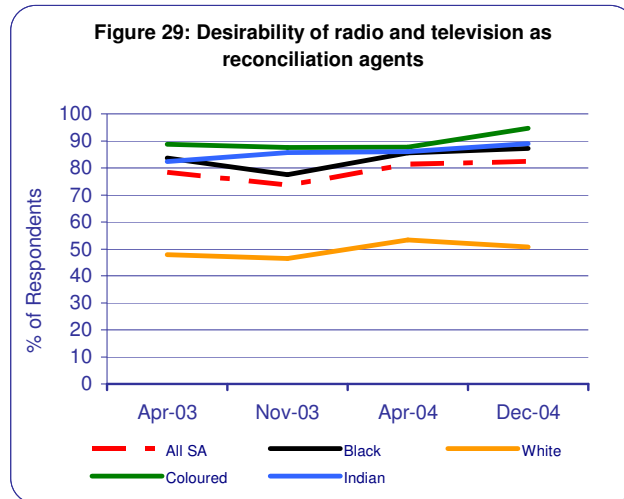
Doxtader argues that reconciliation requires more than a superficial willingness to belong to a diverse political constituency. It also requires dialogue, or what Kahane refers to as “deep conversations”.⁴² This, Doxtader suggests, should extend beyond discussion and beyond individuals and groups who are gathering and “expressing their views, and then leaving their respective claims to hang in the air”.⁴³ Such interaction should ideally become entrenched in public discourse, which in turn, should inform our actions relating to broader programmes for national reconciliation. It is of essence that it reaches beyond social and political elites to a broader spread of the South African population

The media is one of the most powerful vehicles with which messages of this nature can be conveyed. While the South African readership of newspapers and news-orientated magazines is restricted by lower literacy rates than in the developed world, the reach of the country’s broadcast media is significant. With broadcasts in all of the eleven official languages, it has the capacity to be a powerful tool in the service of national reconciliation.

⁴¹ Based on the respondent’s own race, the question was asked by making reference to their overall average contact with members of all three other race groups

⁴² Kahane, A (2002) *Shaping the Future: How Small Groups of People Can Change the World for the Better*. Unpublished Manuscript.

⁴³ Doxtader, E. (2001) “Debate about Debate will Build Democracy” in *Cape Times*. 13 May 2001.



Question asked: *The government should require Radio and TV stations to have more shows where South Africans can talk to each other about things like transformation and nation-building (Percentage in agreement).*

Figure 29 reports public responses on the desirability of the broadcast media as agents for reconciliation. Nationally 82,4% of respondents have indicated their agreement with this statement that radio and television should play a more active role in fostering national reconciliation. Black African (87,4%), coloured (94,7%) and Indian (89%) respondents all showed overwhelming agreement with the statement for the need of a stronger role for the broadcast media in the reconciliation process. Half of white respondents (50,7%) provided affirmative responses on this issue.

A national survey, conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), in 2001 suggests that some 92% of South Africans belong to some form of religious orientation.⁴⁴ 70% responded that they attend a religious service at least once a month.⁴⁵ These figures underline the pervasiveness of the influence of religious institutions in the country. They are, therefore, ideally placed as agents for social change and in this instance, national reconciliation.

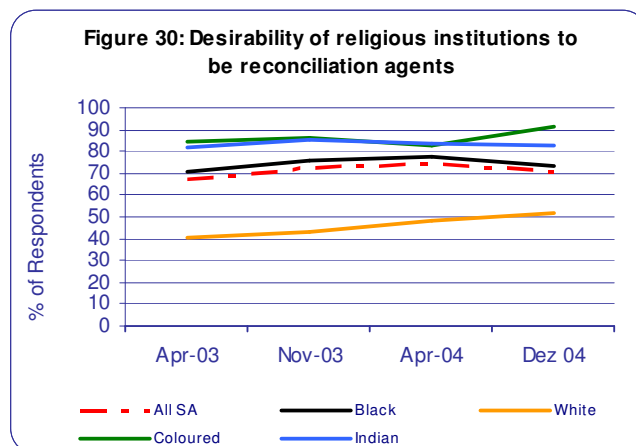


Figure 30: *Different churches or religious organizations should start holding some services together so that different South Africans can get to know one another better (Percentage in agreement).*

⁴⁴ HSRC (2002) *Public Attitudes in Contemporary South Africa: Insights from an HSRC Survey*. HSRC Press: Cape Town. p.87.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.89.

The results reported in Figure 30 indicate that 71,1% of South Africans support the idea of a more engaged role for religious institutions in the process of national reconciliation. The highest percentages of support were registered amongst coloured respondents (91,5%) and Indian respondents (83,1%). 73,6% of black African respondents have responded positively to this statement. Similar to their response on the desirability of the media as a reconciliation agent, white respondents (51,5%) seem to be more cautious about the role of religious institutions in this regard.

10. Historical Confrontation

No discussion of the reconciliation process in South Africa or any other transitional society would be complete without an investigation of the degree to which the nation has been able to confront its past. There is a saying that proclaims that 'those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it'. Whilst this certainly rings true, a nation unable to let go of its history also faces the danger of never reconciling. Two elements are of essence here: Acknowledgement of the past, but also the ability to move beyond the scars of a divided past.

10.1. Acknowledgement

Villa-Vicencio, amongst others, emphasises acknowledgement as a critical milestone along the path to reconciliation.⁴⁶ In South Africa, as in most transitional societies, not only the acknowledgment of the past, but also an awareness of its continuing impact on the present, is critical for true reconciliation.

The field of education provides one of the most striking examples. Given decades of unequal spending of the education budget, we are today not only faced with inferior infrastructure and resources, but also insufficient teaching capacity. This, inevitably, has had an impact on eligibility of learners for further education, access to the job market, and ultimately it continues to reinforce skewed income distribution patterns. This is not likely to change in the near future. Van der Berg, for example, notes that 95% of those who failed matric in 2003 were African, while Africans comprised 83% of that particular age cohort.⁴⁷

In this survey we wanted to establish the extent to which the South African population draws this link between past discrimination and present reality. We have consequently asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a statement, which asserts that current levels of income inequality can be attributed to the lack of education opportunities during the previous political dispensation. The extent of agreement with this statement has implications for broader national reconciliation as it provides clues to the degree of normalisation of our society.

Figure 31 presents the responses to this statement. Nationally 83,8% of South Africans agree that past educational policy has impacted on present income patterns. As could be expected, the three previously disadvantaged groups show significantly high levels of agreement, while the white response of 57,5% is more mixed. Both nationally and amongst the different population groups

⁴⁶ Villa-Vicencio, C (2003) *The Politics of Reconciliation*. Unpublished paper. See also Biko, N. (1998) "Amnesty and Denial" in Villa-Vicencio, C and Verwoerd, W. (eds) (2000) *Looking Back Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*. University of Cape Town Press: Cape Town. Pp.196.

⁴⁷ Van der Berg, S. (2004) 'Education: The crisis in schooling' in Brown, S. and Fölscher A. (eds.) *Economic Transformation Audit 2004*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation: Cape Town, p. 29.

themselves, responses have remained fairly stable since the first measurement in April 2003. This suggests that not much has improved in this period to warrant a different assessment.

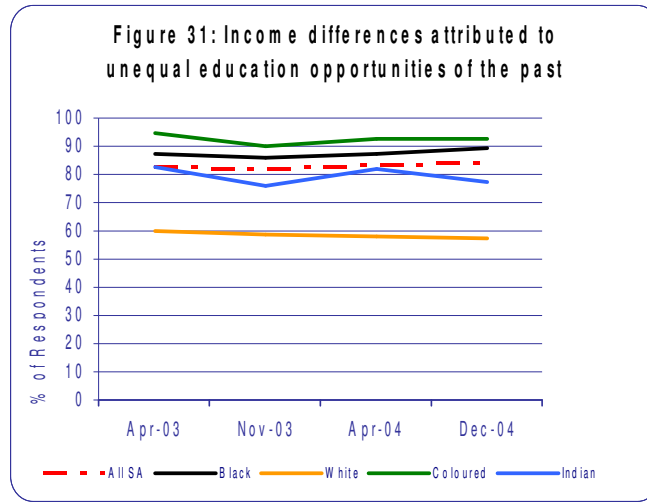


Figure 31: South Africa has great income differences today because in the past blacks were not given the same education opportunities as whites. (Percentage in agreement)

Dealing with the material injustice is a first, but not sufficient step for national reconciliation. It is arguably the less painful part of coming to terms with the legacy of apartheid. Most difficult for the beneficiaries of the system is the acknowledgement that their privilege was built on, and protected by, brutality that caused extreme hardship for millions of people. It can be argued that true reconciliation can only occur when this acknowledgement has taken place and the full extent of this reality has been grasped.

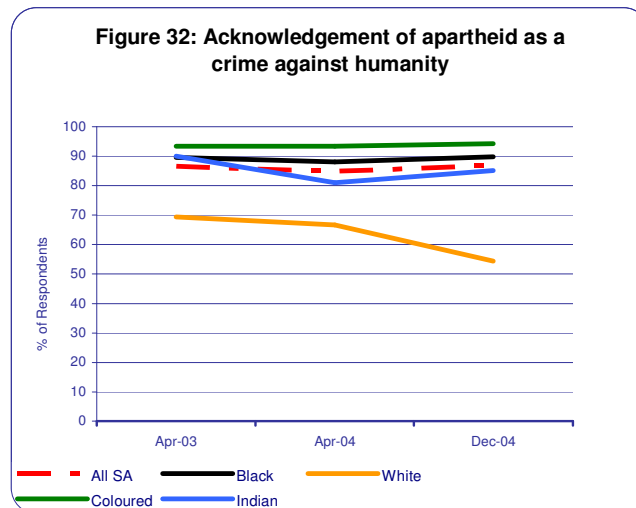


Figure 32: Apartheid was a crime against humanity (Percentage in agreement) ⁴⁸

⁴⁸ This question was not asked in the November 2003 round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey.

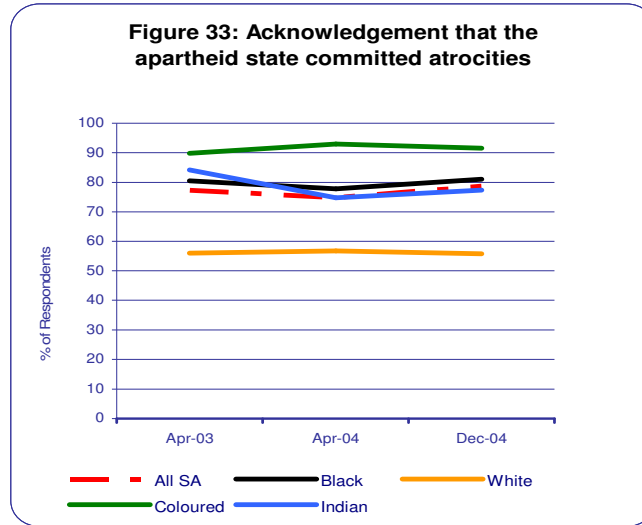


Figure 33: In the past the state committed horrific atrocities against those struggling against apartheid. (Percentage in Agreement)⁴⁹

Figure 32 shows that amongst formerly disadvantaged groups there are overwhelming levels of agreement with the statement that apartheid was a crime against humanity. It does not come as a surprise then that equally high percentages concur with the view that the state committed atrocities against the opponents of apartheid, as reflected in Figure 33. White responses to both statements are more mixed. Levels of agreement with the contention that apartheid was a crime against humanity have dropped consistently since the first measurement in April 2003. The biggest drop from 66,7% to 54,3% occurred between the two most recent measurements. White responses in Figure 33 have remained virtually unchanged.

Both of these measurements suggest that a significant proportion of white South Africans disagree with the extent of the suffering that was caused by the apartheid system. It is indeed unfortunate. Is this because of denial, or can it be that many white South Africans have, for some reason, not been able to draw the link between the past and our social and material realities at present? If it is the latter, what prevents this group from doing so? These questions demand further investigation.

10.2 Forgetting the past

ealing with the past does, however, not imply that a society should remain hostage to it. While it is appropriate for South Africans to concern themselves with the healing of memories at this juncture, it is also important to look forward and work towards the kind of society that they aspire to. It would most certainly not make sense to use South Africa's apartheid past as a benchmark to measure current and future progress. As Alwinus Mhlatsi, appearing before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) argued: "We have children to bring up".

To establish the extent to which South Africans desire to move forward, regardless of the past, the survey has asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I want to forget about the past and move on with my life". The results are reflected in Figure 34 below.

⁴⁹ This question was not asked in the November 2003 round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey.

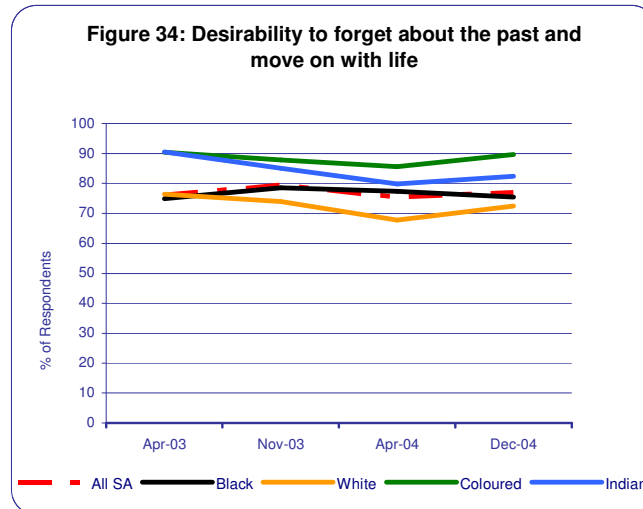


Figure 34: I want to forget about the past and just get on with my life (Percentage in agreement)

77% of South Africans have indicated during the November 2004 round of the survey that they are eager to forget the past and move on with their lives. All population groups have since the first measurement shown exceptionally high levels of agreement with the statement. When interpreting these results, we should be cognisant of the fact that interpretations of what we associate with the past may vary between population groups.

While black African, coloured, and Indian respondents may to some extent associate the past with political oppression, the majority's lived experience of material hardship may be its strongest association. An affirmative response from these categories, may point to a need to break with a past, characterised by poverty, but not necessarily with the memories related to their oppression. Responses by white South Africans, on the other hand, may have been motivated by other reasons. Over the last decade much of government's programmes have been aimed at redressing injustices of the past by making institutions more representative. Inevitably policies, such as affirmative action, have given preferential treatment to formerly disadvantaged groups. Amongst many white South Africans a feeling of being trapped by their historical privilege has therefore arisen. This perspective may provide a possible explanation for the high level of agreement in this regard.

10.3 Forgiving the past

A more specific measure to gauge whether previously disadvantaged groups are ready to move beyond the psychological scars of apartheid, is the willingness to forgive those who inflicted discriminatory policies upon them. This goes beyond the previous measure, which depended on the respondent's conceptualization of what the 'past' constitutes.

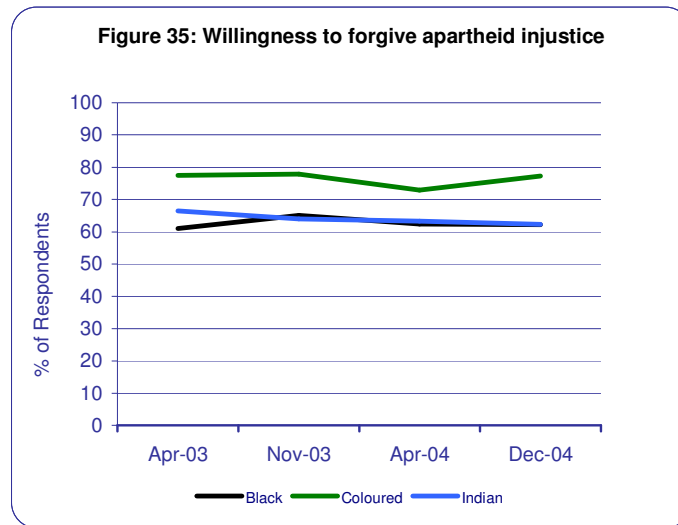


Figure 35: I am trying to forgive those who hurt me during apartheid (Percentage in Agreement)

Figure 35 suggest that the vast majority of those who were oppressed under the previous dispensation are willing to forgive those who did them harm under apartheid. 77,3% of coloured respondents, 66,3% of Indian respondents, and 66,2% of black African respondents have responded that they actively try to forgive those who hurt them in the previous political dispensation. During the two years of measurement the goodwill amongst these groups have stayed stable and, importantly, remained substantial. This is significant and represents social capital of which the value cannot be underestimated. Seen against this background, the decline in white acknowledgement of the impact of apartheid on these communities (reflected in Figures 32 and 33) become all the more disconcerting.

10.4. Vengeance

A great deal of debate has emerged in recent years over the necessity of forgiveness in post-conflict societies. Increasingly scholars are examining perpetrator-victim relations from the opposite vantage point, focusing on the necessity of reducing levels of need for vengeance. Proponents of this view argue that vengeance or revenge represents the flipside of forgiveness, and occurs as a moral response to loss or wrongs, based on the impulse to retaliate.⁵⁰

O'Malley, commenting on eleven workshops conducted with Khulumani Support Group members, speaks about vengeance as the 'pacts' people make as a response to excessive loss.⁵¹ He argues "these pacts may take the form of a vow to avenge the death, or a vow that nothing else will ever replace the deceased".⁵² Accordingly this seeking of revenge or vengeance will manifest itself if opportunities for venting and confronting the emotions evoked by the loss are not established. Similarly Jacoby asserts "vengeful anger is at its most powerful and pervasive when there are no mechanisms for releasing it through legitimate channels".⁵³

⁵⁰ Marcia Hartwell. Interview: Cape Town, December 2002.

⁵¹ O'Malley, G (1999) "Respecting Revenge: The Road to Reconciliation" in *Law, Democracy and Development*. Vol. 3.

⁵² Quoting Hamber, B. and R. Wilson (1999) "Symbolic Closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post-conflict societies." Paper presented at the Traumatic Stress in South Africa Conference hosted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in association with the African Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Johannesburg: Parktonian Hotel. 27 – 29 January 1999.

⁵³ Jacoby, S (1983) *Wild Justice: The Evolution of Revenge*. New York: Harper & Row. Pp. 181.

The dangers of high levels of vengeance are clear. If unchecked, the response of victims may lapse into acts of aggression and violence. Besides the blatantly illegal nature of such acts, there is also an inherent danger that retaliatory acts will be disproportionate to the wrongs committed, or may simply be waged against innocent “others whom they identify with perpetrators”.⁵⁴ Moreover, when people seek to avenge the crimes perpetrated against themselves, there is potential for a situation whereby “the fantasy of revenge simply reverses the role of the perpetrator and victim, continuing to imprison the victim in horror and degradation”.⁵⁵ The result of this can be self-perpetuating circles of the victor’s revenge that continue the conflict indefinitely.

Figures 36 and 37 present responses to two statements, intended to measure the need for retribution and the lengths victims will go to ensure that it does occur.

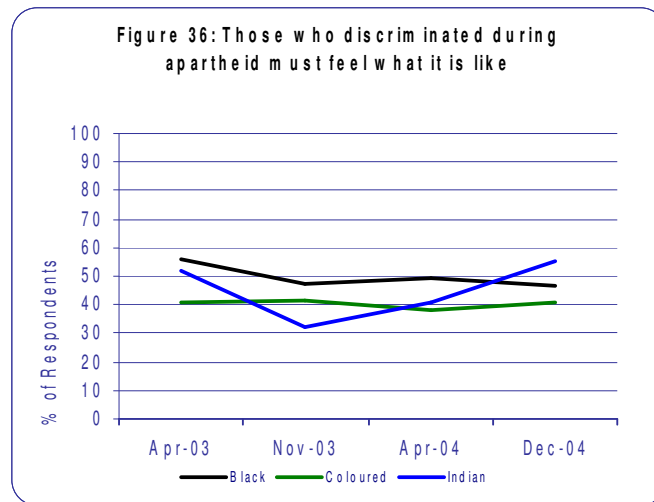


Figure 36: I think it is fair that the people who discriminated against others during apartheid feel what it is like to be discriminated against. (Percentage in agreement)

⁵⁴ O'Malley, G (1999) "Respecting Revenge: The Road to Reconciliation" in *Law, Democracy and Development*. Vol. 3.

⁵⁵ Minow, M (1998) *Between vengeance and forgiveness: facing history after genocide and mass violence*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 13.

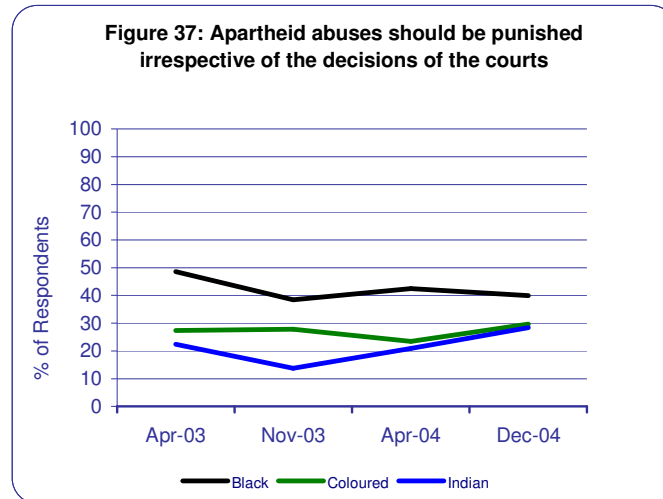


Figure 37: People who abused others during apartheid must be punished, even if it means going against the decisions of the courts. (Percentage in Agreement)

Probably the most significant feature of Figure 36 is the continuing decline (from 55,8% in April 2003 to 46,9% in November 2004) in the number of black African respondents who indicated that they would like to see perpetrators of apartheid experiencing the same hardship as that which they had inflicted. A similar decline is visible in Figure 37 amongst black Africans who are prepared to resort to extra-judicial methods to ensure retribution. This percentage has gone down from 48,6% at the first measurement to 39,9% in November 2004. When comparing both figures, it appears as if the black African sentiments towards vengeance have declined consistently since the first measurement. Responses favouring the types of revenge, outlined above, have either remained stable or increased marginally since April 2003. While coloured responses have not changed significantly from survey to survey, the great variance in responses amongst Indians from one survey to another needs further investigation. The likelihood that the relatively small national sample of Indians in the survey has impacted on this response pattern, can not be discarded.

11. Racial Reconciliation

This report - whilst recognising that previously divided groups do not have to “love each other” to live together - argues that social distance-, stereo-type-, and social contact indicators, are important in explaining the variability in attitudes towards national reconciliation. Low levels of trust and understanding, based largely on stereotypical views of others, do impact on people’s capacity to build meaningful social and economic relationships. In their absence, tolerance and consensus may be more difficult to achieve.

11.1. Cross-racial Contact

The first step to analyzing the state of racial reconciliation is to investigate how frequently, if ever, South Africans of different racial backgrounds interact with each other. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they talk to people from a different population group on an average day. This may include any kind of contact ranging from quibbling about a price with a street vendor to conducting intense business negotiations. The objective here has merely been to

establish the extent to which people from different population groups are being exposed to one another in their daily routines.

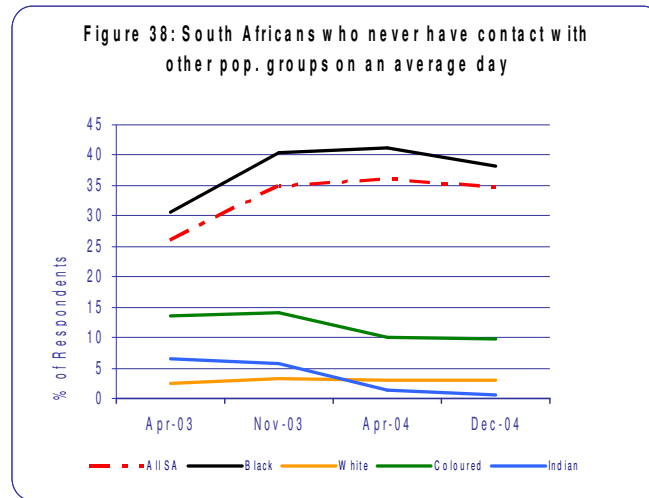


Figure 38: On a typical day during the week, whether at work or otherwise, how often do you talk to (GROUP) people? (Percentage who said never).

The results of Figure 38 suggest that there has been an increase from 26,1% in April 2003 to 34,7% in November 2004 in the number of South Africans who are unlikely to have any contact with somebody from another population group on an average day. While there have been fewer white, coloured, and Indian respondents who indicated that they never have contact with other groups, there has been a significant increase from 30,7% to 38,2 amongst black Africans.

Such levels of interaction are low, but it should be kept in mind that the statistical likelihood for inter-group contact of black Africans is much lower than it would be for the smaller population groups. When an individual's population group constitutes eight out of every ten South Africans, it is more probable that interaction would be with somebody from the same group. Conversely, the likelihood of smaller population groups to interact with the largest group is much bigger.

There are, however, two factors that mitigate the oversimplification of this argument. The first is the fact that most South Africans still tend to settle in areas where their particular population group form a numerical majority. Over the past two decades there has also been a growing trend for office blocks and shopping malls to move away from city centres towards the suburbs. This means that people do not regularly move out of their racially spatialised areas.

This fact also compounds the impact of unemployment, the second factor that obstructs normal interaction patterns. Successive surveys have indicated a very strong correlation between employment status and the frequency of group interaction. A lack of employment is likely to decrease mobility, which limits an individual's opportunity to integrate with other groups in the more racially-integrated first economy. Apart from its obvious economic necessity, employment levels, therefore, also proves to be imperative for the broader normalisation of social relations.

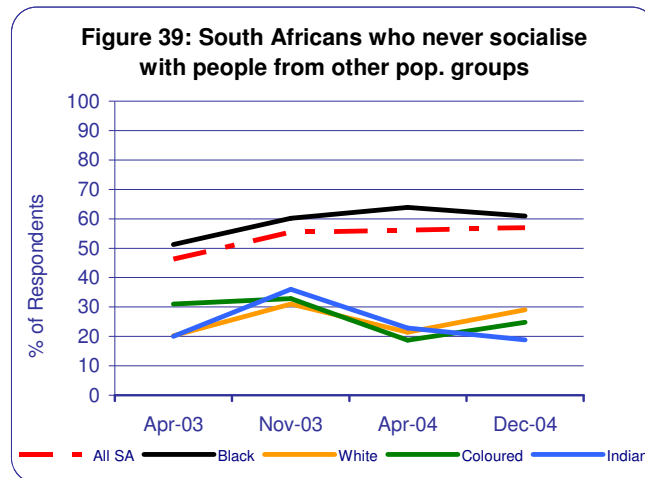


Figure 39: When socialising in your own home or the homes of friends, how often do you talk to (GROUP) people? (Percentage who said never)

While responses in Figure 38 reported on all forms of interaction, including involuntary contact, those in Figure 39 provide an insight into the frequency of voluntary, informal, interaction. Here as well an increasing number of respondents have indicated that they never socialise with people from a different group. Between April 2003 and November 2004 this figure has increased by 10,7% to 57%. While responses for black Africans have peaked in April 2004 at 63,8%, it has declined only marginally to 61% in November of the same year. This is still 9,7% higher than the first measurement. It is has, however, been difficult to discern consistent response patterns amongst the other population groups. Between the two most recent surveys, the number of whites and coloureds that reported no informal contact did increase again after a significant drop between the second and third surveys. Currently Indian South Africans seem to be exposed to the highest levels of informal inter-group contact, with only 18,8% of respondents in this group indicating no social contact with other groups.

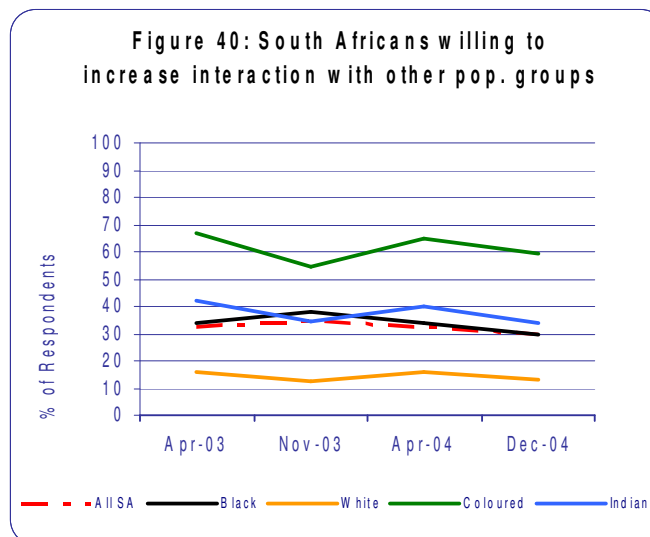


Figure 40: If you had a choice, would you want to talk to people of another race group (Percentage in favour of more frequent contact).

The responses reported in Figures 38 and 39 suggest that levels of contact between South Africa's population groups are quite low. But is there a desire amongst citizens to increase inter-group

contact? Figure 40 indicates that only 29,7% of South Africans seem to think so. Whites (13,1%) were least inclined to increase their contact with other groups, followed by black Africans (29,5%), Indians (34%) and coloured respondents (59,2%). Not reflected in Figure 40, but also interesting to note, are the responses in favour of less contact with other groups. 7,6% of whites, 3,9% of Indians and 1,7 have indicated that they would prefer less frequent interaction with other groups. The highest number of positive responses to this proposition came from Black Africans with 18,4%.

11.2. Cross-racial Preconceptions

The findings of the report thus far indicate that few South Africans engage in cross-racial contact, and if they do, very little of this interaction is of an informal socialising nature. Moreover, few see the need to increase interaction with other groups. We have already referred to a number of factors that can impede such contact in previous sections, but part of the problem may also lie with fear of the unknown, resulting in a lack of trust and the creation of negative stereotypes. In this section we briefly look at responses regarding perceived knowledge about other population groups, as well the levels of trust that exist between these groups.

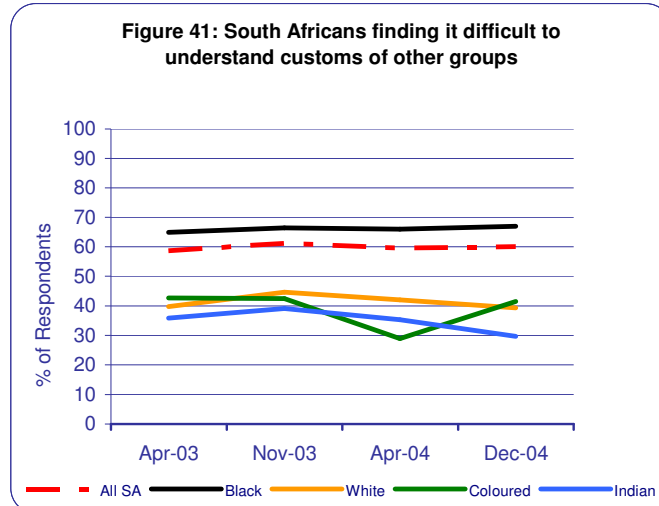


Figure 41: I find it difficult to understand the customs and ways of (GROUP) people. (Percentage in agreement)

Figure 41 reports the results of responses to a statement regarding the extent to which South Africans understand the behaviour of fellow citizens that do not belong to the same population group. It can be hypothesised that a lack of understanding of cultural customs and practice may be an impediment to political tolerance, but importantly also, national reconciliation. In the November 2004 survey 60,1% of all respondents indicated that they have difficulty in making sense of the customs and ways of South Africans from other population groups. A breakdown of the responses by the different population groups shows that black Africans, with 67%, show the highest level of agreement, followed by coloureds (41,5%), whites (39,3%) and Indians (29%).

Within the context of the broader patterns of inter-group contact that has been reported earlier, the large difference between black African and other responses do make sense. It should, nevertheless, be noted that responses to this statement reflect perceived knowledge of the respondent, which may be far removed from the actual reality. It may indeed be based on negative stereotypes that can further reinforce divisions between the country's different population groups.

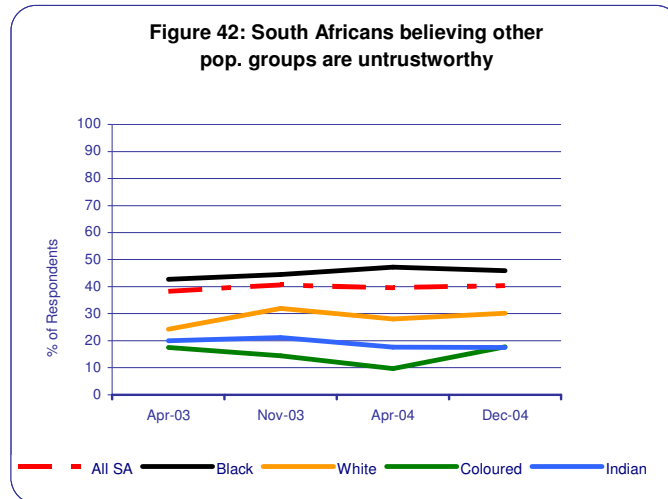


Figure 42: (GROUP) people are untrustworthy. (Percentage in Agreement)

Negative stereotyping targets various aspects of group behaviour, but its cumulative effect is to cast doubt about the abilities and/or intentions of other groups. Figure 42 reports on the degree of distrust South Africans harbour towards population groups other than their own. In the November 2004 survey 40,5% of all respondents have indicated that they agree with the statement that people from other groups are untrustworthy. This figure is virtually unchanged from previous measurements. Black African respondents, with 45,9%, have shown the highest level of distrust towards other groups, followed by an equally high 30,1% amongst white respondents. Indian and coloured responses, both registering 18%, show the most confidence in groups other than their own.

11.3. Cross-racial social distance

One of the most tangible indicators of normalized race relations, and to a large extent also national reconciliation, is the extent to which people from different groups are willing to share their personal space. The survey has used three different statements to measure different facets of interaction at this level. The first was to gauge opinion around integrated neighbourhoods, the second about multi-racial schools, and the third to test the acceptability of mixed marriages.

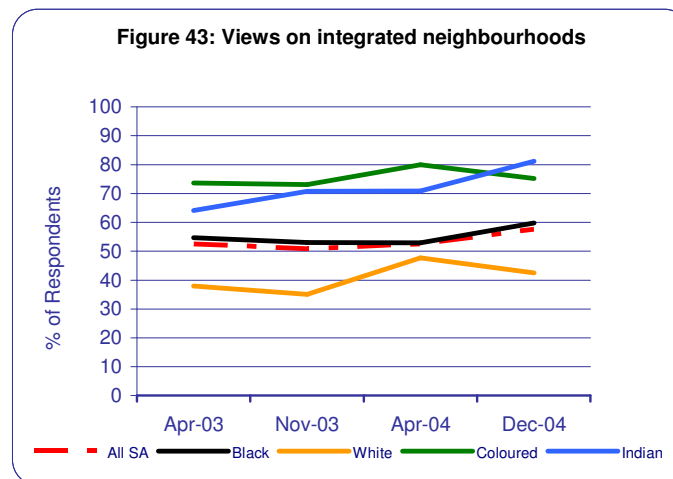


Figure 43: Living in a neighbourhood where half my neighbours are (GROUP) people (Percentage approving).

The majority (57,7%) of South Africans, do not have a problem with living in a neighbourhood where at least half of their neighbours are from other population groups. Figure 43 show that levels of agreement are especially high amongst Indians (81,2%) and coloureds (75,2%), the two numerically smallest groups. Black African responses are just higher than the national average at 59,7%, while white responses have declined from a high of 47,7% in April 2004 to 42,5% in the most recent survey.

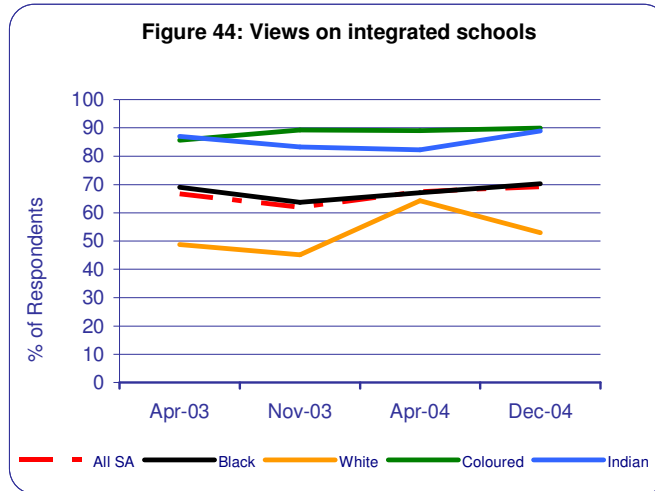


Figure 44: Having a (GROUP) person sitting next to my child, or the child of my family member, at school. (Percentage approving)

Figure 44 shows that 69,2% of all respondents are comfortable with the idea of multi-racial schools. This has been the highest positive approval rate to this statement since the first measurement. Again coloureds and Indians, both at 89%, show the highest positive responses to this statement, followed by black African respondents with 70,3%. White responses on the issue of mixed schools have peaked in April 2004 at 64,2%, but has gone down again to 52% in the most recent survey. This drop of 12,2% is significant and it would be interesting to see whether this downward trend would continue during the fifth round of the survey.

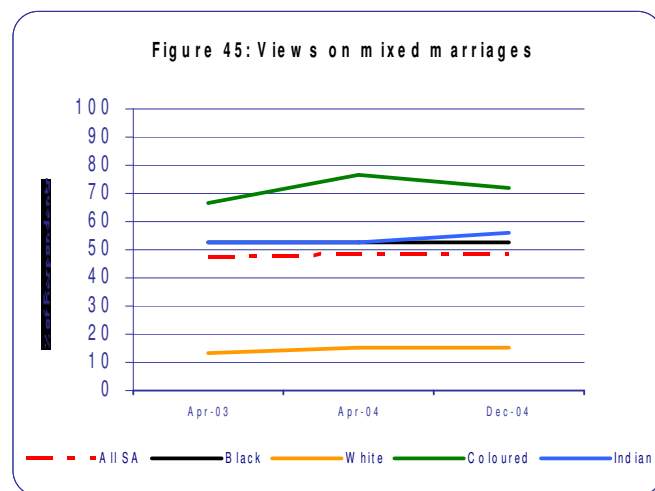


Figure 45: Having a close relative marry a [GROUP] person⁵⁶ (Percentage approving)

⁵⁶ This question was not asked in the November 2003 round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey.

The most striking feature of Figure 46 is the comparatively low level of approval for inter-racial marriages amongst white respondents. Only 15,4% of whites have indicated that they will approve of a marital union between a close relative and somebody from a different population group. This stands in stark contrast to the approval rates amongst coloureds (71,1%), Indians (55,9%) and black Africans (52,5%). This measure is probably the most personal of the three social distance indicators.

When responses to the three indicators above are being read together, it suggests that there is an overall increase in openness towards the idea of racially-shared spaces in South Africa. But an analysis of this nature would be insufficient if the responses from the different population groups are not being analysed in isolation from each other. Here it is interesting to note that positive responses for both black Africans and Indians have increased for all three measurements. White and coloured responses, on the other hand, have either declined or remained unchanged. The fifth round of the survey will provide some insight on whether this divergence is part of a continuing pattern.

12. Reconciliation in South Africa

This round of the SARB has once again produced fascinating data, but in many ways it has also left us with more profound questions about the underlying factors that impact on the reconciliation process in South Africa. This is not strange for a project of this nature. We have to admit that after only three years in existence, the project is only now entering a phase where we can start to identify particular response trends. In turn, this will allow us to investigate particular deeper-lying reconciliation variables and the extent to which they impact on the reconciliation process.

As before, this report dealt with a number of reconciliation indicators that have been distilled from six hypotheses that pertain to the nature of reconciliation (See p. 8.).

While responses regarding general and personal safety have gone slightly down since April 2003, the decreases have not been significant. This decline was matched by an equally small decline in respondents' evaluation of government performance in reducing crime. There have also been small declines in the evaluation of general and personal economic conditions. Those in higher income groups were, however, more upbeat about their economic prospects. Responses on the cultural front have remained stable for all population groups.

Still within the theme of human security, the report has paid attention to respondent evaluations of government performance relating to specific services. Despite high levels of social unrest in a number of centres, which pertained to the quality of service delivery, respondents in this survey have given government very positive evaluations for its provision of key social services. Its ability to deliver basic services, welfare, housing, and healthcare, have received exceptionally good evaluations of 60% and higher. While all evaluations for the respective services were slightly down in the most recent survey, it still remains substantial. It would be particularly interesting to see what these evaluations will look like in the fifth survey, which was conducted in April 2005, against the background of the service delivery protests that was referred to above.

As far as political culture is concerned, the report card is mixed. Slightly fewer South Africans have indicated that they trust the country's leaders to do what is right. There have, however, been increases amongst those who believe in the impartiality and trustworthiness of parliament. Unfortunately this confidence in parliament is for many South Africans only based on instrumental considerations. This is evident in the fact that 43% of respondents have agreed with the statement

that parliament should be done away with if decisions go against the will of the majority of citizens. It suggests that much still needs to be done in regard of entrenching the intrinsic value of democratic institutions in South African political culture.

The rule of law is another political culture indicator that this report has dealt with. What needs to be established is whether an inherent respect for the rule of law exists or whether it is dependent on external conditionalities. This is important, because it points to the extent of which a common understanding of-, and respect for the law can have a unifying effect on South Africans. Just more than 50% of South Africans indicated that they will circumvent the intentions of the law, without actually breaking it. Almost 25% said that their respect for the law is conditional on the government of the day, while 32% felt that in some instances it is better to bring about justice without adhering to the law. Responses to each of these items have remained fairly stable, compared to the April 2004 round of the survey.

Relating to the question of the rule of law, is the issue of justified forms of action. If a democratic system provides all citizens with sufficient avenues for public participation, it follows that nobody will resort to illegal forms of action when they feel aggrieved by government policy. According to the most recent round of the survey, there has been a slight increase in the number of respondents willing to resort to legal forms of protest, such as demonstrations and strikes. In both instances about 50% of respondents have indicated that they would resort to these forms of action. There has also been a small increase amongst those willing to use violence to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. Their number, however, remain small.

Little has changed in the way South Africans view their complex and difficult past. Within the previously disadvantaged groups the vast majority of respondents regarded apartheid as a crime against humanity, that it was accompanied by horrific atrocities, and that the inequalities in society today can be ascribed to the policies of the previous dispensation. White affirmative responses are much lower, but still above 50%. There has, however been a significant decline of about 12% in the number of white respondents that regarded apartheid as a crime against humanity.

A third hypothesis dealt with the need for citizens to form working political relationship across the barriers that divided us in the past. Just less than 50% of respondents have indicated that they do not mind belonging to a political party, made up mainly of people from other population groups. But political relationships may not only be limited to political party membership. It also refers to the broader imperative of national unity. 76% of respondents have indicated in the most recent survey that there is a definite need for a united nation, made up of all the country's constitutive population groups. Responses for each of the population groups have remained fairly stable since the first measurement of responses to this statement.

Cross-cutting political relationships are, however, unlikely in a context where little dialogue exist between formerly divided groups. Churches and the broadcast media are two key institutions of influence that is pervasive enough to facilitate dialogue in South Africa. According to the survey, an overwhelming majority of South Africans support the idea of a greater role for both institutions in the country's reconciliation process. White respondents though are much more hesitant in this regard. While the national approval for the of broadcast media and religious institutions as reconciliation agents are 82% and 71% respectively, white approval is just above 50% on both counts.

As far as cross-racial contact is concerned, just less than 35% of South Africans have indicated that they never interact with somebody from a different population group on an average day. 57% have said that they never socialize with somebody from a different group. There has been a clear racial

difference in responses. Black Africans have indicated far less interaction than members of minority groups. This should be understood within the context of the size of the black African section of the population, compared to that of the smaller minority groups. Employment levels have also played an important role in the mobility of people and hence, their interaction with other groups. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a desire amongst the majority of respondents to increase levels of inter-group contact - only 30% of the total sample has indicated that they would like to do so. A partial explanation for this may lie in the fact that 60% found it difficult to understand the customs and ways of other groups, while a further 40% believed that people from other groups are untrustworthy.

There had been slight increases in responses regarding cross-racial distance from the April to November 2004 surveys. Those who approve of integrated neighbourhoods increased from 55% to 60%, while the percentage of those agreeing with the concept of multi-racial schools grew from 67% to 69%. National perceptions regarding mixed marriages have, however, remained unchanged. After showing significant increases in approval for integrated neighbourhoods and multi-racial schools, the positive responses amongst white respondents, dropped again to 43% and 53% for the respective items.