THE SA
RECONCILIATION BAROMETER
  -TRACKING SOCIO-POLITICAL TRENDS-

INSTITUTE FOR
JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

FIFTH ROUND REPORT:
THE SA RECONCILIATION BAROMETER SURVEY

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1. Introduction

In 2002, eight years into post-apartheid South Africa, certain behavioural patterns relating to the national reconciliation process became increasingly discernable, but lacked quantification to confirm their pervasiveness. The IJR, which had been formed two years earlier, became increasingly aware of the need to supplement its extensive community reconciliation initiatives with a survey instrument to gain a deeper understanding of the multiple variables that impact on the success or failure of initiatives to reconcile a nation that has been divided for centuries. In that year the Institute launched an exploratory survey to iron out the potential pitfalls that were involved in conducting a project of this nature. This paved the way for the first SARB Survey that was conducted in April 2003.

Over the past three years we have continued to sharpen the survey's utility as a measurement instrument by expanding the scope of areas that is covered in the survey. Its emphasis remains on measuring key indicators that relate to our five central reconciliation hypotheses about race relations, human security, historical confrontation, dialogue, political culture, and cross-cutting political relationships (see p.6.) In order to preserve the longitudinal value of the survey, the majority of the original measurements have remained in the survey. Without these it would have been impossible to establish benchmarks from which further research could benefit.

In consecutive surveys we have, however, continued to increase the number of measurements for particular indicators in order to deepen our understanding about nuances that might otherwise have been lost in more generalized statements and questions. One such indicator has been human security, which strongly relates to a critical issue that features quite prominently in South African public discourse, the expansion of socio-economic justice. Since the third round of the SARB Survey, we have, therefore included measurements for citizen satisfaction with a range of basic government service delivery items. Another indicator that has received specific attention in this latest round of the survey has been the increasing focus that is being placed on the consolidation of key democratic institutions. Pressure on institutions to deliver is mounting, as we have witnessed in the public display of dissatisfaction with local government delivery across the country. We ask what impact this has had on public perception about the legitimacy of key democratic institutions.

This document reports on selected findings from the fifth round of the SARB Survey, which was conducted during the months of April and May of 2005. Being in its third year of existence, the project increasingly allows the institute to discern patterns with regard to particular forms of behaviour. During its first two years the national average of certain measurements failed to present an accurate account of the sentiments of the average respondent within each of the particular population group. The average rather pointed to the middle ground between the extremes of minority and majority group responses. There are strong indications that this may be changing. Response patterns during the two most recent rounds of the survey suggest that the gap between the perceptions of different population groups is narrowing. In other words, a convergence in opinion appears to be taking root amongst South Africans.

The report covers a broad series of responses to most statements and questions that were posed in the survey. However, due to limitations in the length of the report, not all responses have been documented here. In most instances we have only provided a racial breakdown of opinions, but this should not be viewed as being our only or primary mode of analysis. In particular instances we have also provided responses to the survey measurements in terms of socio-economic status. In such cases, we have made use of the living standards measurement (LSM), to distinguish between perceptions and attitudes of people that fall within different social classes. We would like to encourage readers of the report to approach the IJR, should additional information be required about the impact of variables other than race and class.

2. Approach

The measurement of a process that is as subjective and as contested as reconciliation has its limitations. The most daunting of these is the need to sacrifice certain of its dimensions in trade-offs to enhance measurability. Nevertheless, the obvious danger of excessive reductionism in translating such a complex process in relation to a handful of critical indicators should also be recognized. This research by no means asserts that reconciliation

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is solely composed of these critical dimensions that we list on page six under the heading of "Unpacking Reconciliation". On the contrary, it recognizes the definitional and contextual ambiguity of the process. It is an attempt at some necessary comparable quantification of the national reconciliation process. But it also has a longer-term imperative, namely the documentation of citizen opinion at a crucial period in the history of South Africa's transition.

Although five surveys have been completed to date, it only accounts for public attitude and opinion of two full years. It is, therefore, important to remember that we are still at a very preliminary stage in the tracking of broader socio-political trends. Even in cases where change has been tremendous, five measurements – particularly across quite a short time period - do not provide sufficient evidence to assume the presence of a trend. Such changes should in most instances be treated as fluctuations unless there are clear indications to the contrary. The presence of trends in responses to most measurement will only confirmed by data emanating from future rounds of the survey.

3. Survey Design

The analysis that follows is based on the results from five national surveys conducted in March-April 2003, October-November 2003, April-May 2004, November-December 2004 and April-May 2005. In all five the same sampling methodology, questionnaires (with new additions) 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). Fieldwork for the fifth round was undertaken between 20 April and 25 May 2005. Face-to-face interviews were done with socially and racially representative samples of 3 498, 3 499, 3 498, 3 499, and 3 490 South Africans respectively. The sample for all five rounds was representative of the entire South African population of 16 years and older. The margin of error for the most recent survey was 1,6%.

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.

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 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.

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 and many of these 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 u*buntu*, 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.

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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 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 (SARB)* 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.

Table 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.

The April/May 2004 round of the *SARB* Survey included a new dimension of research that have 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 *SARB* 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 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?

This round of the survey saw additional statements and questions being added to improve the measurement of the human security and political culture hypothesis. Some of these are being reported in this documents, others that have been less conclusive will be fine-tuned for future surveys.

Table1: Conceptual Overview of Reconciliation Indicators

Hypotheses	Indicators
Human Security: If citizens do not feel threatened, they are more likely to be reconciled with each other and the larger system. **Political Culture:** If citizens view the Institutions, Structures and Values of the new system as legitimate and accountable, reconciliation is more likely to progress. **Cross-cutting Political Relationships:** If citizens are able to form working political relationships that cross divisions, reconciliation is more likely to advance. **Dialogue:** If citizens are committed to deep dialogue, reconciliation is more likely to be advanced. **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. **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.	▪ Physical Security ▪ Expanded Economic Security[10] ▪ Cultural Security ▪ 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 ▪ Commitment to more dialogue ▪ Acknowledgement of Injustice of Apartheid ▪ Forgiveness ▪ Reduced levels of Vengeance ▪ Cross-racial Contact ▪ Cross-racial Perceptions ▪ Cross-racial Social Distance

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. 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

Without question, the fear of being a victim has impacted significantly on the way in which South Africans relate to each other.[13] 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 racial prejudice and it undermines social stability and tolerance".[14] 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". [15] Elsewhere he suggests that by viewing the country through a prism of fear "an identity of victimhood that is linked to race" is created, which reinforces apartheid identities. This, arguably, hinders social stability and the reconciliation process.

The latest official crime statistics, released in September 2005, contained data, which suggest that significant headway has been made in the fight against crime.[16] The majority of crimes have either showed a decline or lower levels of increase. The most significant findings include the year-on-year decrease of 5% in murder rates (12% since 2001), a 19% decrease for attempted murder (22% since 2001), and a 10% decrease in car high-jacking (22% since 2001). While reported incidences of rape have remained fairly stable with a 1,5% increase in the period 2001-2005, the strong upward surge of almost 5% in this statistic between 2004 and 2005 is disconcerting. Irrespective of growth or decline in these vital crime statistics, the actual number of incidences remains unacceptably high. 19 000 murders a year is a shocking figure regardless of whether it represents a 12% decline over the past four years or not.

Of particular interest to this report, is whether the improved crime statistics has managed to contribute to a more positive outlook amongst citizens. Have they provided the kind of encouragement that is necessary for a more positive outlook on the state of crime in South Africa? 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.

Since 2003 the survey has 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).

Figure 1: How do you think the general safety of South Africans will change during the next 12 months? (positive change by race)
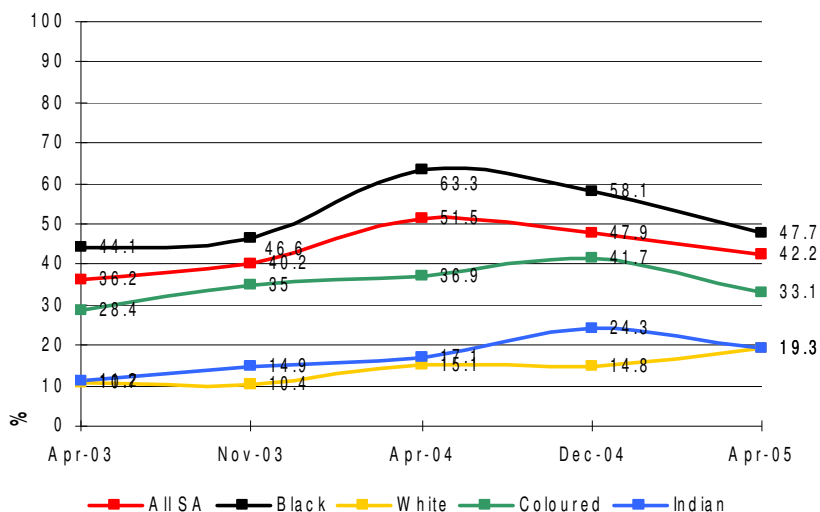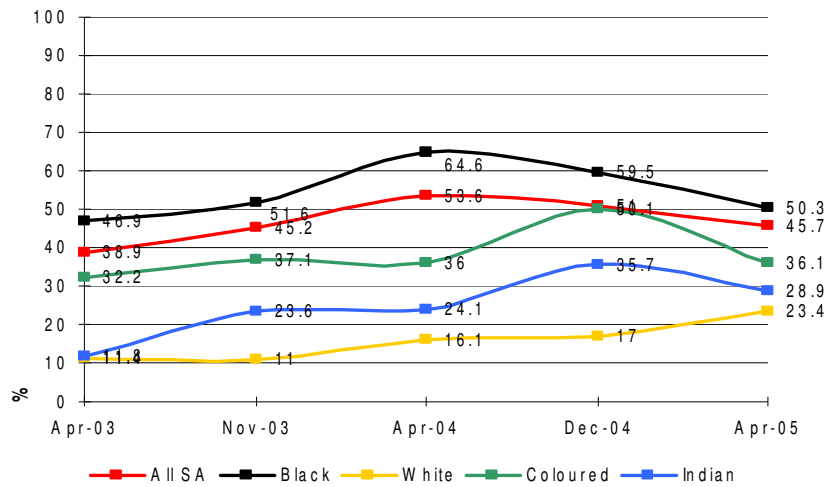
Figure 2: How do you think the personal level of safety of people like you will change during the next two years? (positive change by race)

Figures 1 and 2 reveal a strong correspondence in the way individuals rate their expectations for an improvement in their personal safety and that of the country as a whole. Although responses regarding personal safety are marginally higher than those on the national level, the response patterns virtually mirror each other.

In April 2005 the majority of South Africans were either negative or uncertain about the prospects of their personal safety and that of their fellow countrymen and women. Just 42% believed that the general safety situation in the country would improve, while 45% were confident of an improvement in their personal circumstances. White expectations about an improvement on both counts remain the lowest (28%), but this group has also been the only one that has recorded consistent growth as far as positive expectations for safety is concerned. South Africans of Indian origin, with 29%, also remain fairly sceptical about national and personal safety prospects. Black African and coloured respondents remain the most confident on both counts, but show decreases in optimism compared to a year ago.

Figure 3: How do you think the personal level of safety of people like you will change during the next two years? (positive change by LSM Group – April 2005)
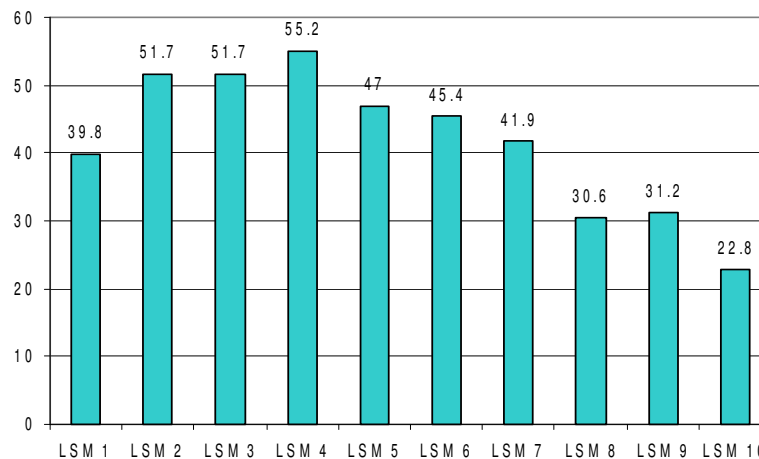

Figure 3 show responses in terms of Living Standard Measurement Categories (an index consisting of various living standards indicators, which relate primarily to access to particular appliances and services) in April 2005. This largely supports the finding that white responses, who fall predominantly within the highest three LSM groups 8-10, remain the most sceptical about an improvement in their personal safety over the next two years.

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Those within the middle categories 4-7 are the most optimistic (LSM4 records the highest level of 55%). Interestingly though, is the fact that the responses of the materially most vulnerable group, LSM1, is located in close proximity to LSM8-10. This, ironically, suggests that those with the least hope for an improvement in their personal security are the poorest and richest segments of our society.

6.2. Economic Threat

At the time of writing the South African economy had recorded its 27th consecutive quarter of growth. GDP growth for 2005 had been estimated at 4,9% and although expected to be slightly lower in 2006, consensus amongst analysts seems to be that the sought after level of 6% is no longer a distant objective. Some even argue that we might have crossed this magical threshold. Government on its part have made it clear that after almost a decade of fiscal austerity it is now in ready to adopt a more expansionary attitude towards the economy. Increased revenues have opened the possibility for higher levels of spending on infrastructure and services.

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. The latter rarely occurs under voluntary circumstances and, within the South African context, has the potential to take on racial tones. Given the country's racially-skewed distribution of economic wealth, this current period of strong economic growth provides a window of opportunity to address these imbalances.

6.2.1 Economic Expectations

While the impact of such growth may be visible on balance sheets in the formal economy, the true test would be whether it filters down to those spheres of society where it is most needed. Has it been robust enough to alter the outlook of ordinary South Africans? Figure 4 reports on responses regarding the prospects for an improvement in the personal economic situation of respondents.

Figure 4: How do you think the economic situation of people like you will change during the next two years?
(Percentage improvement by race)
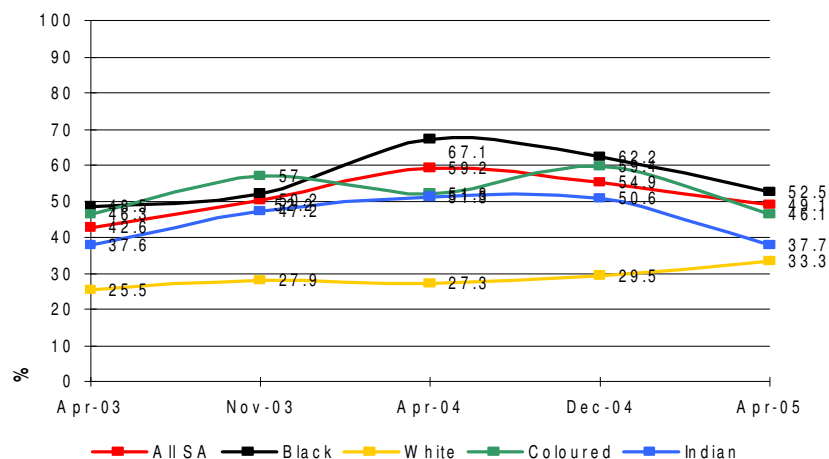
Interestingly, there has been a decline of almost 6% (from 54,9% to 49,1%) in the percentage of South Africans that expect an improvement in their personal economic situation. Most significant are the strong declines in optimism amongst the previously disadvantaged groups. While the Black African and Indian responses already started a gradual decline a year prior to the April 2005 survey, coloured responses recorded a much steeper decline in the months since December 2004. Although from a much lower base, positive white responses have continued to increase since the first measurement. While a quarter of white South Africans showed optimism about their personal economic fate two years ago, this has increased to one third. Despite the general decline in positive responses to the above two questions in recent surveys, there still appears to be more optimism in the personal economic outlook of respondents compared to two years ago.

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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 investigate the opinions of respondents in terms of their social class. Once again LSM categories have been employed for this analysis.

Figure 5: How do you think the economic situation of people like you will change during the next two years?
(Percentage by LSM Category – April 2005)
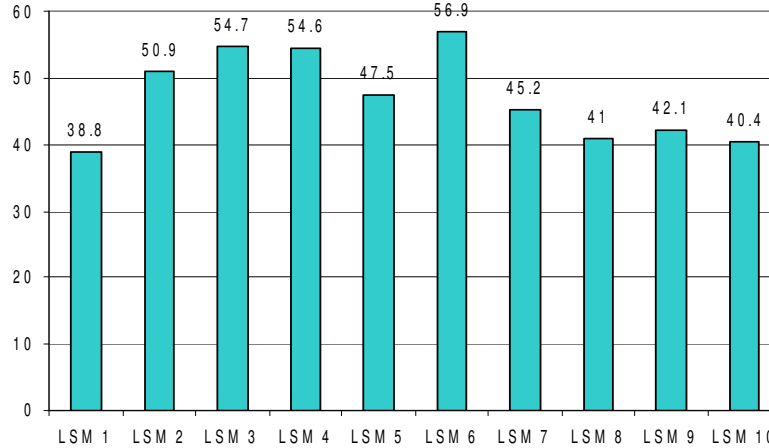
Almost all of the LSM categories recorded a decline in optimism with the exceptions of LSM's 2 and 9. The most striking feature of Figure 5, however, is the convergence in opinion amongst the most affluent (LSM10 with 40%) and poorest segment of South African society (LSM1 with 39%). The better resourced appear to fear for their wealth, while the most destitute, show the least hope for an improvement in their fate. The middle categories, which can roughly be defined as the middle class, appear to be most upbeat about their prospects. Most optimism seem to reside in LSM's 3,4 and 6.

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 fourth round data was collected only eight months after the third round, it did not come as much of a surprise that there was little change in the responses between the two surveys. The April 2005 round of the SARB Survey, points to a more marked decline in the positive evaluation of their financial situation and living conditions.

Figure 6: How does your financial situation compare to that of 12 months ago? (percentage improvement by race)
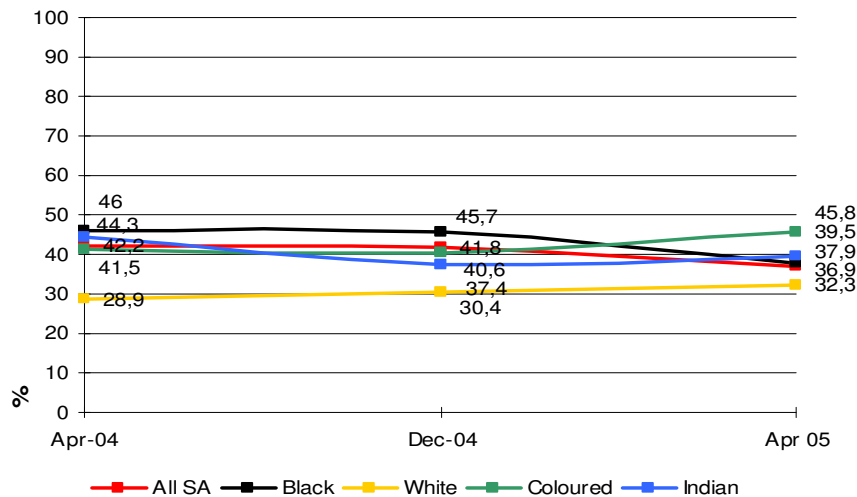
Figure 6 shows that those who feel that they were in a better financial position than a year ago decreased by almost 5%. In April 2004 this figure stood at 42,2%; in April 2005 the corresponding figure was 36,9%. The sharpest drop in positive responses occurred amongst black African respondents from 46% in April 2004 to 37,9% a year later. Indian responses also showed a decline from 44,3% to 39,5%, but remain the second most positive group after coloured respondents of whom 45,8% felt that they were better off financially than a year ago. Although the numbers of positive responses amongst white respondents have continued to grow incrementally between the surveys, with 32% they remain the group with the lowest positive rating.

Figure 7: How does your financial situation compare to that of 12 months ago?
(percentage improvement by LSM Category – April 2005)
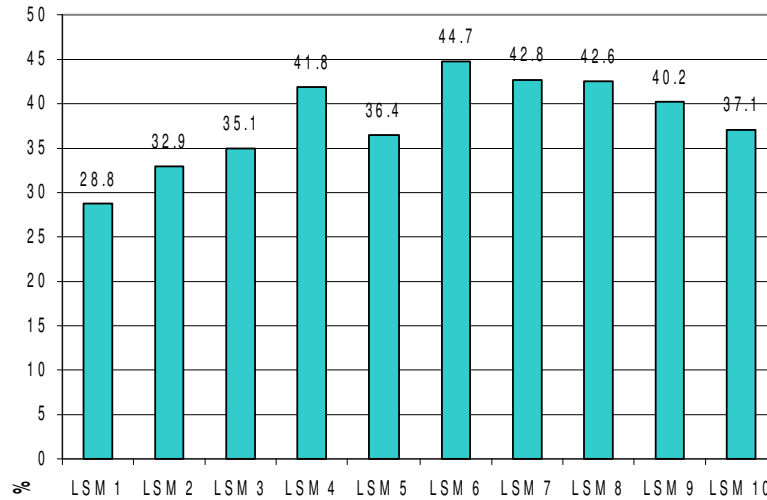
A breakdown of responses to the same statement in LSM categories reveals that the lowest three categories were least likely to have experienced an improvement in their personal financial situation. Those most positive about the state of their personal finances compared to a year ago, reside in the middle classes. It peaks with 44,7% in LSM6, but then starts to decline again towards LSM10 with a positive response rate of 37,1%. With the exception of LSM5, all categories between 4 and 8 recorded levels of improvement higher than 40%

Figure 8: How do your living conditions compare to that of 12 months ago?
(percentage improvement by race).
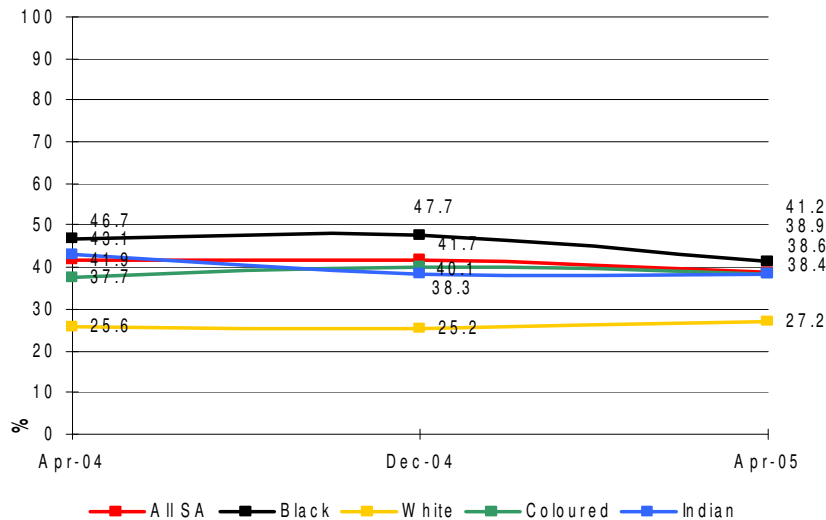
There has also been a slight decline in the number or respondents who felt that their living conditions have improved over the past year. In April 2005 38,9% of South Africans felt that this was the case, compared to

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41,9% twelve months earlier. The biggest decrease of just more than 5% occurred amongst black Africans, which saw the percentage of positive responses shrink from 46,7% to 41,2%. As a group, they nevertheless recorded the highest level of perceived improvement in living conditions. Both coloured and white respondents have shown small increases of 38,4% and 27,2% respectively. Indian respondents, however, registered a decline from 43,1% to 38,6%.

Figure 8: How do your living conditions compare to that of 12 months ago?
(percentage improvement by LSM Category – April 2005)
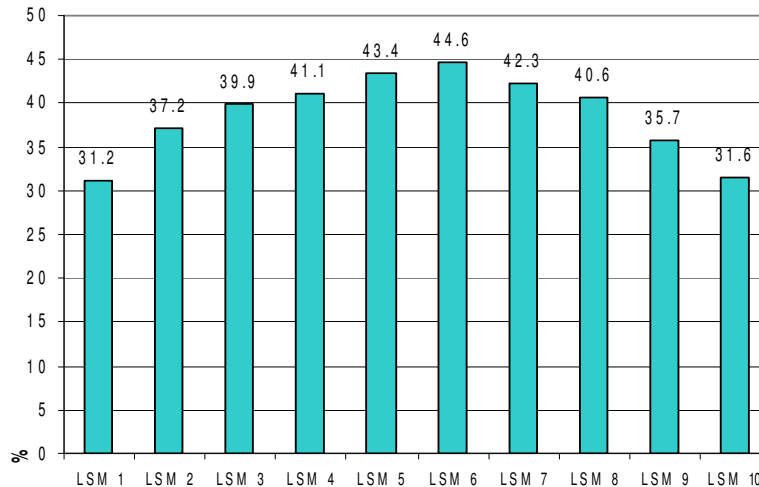
An analysis of living conditions amongst LSM categories shows a very similar pattern to that of the analysis of financial security. The lowest levels of perceived improvements have been recorded amongst the most affluent and those with the least access to material resources. Similarly, the highest level of positive responses emerged in the middle category, peaking once again in LSM6 with a 44,6% level of agreement.

6.2.3. Unemployment

High unemployment levels remain a major impediment to sustained economic growth and the eradication of South Africa's grave social inequalities. For the larger part of the past two decades the country's economic growth rates have failed to match or surpass the expansion of its labour market. This has inevitably increased competition for access to employment, particularly within the unskilled and low-skilled sectors of society. An added dimension to the job security picture has been the need to rectify the racially-skewed profile of the South African work force on all employment levels. Often this has resulted in a perceived competition for employment with strong racial undertones.

Substantial and sustained employment growth would, therefore, go a long way in addressing inequality, but also alleviate inter-group competition for limited employment opportunities. The official unemployment rate currently stands at 26,5%[17] - a figure that has fluctuated only marginally over the past two years. More expansive definitions of the same measure estimate the number of South Africans without employment in the region of 41%. There are, however, indications of acceleration in the creation of job opportunities. The most recent Quarterly Employment Statistics Survey has, for example, indicated that 99 000 new opportunities have been created in the formal non-agricultural sector between June and September 2005.[18] This has translated into an estimated, 1,4% increase in this sphere. This has been good news for the country as a whole, but how tangible has this increase been on grassroots level? As a measure of their optimism in the employment prospects that the country holds, respondents have been asked how their chances of finding employment compares to 12 months ago.

Figure 9: How do the chances of you finding a job compare to what they were 12 months ago?
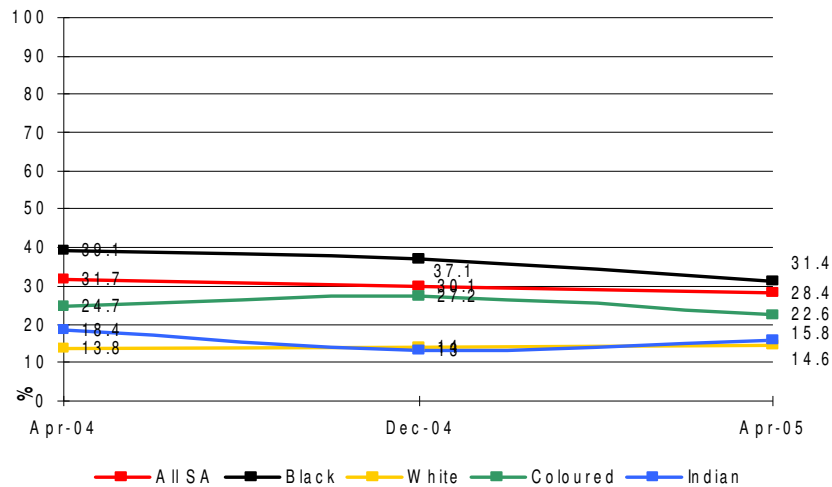*(percentage improvement by race)*

Figure 9 indicates a small decline of just under 3% from 31,7% in April 2004 to 28,4% in April 2005 amongst South Africans who have experienced an improvement in their current employment prospects as compared to a year ago. The decline amongst black African respondents from 39,1% to 31,4% is, however, more striking. Coloured, Indian and white responses have changed only marginally during the same period. The cumulative picture, therefore, seems to suggest that the positive indicators of the Quarterly Employment Statistics Survey have not found much bearing within the broader population or within the country's respective population groups.

Figure 9: How do the chances of you finding a job compare to what they were 12 months ago?
(percentage improvement by LSM Category – April 2005)
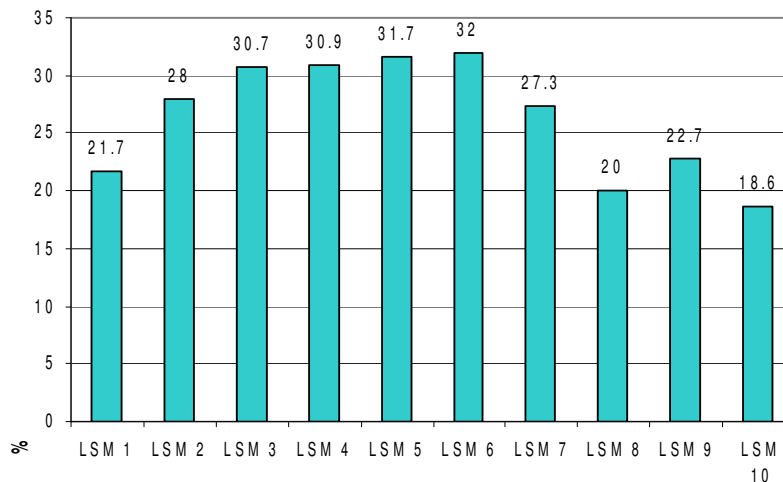
When the same measurements are being viewed from a living standards perspective, most optimism is located within the lower middle LSM categories. Least optimism resides in the LSM categories that in reality record the highest levels of actual employment in South Africa. Notable here is also the fact that the least resourced category, LSM1, record the third lowest agreement with the contention that employment prospects have improved over the past year.

6.2.4. Government Evaluations

The fourth round report of the SARB Survey in early 2005 noted the marked increase in incidences of protest against insufficient local government service delivery. These protests have increased in number and intensity during the course of 2005 and have succeeded in focussing attention on major shortcomings within the local

government system, but also on deficiencies in the intergovernmental relations between the different spheres of government. While government has excelled in its macro-management of the economy, these very visible displays of public dissatisfaction has highlighted the extent of the bottlenecks that still exist in terms actual spending and delivery of quality services.

Although the SARB Survey has been tracking various facets of service delivery over the past year, this section of the report will focus specifically on the delivery of basic services, which include responsibilities such as water provision, access to electricity, sewage, and waste management to communities across the country.

Figure 10: How would you say government is handling the delivery of basic services to all South Africans? (percentage approval by race)
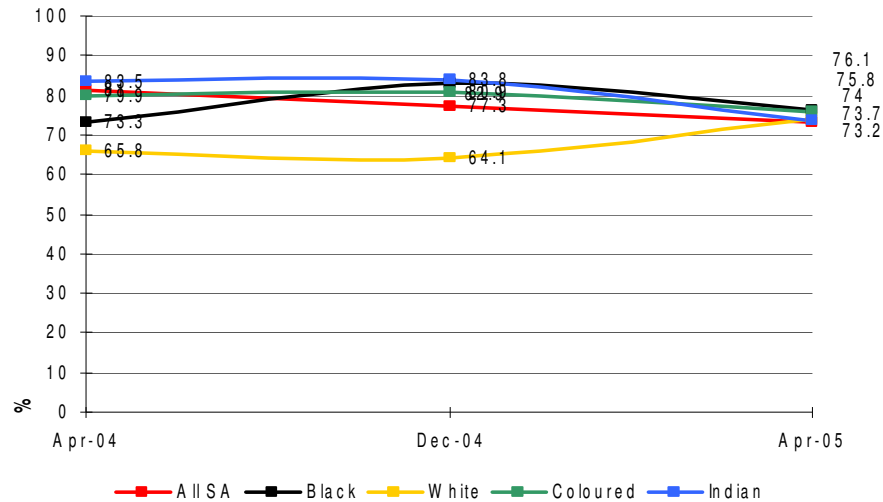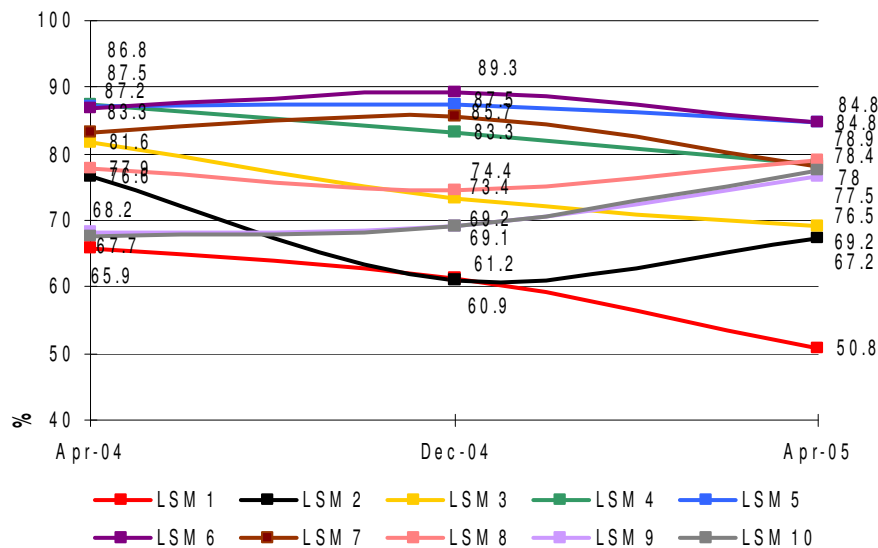

Figure 11: How would you say government is handling the delivery of basic services to all South Africans? (percentage approval by LSM Group – April 2005)

Figures 10 and 11 report on citizen responses to basic service delivery efforts in the twelve months between April 2004 and April 2005. During this period national approval for the quality of service delivery has sunk quite considerably from 81% to 73,2% (See Figure 10). While the positive evaluation of white respondents have increased in this period from 65,8% to 73,2%, approval ratings amongst coloured and Indian respondents have declined significantly with about 4% and 6% respectively. Approval ratings by black African South Africans have increased from 73,3% to 76,1%. This is, nevertheless almost 7% lower than the 82,9% that was recorded in December 2004.

Figure 11, which presents the breakdown of responses in living standards categories present an interesting picture. Its striking feature is the considerable decline in approval for service delivery efforts amongst respondents in LSM1. In April 2004 65,9% of respondents in this segment of the population approved of local government service delivery efforts. This was the weakest rating recorded amongst all groups at the time. A year later in April 2005, this approval rating dropped further with a staggering 15% to 50,8%. While the evaluations amongst respondents in LSM's 2 and 3 are less bleak, they are considerably lower than a year ago with 69,2% and 67,2% respectively. The strongest increases, interestingly occurred amongst the top two LSM categories. LSM9 increased by 8% from 68,2% to 76,5% while the corresponding increase in LSM10 was from 67,7% to 77,5%.

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.[19]

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 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"[20], 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 within 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.

Figure 12: In the next twelve months, do you think other people's respect for your religious or language group will improve? (percentage agreement by race)
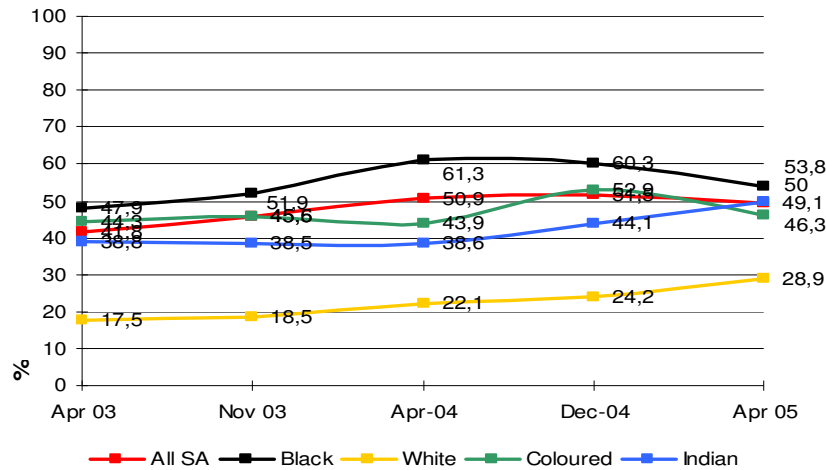

Figure 12 shows that just under 50% of South Africans feel that respect for their particular culture has increased over the past year. There has been little variance in responses to this question since it appeared in the first survey of April 2003. Black African responses peaked in April 2004 with 61,3%, but declined to 53,8% in the most recent survey. Positive feedback amongst coloured respondents reached its highest level of 54,5% in December 2004, but dropped again to 49,5% five months in later in the April 2005 survey. An encouraging feature of Figure 14 is the constant increase in the positive evaluations amongst white and Indian respondents, two groups that over the past eleven years have been least optimistic about the position of either their language or culture within the post-apartheid social dispensation. White responses have increased with just over 11% from 17,5% in April 2003 to 28,9% in April 2005. The corresponding figures for Indian responses were 38,8% in April 2003 and 50,1% in April 2005.

Figure 13: Will government support for different language and religious groups to practice their language or religion improve? (percentage agreement by race)
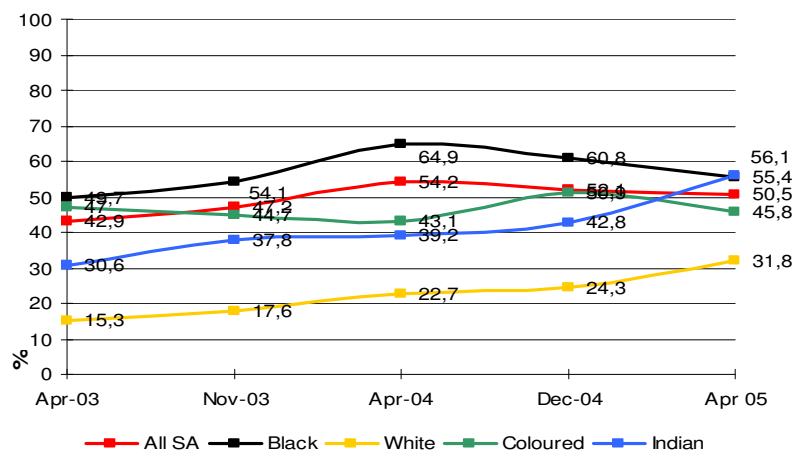
The pattern of responses in Figure 13, which accounts for personal perceptions on government support for individual language and cultural groups, virtually mirrors that of Figure 12. Again the strongest features of this graph is the doubling of white positive responses from 15,3% in April 2003 to 31,8% twelve months later. Just as encouraging is the sustained growth in positive sentiment amongst Indian respondents. Positive evaluations amongst this group has increased from 30,6% in April 2003 to 55,4% in April 2005. 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.

Since the political transition in 1994 a number of geographical name changes have been made on the premise that location names should be reflective of the original inhabitants that first occupied a particular physical space. While several of these changes were accompanied with different degrees of friction, the most controversial of these has been the renaming of the city of Pretoria to Tshwane, named after Chief Tshwane that lived in the area, prior to the arrival of the first Voortrekkers. Geographical names have symbolical value as far as perceptions of respect and acceptance of cultural values between groups are concerned. To some a name may be an affirmation and acknowledgement of their history; to others it may be a sign of exclusion. The SARB Survey has prompted respondents about this issue in its most recent round.

Figure 14: It is important that town and city names reflect the culture of its original inhabitants.
(percentage agreement by race – April 2005)
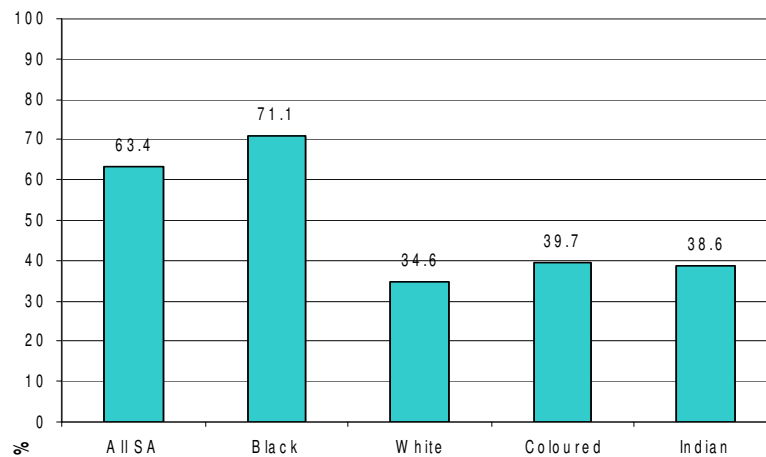
Almost two thirds of South Africans, or 63,4% agree that the names of their towns and cities should acknowledge culture and practice of its original inhabitants. Most support for this notion, 71,1%, resides amongst black African respondents while less than half of those in the coloured, Indian and white categories show approval for this as a mechanism of cultural accommodation.

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".[21] 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.

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.[22] 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 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".

Figure 15: The people who run the country are not really concerned with what happens to people like me (percentage in agreement by race) [23]
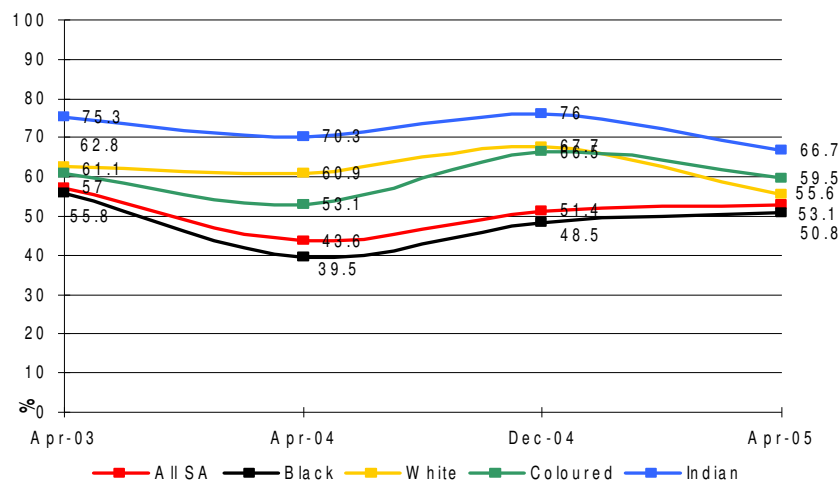
*Figure 16: The people who run the country are not really concerned with what happens to people like me
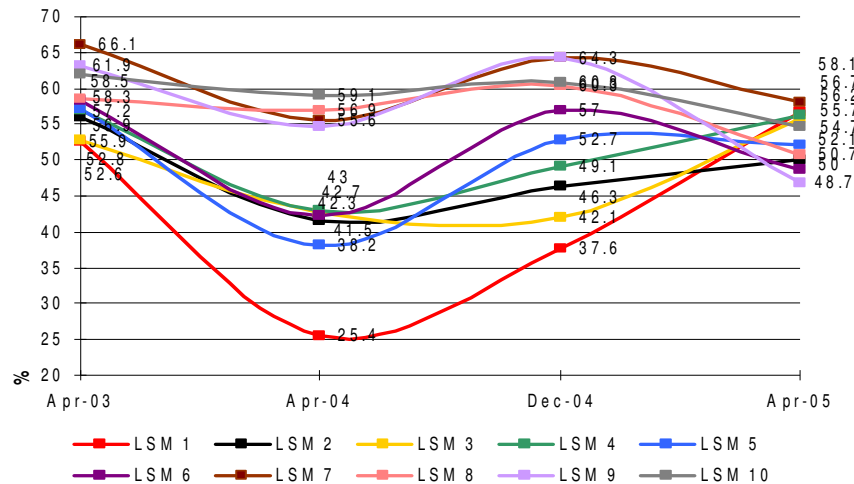(percentage in agreement by LSM Group – April 2005) [24]*

Figure 15 suggest that the three minority groups feel the most distant from the country's political leadership. 66,7% of Indians, 59,5% of coloureds and 55,6% of white respondents have indicated in the most recent round of the survey that the country's leaders are not concerned about the plight of people like them. The corresponding figure amongst black respondents was 50,8%. Given this country's long history of social division, this pattern of racial response should not come as a surprise. An interesting aspect, however, reflected in this graph, is the apparent convergence of opinion in this regard. Compared to April 2003 fewer respondents in each of the minority groups have indicated agreement with the statement, while slightly more black African respondents have done so.

Figure 16 shows responses to this statement in terms of living standard categories. It points to a more complex picture in perceived concern of national leaders to the plight of their followers. The strongest and most visible feature of this graph has been the decline in negative responses during the third round of the survey in April 2004, which was conducted in the period immediately before and after the country's third democratic general election. Given, the substantial increase in negative responses in the following round to the survey, it can be concluded with relative certainty that election promises have had an impact on responses during the third round of the SARB Survey. The most dramatic variance occurred amongst those South Africans with the lowest living standards, LSM1. In April 2003, 52,6% of respondents in this category agreed that government does not care about people like them. None of the remaining nine categories showed such low level of agreement with this statement. During April 2004, this figure more than halved to 25,4%, making them the most optimistic about leaders' concern for their plight. Not co-incidentally, the focus of this election also fell on the plight of this section of the South African population. A year late, this figure almost doubled, making it the second most negative section of the country's population. Whereas all other categories appeared to show more confidence in their perception about leadership concern, this category, together with LSM2 have shown consistent declines since the third round of the survey.

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.
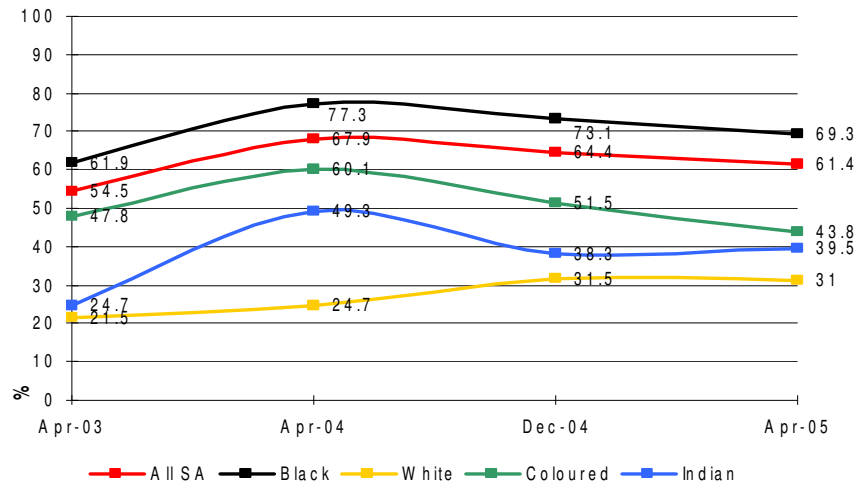*(percentage in agreement by race) [25]*

Figure 17 shows how both national and individual group responses have peaked in the third round of the SARB Survey, which was conducted in April 2004. Since then responses have started to decline incrementally. Two exceptions should be noted. The first is strong decline in responses by coloured participants in the survey from 60,1% in April 2004 to 43,8% twelve months later. The second is the response pattern amongst white respondents. Positive responses amongst this group have peaked during the fourth round in December 2004 and have dropped with only half a percent during the most recent survey in April 2005.

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, 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. Off 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".[26]

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.[27]

Figure 18: The South African Parliament treats all people who come before it –
black, white, coloured and Indian – the same. (percentage in agreement by race)
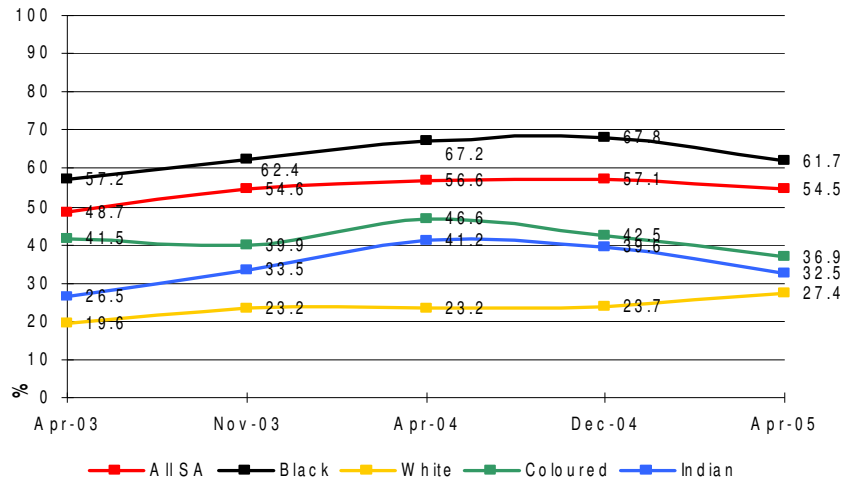
Perception about equal treatment for all groups by the South African Parliament remains the lowest amongst the country's minority groups (see Figure 18). Agreement with the statement that parliament treats all South Africans the same reached its highest point amongst Indian and coloured respondents during the third round of the survey. Since then positive evaluations have dropped consistently. White respondents are still the most likely to disagree with the statement, but remain the only group that has consistently improved on previous levels of agreement. Positive responses amongst black Africans have peaked in December 2004, but dropped by six percentage points to 61,7% in the latest round of the survey. This is still about 7% higher than the national average of 54,5%.

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.

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 by race).
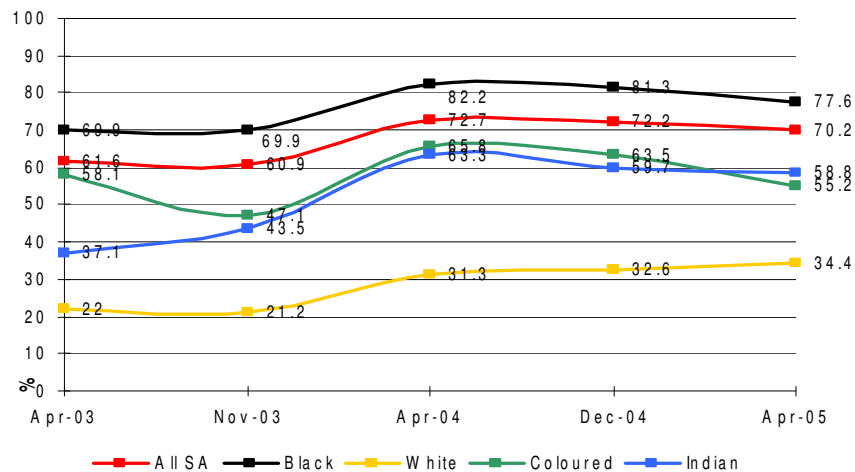
The pattern of responses in Figure 19 appears to be very similar to that of Figure 18. Indian and black African responses have levelled out during the two most recent rounds of the survey, after having peaked during the third round of April 2004. This also resembles the pattern of the national response. In April 2004 61,6% of South Africans believed that parliament could be trusted. A year later, the corresponding figure was 72,7%. In the most recent round of April 2005, it has declined by two and a half percentage points to 70,2%.

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. Doubt in the legitimacy of an institution, also has implications for national unity, because it questions the authority of such an institution to regulate social relations.

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 by race)
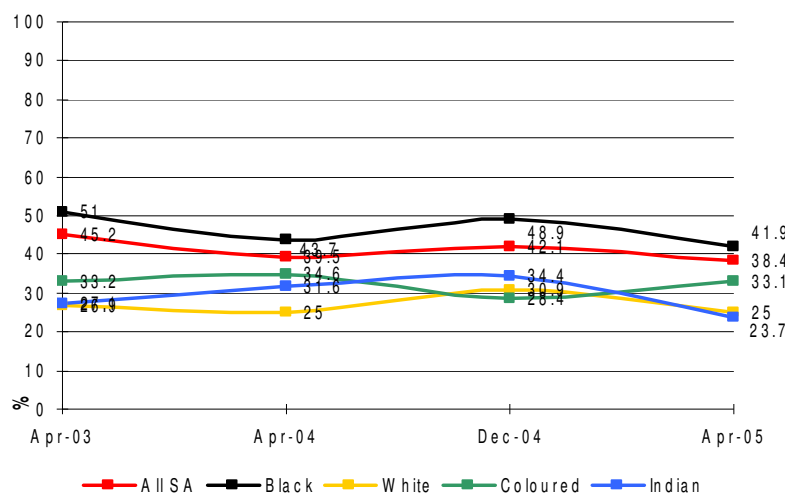
Figure 20 reports on the opinions of South Africans regarding the importance of the institution of parliament, regardless of its outputs. Responses to this statement do provide some cause for concern. Since the first measurement two years ago, more than a third of all respondents have indicated that parliament might become disposable in instances where most people don't agree with its decisions. The latest figure stands at 38,4%. This 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 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?" It is, however, encouraging to note that national approval for this notion has dropped consistently since the first measurement that registered 45,2% agreement.

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 improved 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.

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 showed, however, 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, which in 2006 will celebrate its first decade of existence. 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",[28] 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".[29]

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 by race)
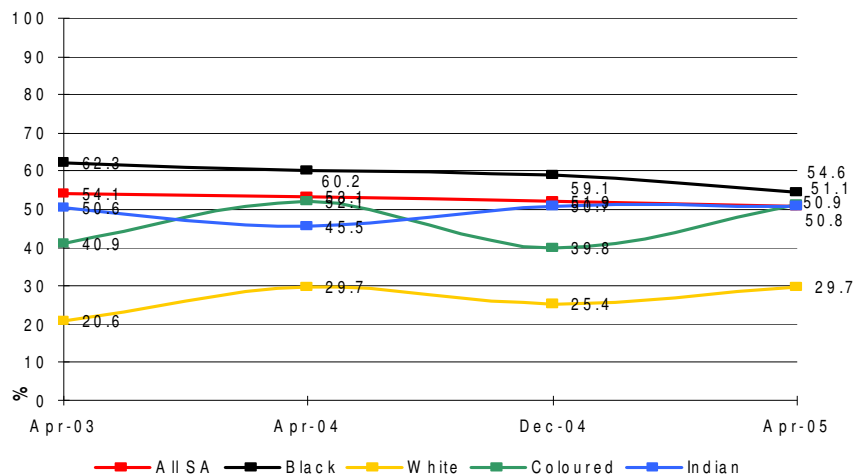
Respondents have been asked to indicate whether they would circumvent the law, without actually breaking it. The objective of this type of question is not so much to establish whether citizens respect particular laws that affect them, but whether there is a general commitment to the intrinsic value of obeying the law. The responses in Figure 21 show that just more than half (50,8%) 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 into 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 commentators make sense of the culture of non-payment that is still present amongst previously disadvantaged groups.

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: It is not necessary to obey laws of a government that I did not vote for
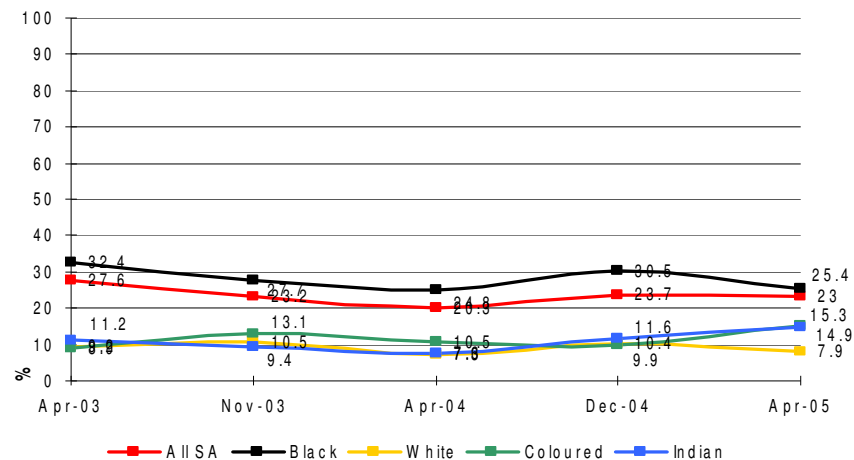*(percentage agreement by race)*

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 (25,4%), while the lower levels have been recorded amongst whites (7,9%), Indians (14,9%) and coloureds (15,3%). Given the 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 a blurring between state and partisan interests. This response may not necessarily have indicated support for the principle, but rather an understandable distrust of the *bona-fides* of predominantly white parties. It should, however, be noted that the number of affirmative responses amongst black respondents have decreased by 7% since the first round of the survey. In April 2003 agreement with this statement stood at 32,4%. Two years later in April 2005 the corresponding figure was 25,4%.

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 might be compromised.

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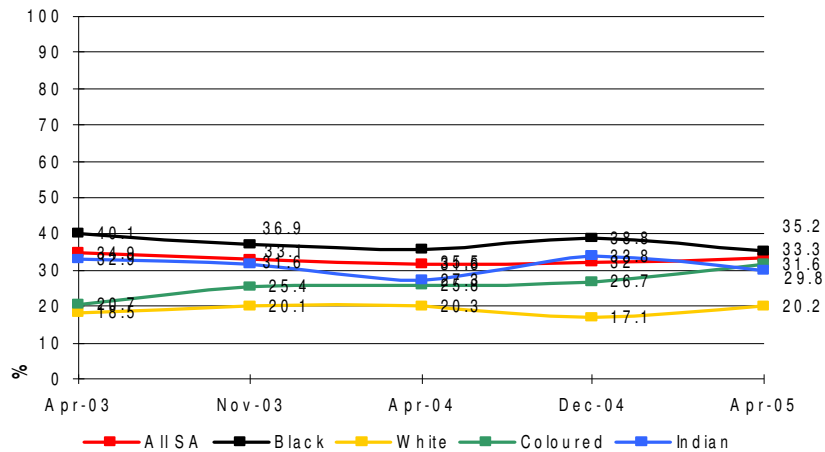

Figure 23 points to the fact that in April 2005 a third of South Africans were prepared to take the law into their own hands rather than waiting for a prolonged period to obtain justice. There appears to be a convergence of opinion on this issue amongst most South Africans, irrespective of their social background. Approval for this notion is strongest amongst the formerly disadvantaged groups.

As noted earlier, 2006 will mark the first ten years of the existence of the South African Constitution. This document contains the key values of our state and requires that all conduct within its borders should me measured against the broad standard that it sets. Not only does it guide proper conduct within civic life, but also the relations of individuals *vis-à-vis* the state. Each piece of legislation and all rulings of our courts should be in accordance with these values, which provides predictability and, therefore also, social stability. While the interpretation of constitutional rights and obligations is subjective and may differ from time to time, it is crucial that a common acceptance exist about their basic tenets.

Figure 24: The rulings of South African courts should be in accordance with the Constitution, even if it contradicts the will of the people (percentage agreement by population group – April 2005)
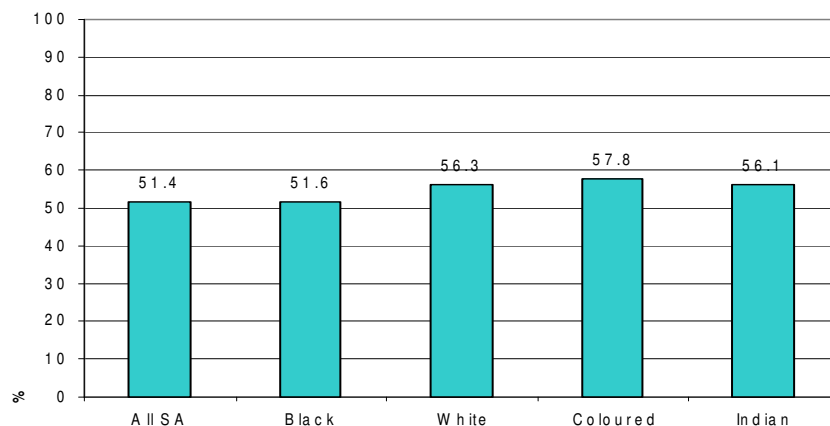

Figure 24 reports on citizen responses to a statement that courts should make rulings that are in accordance with the rules of the Constitution, irrespective of how unpopular they are at the time. Just more than half of South Africans, or 51,5%, agreed with this statement. There is little variance in responses to this statement amongst

the different population groups. Coloured South Africans, with 57,8% were most likely to agree, while black Africans with 51,6% were least likely to do so.

## 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 fault lines. 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.[30] Such relations are important for reconciliation as they hold the potential for the formation of a more fluid political society that can address issues that transcend racial, religious, class and linguistic boundaries.[31] 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 25: It is desirable to create one united South African nation out of all the different groups who live in this country. (percentage in agreement by race)
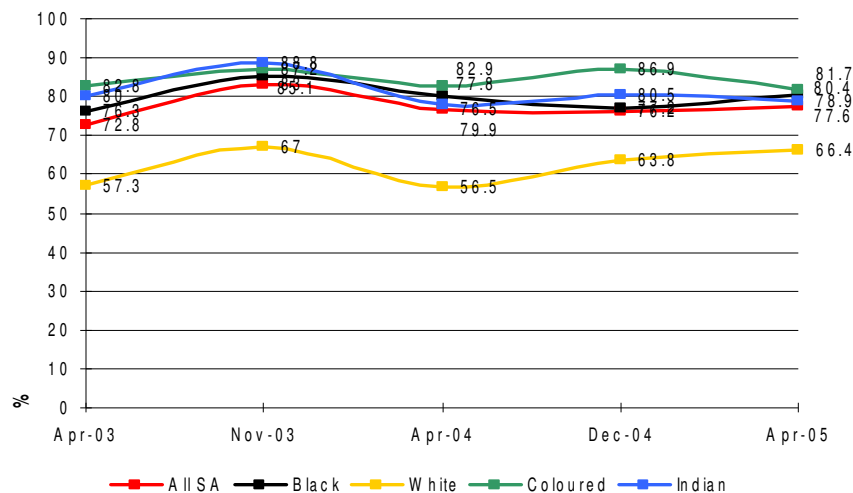
One of the most encouraging features of the SARB over the past three years has been high and consistent level of support for the ideal of a united nation. While the exact content of such a united nation might be a cause for debate, it is encouraging to note that the vast majority of South Africans support the basic principle. Over the past three years positive responses have increased nationally from 72,8% to 77,6%, as indicated in Figure 25. Black Africans have also increased their positive response from 76,3% to 80,4%. Coloured and Indian feedback, which clusters closely together with those of black African respondents, has decreased only slightly during the past three years. Although white acceptance of the principle for a united nation is still 11% below the national average, it has increased with almost 9% since the first measurement. Should positive responses amongst this group continue along its current trajectory, it might result in an even stronger convergence of opinion on this issue.

8.2. Racially mixed Political Parties

A great deal of scholarly speculation exists around the nature of voting behaviour in South African elections. Some attribute election outcomes to the strong role that racial allegiance plays in many sectors of society. Others dismiss this notion of a racial census and insist that South African voters are mature enough and able to base their vote on rational choice.[32] It can be expected that this issue would once again feature strongly in the analysis of the March 2006 local government elections.

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.

Figure 26: *I could never imagine being part of a political party made up mainly of people of another race.*[33]
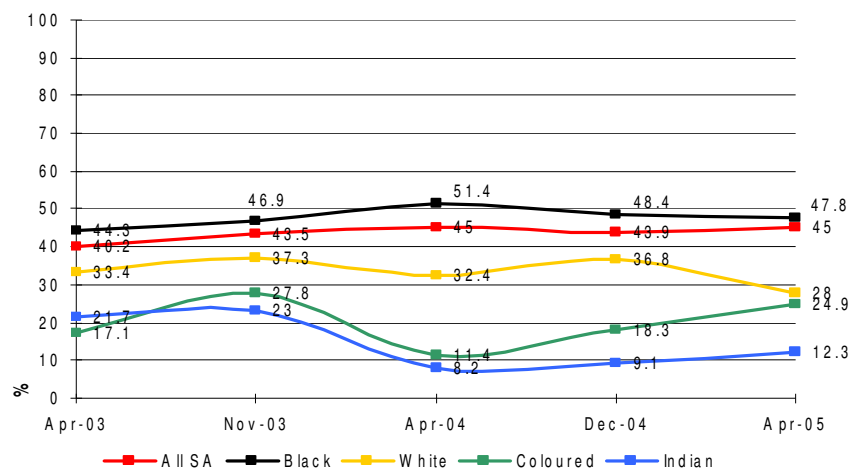(percentage in agreement by race)

Figure 26 suggests that less than half of South Africans would not consider being part of a political party if his or her population group does not constitute a majority in such a party. Over the past three years there has been a 5% increase from 40,2% to 45% amongst in the total number South Africans that agreed with this statement. Black Africans, with 47,8% were the most likely to agree in April 2005. Their response, however, marks the second consecutive decline in approval for this statement. Indians, at 12,3%, were the least likely to agree, while responses amongst coloured respondents showed the biggest single increase over the past year. In April 2004 only 11,4% of respondents in this group concurred with this statement. A year later this figure has more than doubled to 24,9%. White responses on the other hand, have shown the single biggest single from 32,4% to 28% during the same period.

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".[34] 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".[35] 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.

Figure 27: 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 by race).
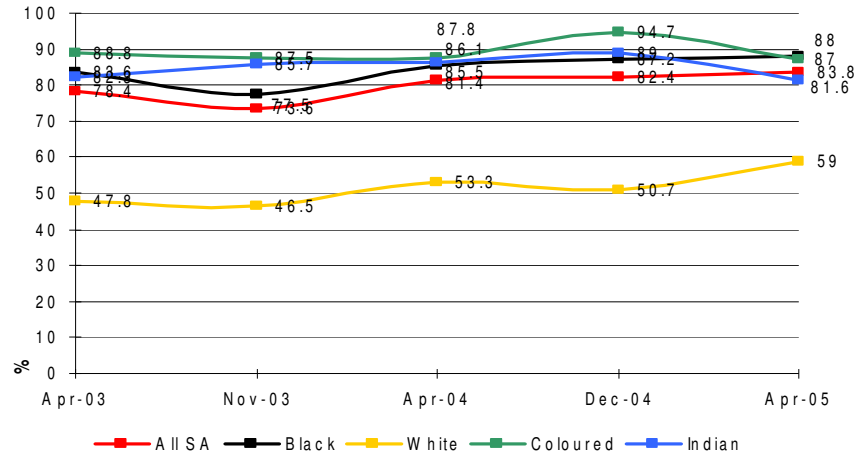

Figure 27 reports on public responses on the desirability of the broadcast media as an agent for reconciliation. National support for the idea of more opportunities for public dialogue in the public broadcast media has remained fairly stable since the first measurement in April 2003. During this first round of the survey 78,4% of respondents agreed with this notion, while the corresponding response two years later stood at 83,8%. Black African, coloured and Indian responses have tended to cluster together at significantly high levels of approval over the past three years, while white support for the broadcast media's role as a platform for national discourse has lagged far behind that of the former three. It is, nevertheless, interesting to note that white agreement has increased by over 11% over the past three years.

According to the *South Africa Survey 2002/2003,* 87% of South Africans have some form of religious affiliation.[36] 70% respondents indicated in a 2001 Human Sciences Research Council survey that they attend a religious service at least once a month.[37] These figures underline the pervasive influence of religion in our society the country. They are, therefore, ideally placed as agents for social change and in this instance, national reconciliation.

Figure 28: 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).

28
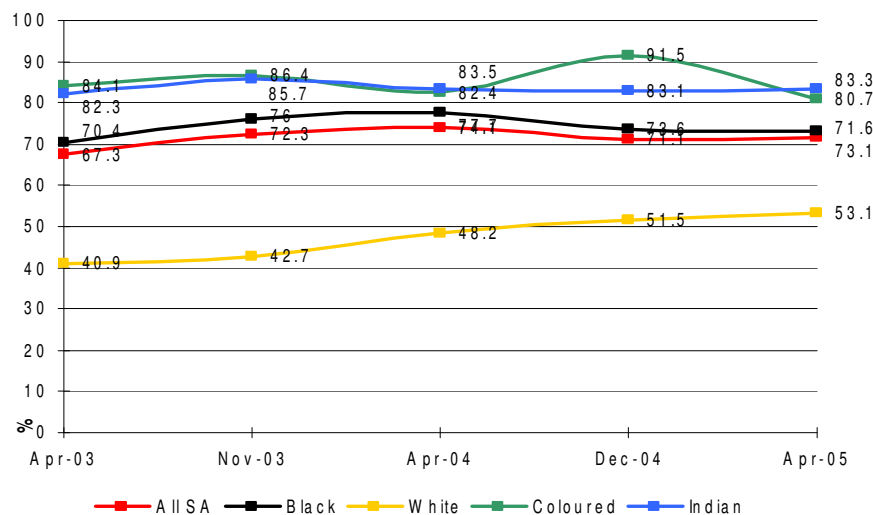
The results reported in Figure 28 indicate that 73,1% of South Africans support the idea of a more engaged role for religious institutions in the process of national reconciliation. The highest percentages of support were registered amongst Indian respondents (83,3%) and coloured respondents (80,7%). The response of the latter, however, marks an almost 11% decline in approval for this statement. At 71,6%, black responses have remained almost unchanged compared to three years ago. White respondents at (53,1%) remain the most sceptical in this regard, but have shown the highest margin of increase of just over 12% during the same period.

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.[38] 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.

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. 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 29: Apartheid was a crime against humanity (percentage agreement by race) [39]
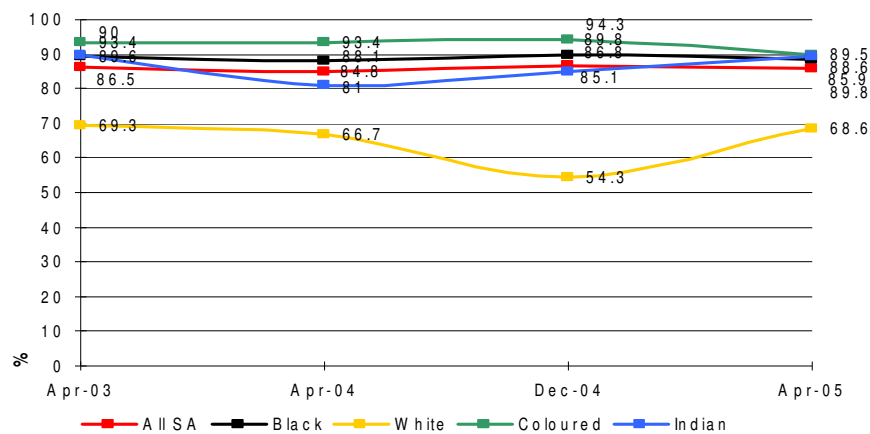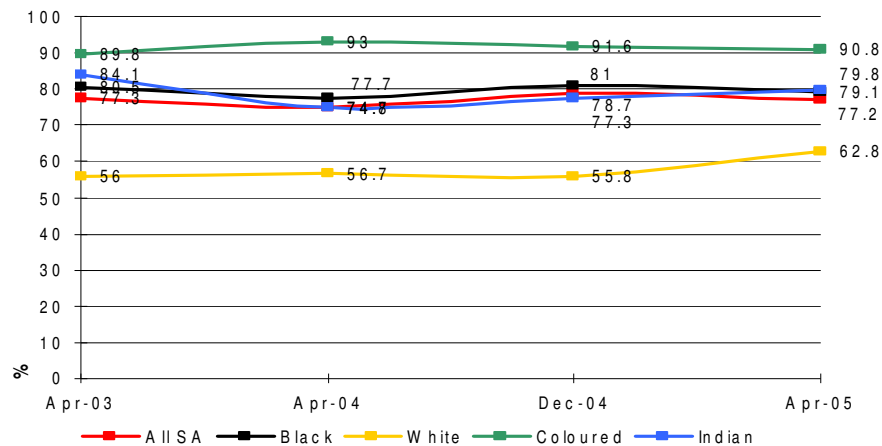
Figure 30: In the past the state committed horrific atrocities against those struggling against apartheid. (percentage agreement by race) [40]


Figures 29 and 30 suggest that strong consensus exists amongst previously disadvantaged groups about apartheid's criminal nature and the brutality with which it was implemented. These figures, not unsurprisingly, have remained high and stable since the first measurement in April 2003. White agreement on both counts still remains significantly lower than that of those groups who bore the brunt of apartheid legislation. Responses in this group to the statement, which claims that apartheid was a crime against humanity has returned to the same level of a year ago after it dropped by almost 12% in December 2004. Their response to the occurrence of violent atrocities during the struggle has shown a slow, but consistent increase since the first measurement.

10.2 Forgetting the past

Arguably, there should be a fine balance between dealing with the past and being held hostage to it. South Africans should concern themselves with the healing of memories at this juncture, but 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.

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 31 below.

Figure 31: *I want to forget about the past and just get on with my life (percentage in agreement by race)*
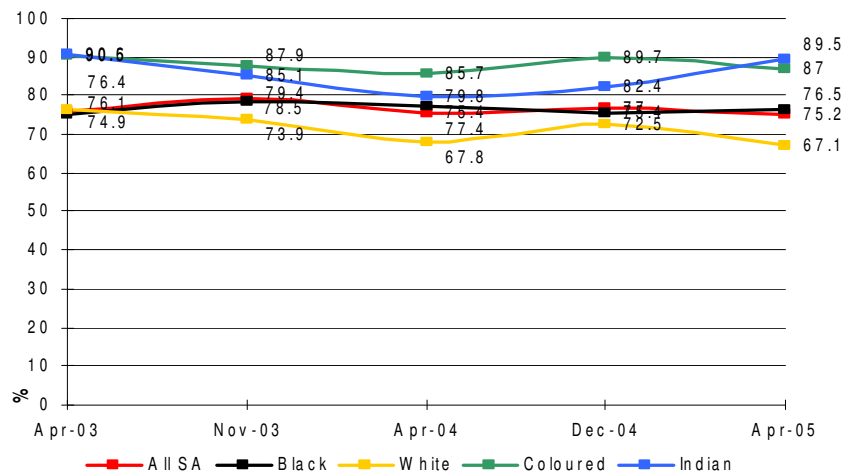
Three quarters of South Africans, or 75,2% have indicated during the most recent round of the survey that that they would prefer to forget about the past and move on with their lives. This figure has remained fairly constant since the first measurement in April 2003. Coloured and Indian respondents with 87% and 89,5% respectively were the most likely to agree with the statement. The corresponding figure for black respondents was 76,5%, about two percent higher than the first measurement of 74,9% in April 2003. Interestingly, white South Africans showed the lowest levels of agreement with the notion that it is better to forget about the past and move on with life. During the latest round of the survey 67,1% of respondents agreed with this statement. This is almost 8% less than during the April 2003 round.

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. Willingness to forgive is here based on the victims' subjective experience of apartheid.

Figure 32: I am trying to forgive those who hurt me during apartheid (percentage in agreement by race)
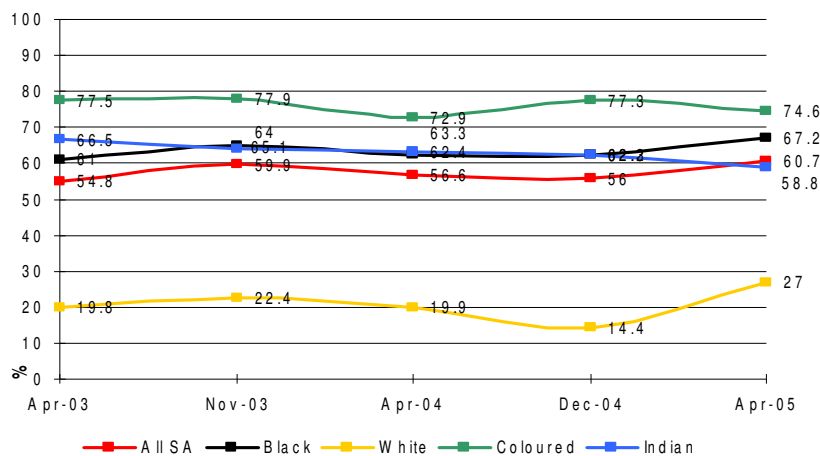
Figure 32 suggests that the vast majority of those who were oppressed under the previous dispensation are willing to forgive those who did them harm under apartheid. 74,6% of coloured respondents, 58,8% of Indian respondents, and 67,2% of black African respondents have responded that they actively try 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.

Although white South Africa has been the major beneficiary of apartheid policy, its implementation also had unintended negative consequences for several white families. We, therefore, also report white responses to this

question, but recognise that in strict material terms it would be inappropriate to regard this group *per se* as victims of the system. In April 2005 when the most recent round of the survey was conducted, 27% of white respondents indicated that they are trying to forgive those that have hurt them during apartheid. This is just more than 7% higher compared to two years ago.

10.4. Vengeance

A great deal of debate has emerged in recent years about 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.[41]

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.[42] 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".[43] 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".[44]

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".[45] 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".[46] The result of this can be self-perpetuating circles of the victor's revenge that continue the conflict indefinitely.

The SARB Survey has over the past two years tried to monitor public sentiment regarding the demand for retribution, even it means using extra-legal avenues. Figure 33 presents a statement about the need for perpetrators of apartheid to be punished by any means possible.

Figure 33: People who abused others during apartheid must be punished, even if it means going against the decisions of the courts. (percentage in agreement by race)
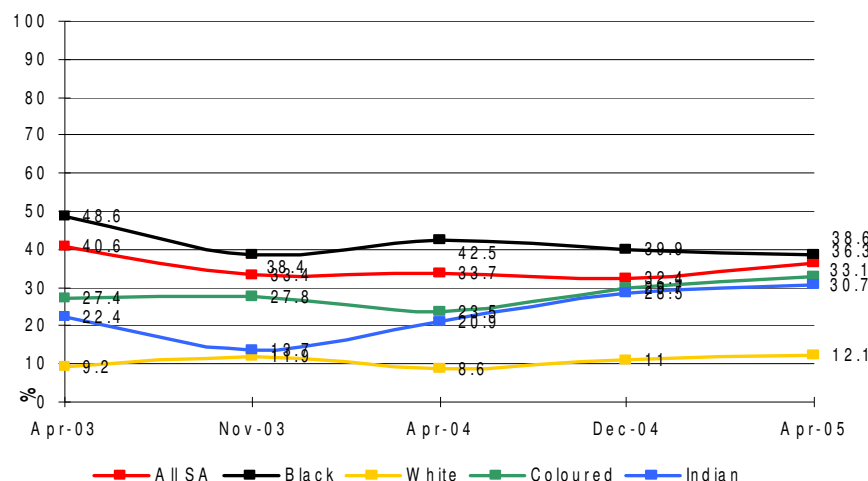
36,3% of South Africans believe that apartheid perpetrators should be punished, regardless of the judicial system's ruling on this matter (see Figure 33). This figures has declined consistently between the first and fourth rounds of the survey from 40,6% to 32,4%. The results of the latest round point to an increase of about 4%. It would be interesting to see whether this marks the start of a new upward trajectory in responses to this statement. Black African responses have remained stable at just over 38%, which is 10% lower than the first

measurement two years ago. The most significant increases over the past year occurred amongst coloured and Indian responses. In this period coloured responses increased from 23,5% to 33,1%. The corresponding increase amongst Indian responses was from 20,9% in April 2003 to 30,7% in April 2005. White support for the punishment of apartheid perpetrators by legal or other means, remained low. In April 2005 white support for this statement stood at 12,1%.

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 34: On a typical day during the week, whether at work or otherwise, how often do you talk to (GROUP) people? (percentage who said "never" by race).
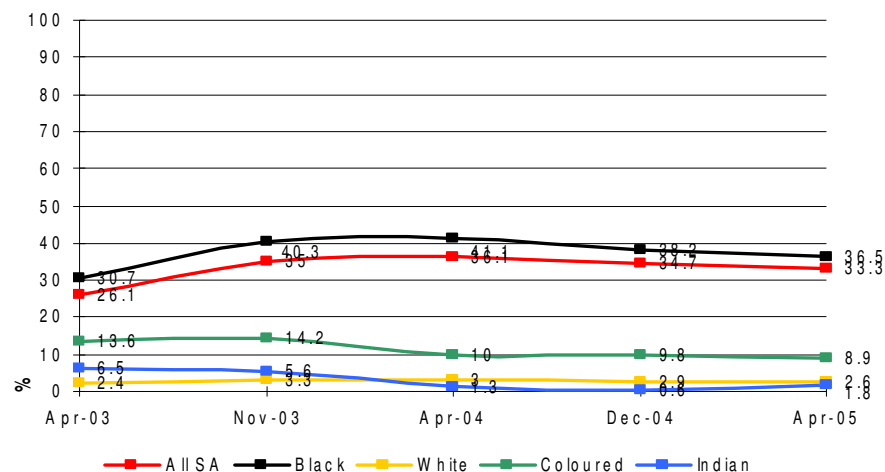
A third of South Africans have indicated during the most recent round of the SARB Survey that they never talk to people from a different race on an average day. This result is almost 4% down from a year ago when 36,1% of South Africans responded in this way, but still 7% higher than was the case two years ago in April 2003 when the corresponding figure was 26,1%. The number of white and Indian respondents who reported no contact with other groups on an average day has never exceeded the 10% mark since the first measurement in 2003. Coloured responses declined from 13,6% two years ago to 8,9% in the most recent survey. While the black African response of 36,5% is still 6% higher than the 30,7% of April 2003, it now appears to be on a downward trajectory since its peak at 41,1% a year ago.

Such levels of interaction remain 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 35: When socialising in your own home or the homes of friends, how often do you talk to (GROUP) people?
*(percentage who said "never" by race)*
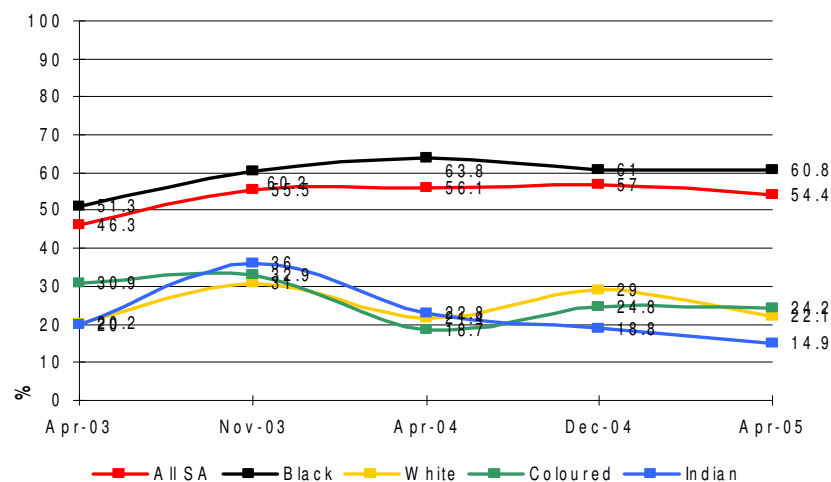
While responses in Figure 34 reported on all forms of interaction, including involuntary contact, those in Figure 35 provide a better insight into the frequency of voluntary, informal, interaction. While the abolishment of apartheid legislation may have opened public spaces and contributed to the integration of workplaces, it does not follow naturally that levels of voluntary interaction would increase. The segmentation of the South African population under apartheid created particular socialisation patterns that discouraged social interaction across race and cultural borders. Informal interaction cannot be enforced by legislation and quotas, it will require a longer-term unlearning of behavioural patterns of the past.

In April 2005 54,5% of respondents have indicated that they have never had informal social contact with people from a different population group. This figure marks a 2% drop from 12 months earlier when the same figure stood at 56,4%. It is, nevertheless still eight percentage points higher than it was two years ago at the first measurement. The percentage of black Africans indicating no social contact remains high at 60%. Coloured responses indicating no social contact have dropped by over 6% over the past two years, while white responses have increased marginally by 20% over the same period. Indian responses, which have peaked at 36% in November 2003, have since been on a constant decline and registered 14,9% in the most recent survey.

The Institute's research in recent years has suggested a link between social class and the level of interaction between South Africans. The results of consecutive surveys of this project have confirmed that strong correlation indeed exists between the two. Figure 36 reports on levels of informal socialisation between groups in terms of living standards categories for April 2005.

Figure 36: When socialising in your own home or the homes of friends, how often do you talk to (GROUP) people?
(percentage who said "never" by LSM group – April 2005)
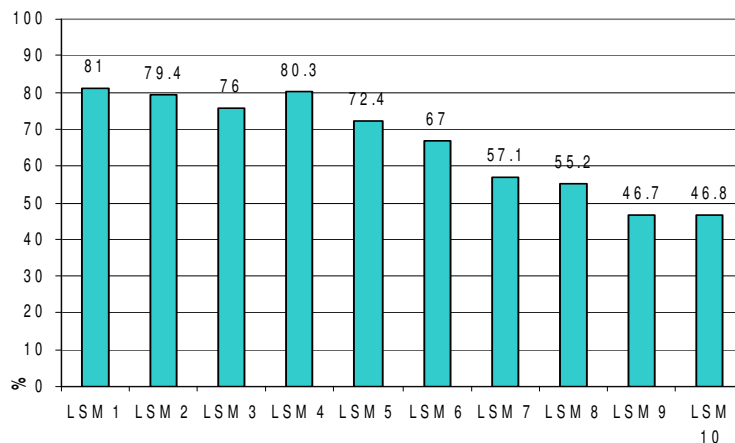
The results of Figure 36 show a general pattern that suggests a higher likelihood of social contact amongst the more affluent. LSM1, the group with the lowest living standard, record the highest percentage of respondents that have not had any informal contact with people from a different population group. This figure declines stepwise with every increase in LSM category until LSM10, which contains the lowest percentage of respondents that have indicated no social contact with other groups. The only exception in this pattern is a marginal deviation between LSM's 2 and 4.

Another measurement that gauges social integration is a question about the desired frequency of interaction between respondents of different population groups. The responses reported in Figures 34 and 35 suggest that levels of contact between South Africa's population groups are quite low. But do South Africans necessarily want to increase their contact with people from groups other than their own?

Figure 36: If you had a choice, would you want to talk to people of another race group
(percentage in favour of more frequent contact by race).

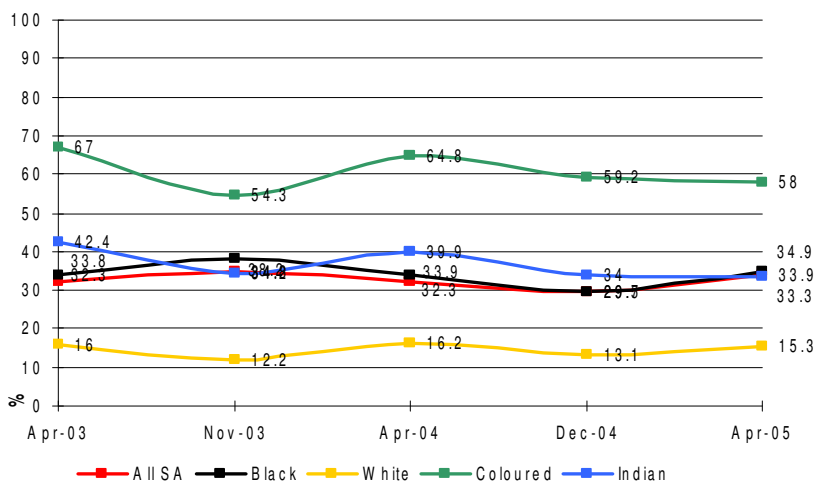Figure 36 shows that about a third of South Africans would prefer to increase their frequency of contact with people from other groups. Black and Indian responses fall respectively just above and below the national average. Coloured respondents with 58% appear to be the group that is most open to the idea of increased inter-group contact. Their response in the most recent survey, however, marks a drop of almost 7% compared to a

35

year ago. White respondents remain the most cautious when it comes to increasing contact across racial lines. In the most recent survey, only 15,4% indicated a desire to do so.

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 37: I find it difficult to understand the customs and ways of (GROUP) people.
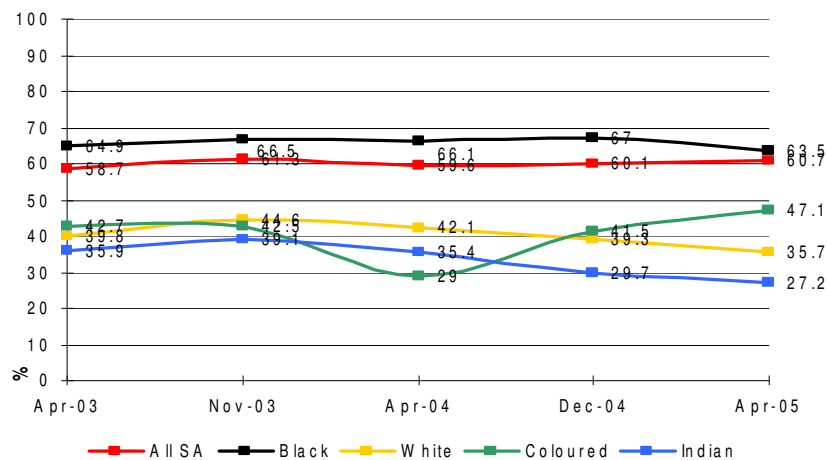(percentage agreement by race)

Figure 37 reports the results of responses to a statement regarding the extent to which South Africans perceive to understand the behaviour of fellow citizens from a population group other than their own. 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 April 2005 round 60,7% 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 63,5%, show the highest level of agreement, followed by coloureds (47,1%), whites (35,7%) and Indians (27,2%). Over the past two years affirmative responses amongst black Africans, whites, and Indian South Africans have decreased steadily to below their first recorded measurements in the SARB Survey. The only group that has experienced a significant increase in their response has been coloured South Africans. In April 2003 42,7% of coloured respondents felt that they had difficulty in understanding the customs and ways of people of groups other than their own. This figure declined to 29% a year later, but has since increased again with 18% to 47,1%

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 38: (GROUP) people are untrustworthy. (Percentage agreement by race)
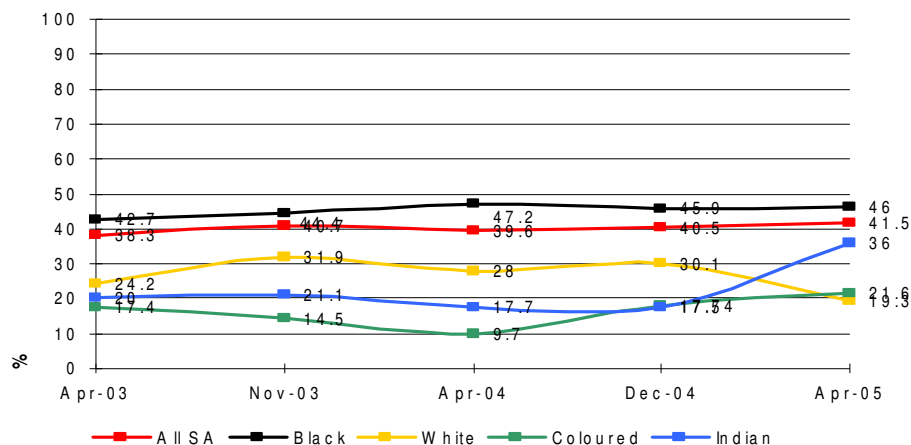
Negative stereotyping targets various aspects of group behaviour, but its cumulative effect is to cast doubt about the abilities and/or intentions of other groups. Figure 38 reports on the degree of distrust South Africans harbour towards population groups other than their own. In the April 2005 survey 41,5% of all respondents have indicated their agreement with the statement that people from other groups are untrustworthy. This figure is 1% higher than a year earlier and 2% more than two years ago. The highest levels of agreement still reside with the black African group at 46%. This figure is about 1% lower than the year before. The two most interesting movements have been amongst the white and coloured population groups. The 21,6% level of agreement amongst coloured respondents in April 2005 marks an almost 12% percent increase from the 9,7% twelve months earlier. Equally significant is the almost 11% drop in the percentage of white respondents that perceive people from other groups to be untrustworthy.

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 39: Living in a neighbourhood where half my neighbours are (GROUP) people (percentage approving by race).
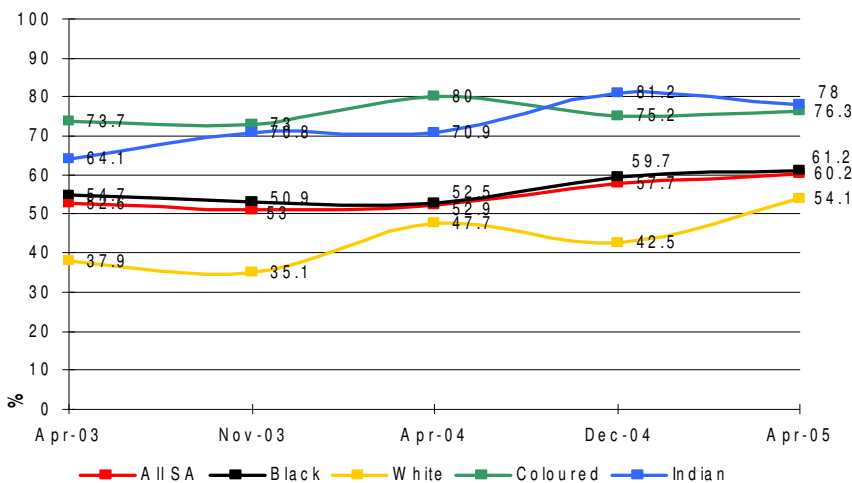
Figure 39 presents South African responses on the desirability to live in a neighbourhood where the majority of residents come from a population group other than that of the individual respondent. It suggests that most South Africans (60,2%), approved of such a scenario in April 2005. This is an almost 8% increase on the first measurement of 52,6% two years earlier. Approval amongst black African respondents have increased in the same period from 54,7% to 61,2%. Indian responses are 14% higher at 78% and coloured responses have increases more moderately from 73,7% to 76,3%. While white respondents continue to show the lowest levels of agreement, the most marked positive increase for this measurement occurred within this group. In April 2003 approval amongst white South Africans stood at 37,9%. Two years later the same figure increased by just under 17% to 54,1%.

Figure 40: Having a (GROUP) person sitting next to my child, or the child of my family member, at school. (percentage approving by race)
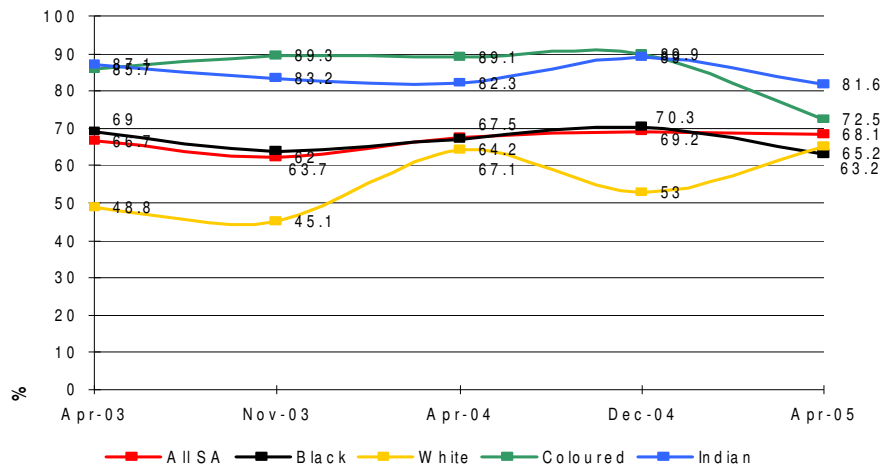
Figure 40 shows that 68,1% of South Africans approve when children from another population group sit next to their child or the children of their friends at school. Coloured and Indian respondents have shown the highest level of approval for the principle of mixed schools, but the percentage for both represent marked declines compared to similar measurements two years ago. Black African approval have remained fairly stable during this period, declining only moderately from 69% to 65,2%. Again the biggest increase in support occurred amongst white respondents. In April 2003, their approval stood just below half of this group at 48,8%. Two years later in April 2005, the same figure increased by almost 17% to 65,2%.

Figure 42: Having a close relative marry a [GROUP} person[47] (percentage approving by race)

38

Figure 42 confirms that the coloured group remain the most open to the idea of marriages between members of different population groups. This measure is probably the most personal of the three social distance indicators. 71% indicated that they would approve of a marriage between a close relative and somebo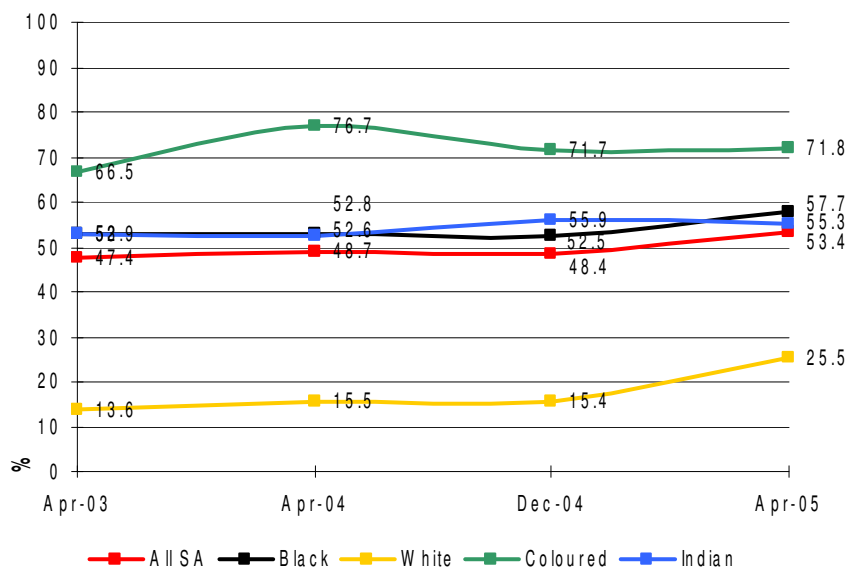dy from a group other than their own. This is just over 18% higher than the national average of 53,4%. Indian and black African levels of approval are moderately higher than the national average at 55,3% and 57,7%. Only a quarter of white respondents (25,5%) approved of interracial marriages. Their response, nevertheless, shows an improvement of just below 12% when compared to the first measurement in April 2003.

12. Reconciliation in South Africa

The SARB Survey, now in its third year of existence, has been conducted five times, and has rendered quality survey data that account for two years of public opinion on national reconciliation. This is a relatively short period, but already it appears as if the trajectories of some measurements may be pointing towards general patterns of response.

A feature not uncommon in many South African social surveys – and in particular those that measure relationships across cultural borders - is the presence of racial response patterns. The country's long history of division on virtually every level of social life has made common South African values the exception rather than the rule. The results of the 2005 round of the SARB Survey suggest no different. Clear racial response patterns can still be discerned. General levels of optimism amongst black Africans remain higher than that of respondents that belong to one of the three small population groups. Conversely, sentiments of caution and pessimism are more common within the latter three groups. White respondents, with few exceptions, remain the most skeptical about their place in society, relations with others, and their sense of physical and material security. But this most recent round of the survey also provided grounds for cautious optimism.

It appears as if the response gap might be narrowing between the sentiments of the respective population groups. Responses pertaining to a large number of measurements are moving increasingly closer towards the average national responses, which mean that we might be witnessing the start of a convergence in opinion on a number of issues. The results of the fourth round of the survey that was conducted in December 2004 did provide the first suggestion of such a convergence. The most recent round in April of this year showed a continuation of this movement for most measurements. It would be interesting to see whether this pattern will continue into the sixth round of the SARB Survey that will be conducted during April 2006. If indeed the case, it signifies the broadening of common ground between South Africans of different backgrounds – a truly positive development.

This report has provided feedback on South African responses to selected indicators that relate to the five central hypotheses developed for the purposes of this project.

The first proposes that if citizens do not feel threatened, they are more likely to be reconciled with each other and the larger socio-political system. Three indicators impact on this human security hypothesis: physical-, economic- and cultural threat.

The majority of South Africans are not confident about the prospects of an improvement in their level of personal physical security. Only 42% responded that they expect these conditions to improve during the next two months. White respondents remained the least positive, but amongst the four main population groups they were the only one that registered an increase in levels of optimism. Declines in optimism were recorded amongst coloured, Indian and especially black African respondents. An analysis of this same measurement in terms of living standards categories suggest that optimism about personal safety is least amongst the lowest and highest income groups.

The most recent survey has also pointed to a general decline in optimism as far as personal economic expectations are concerned. Nationally there has been a 5% drop in the number of respondents who predicted that their economic fortunes would improve during the next twelve months. Declines were registered amongst

the black African, Indian and especially coloured groups. The latter recorded a 13% drop in the number of respondents who expect better economic conditions. White optimism, however, remained on an upward curve. The share of positive white responses has increased between the first and the fifth survey from a quarter to a third.

The quality of government service delivery plays a critical role in providing economic security to millions of South Africans. Over the past year protests against poor service delivery increased markedly nationwide. This dissatisfaction is also evident in the results of this survey. Approval for basic service delivery declined from 81% in April 2004 to 73% a year later in April 2005. The most dramatic declines for the quality of delivery occurred amongst the two lowest LSM categories.

As far as cultural threat is concerned, there has only been a marginal downward change amongst those South Africans optimistic about an increase in respect for their culture or religious group. Black African and coloured respondents have both recorded 7% decreases, while white and Indian positive responses were marginally higher. Particularly positive has been the consistent increase amongst white respondents, whose levels of optimism have doubled since the first measurement that was done two years earlier.

The second hypothesis is concerned with the issue of political culture. It contends that if citizens view the institutions, structures, and values of the new system as legitimate and accountable, reconciliation is more likely to progress. Three indicators were used in this regard: leader legitimacy, institutional legitimacy and respect for the rule of law.

As far as leader legitimacy is concerned, just more than half of South Africans (53%) responded that government do not care about people like them. Slightly more felt that they could trust the leaders of the country to do what is in the best interest of all South Africans. Most of those doubting the commitment of the national leadership fall within one of the three minority groups. When looking at leadership evaluation through a class perspective, the most remarkable feature is the dramatic increase in the in the number of respondents in LSM1 who agreed with the statement that leaders do does not care about people like them. During the April 2004 round of the survey only 25,4% agreed with the statement. A year later this figure has increased to 56,7%, the second highest amongst all LSM categories.

Measurement of institutional legitimacy has focused on citizen sentiment towards parliament, the most central of all democratic institutions in South Africa. 54,5% of all respondents indicated that parliament treats all South Africans fairly, irrespective of the population group that they belong to. The highest level of confidence in the institution remains amongst black African respondents of whom 77% believe that parliament exercises its duties in an even-handed fashion. Indian and coloured confidence have declined marginally from a fairly low level. Especially significant is the substantial decrease in trust in parliament amongst coloured respondents. Between April 2004 and 2005, this figure has dropped from 60% to 44%. Positive responses to both amongst white respondents continued to increase during the same period. Support for the idea to abolish parliament if it legislates in a way that is contrary to the will of citizens, remains high at 38%. It is, however, encouraging to note that it has been on a constant decline since its first measurement of 43,5% in April 2003.

Less than a quarter of respondents have indicated that it is not necessary to obey the laws of a government that the individual did not vote for. The highest level of agreement remains amongst black African respondent, where just over a quarter approves. White respondents, with 7,9%, were the least likely to agree with the statement. The biggest increase in agreement with this statement over the past year, occurred amongst coloured respondents. During April 2004 this figure stood at 39% amongst this group. A year later this increased to 50%. A third of all respondents noted that they would consider retribution for an offence committed against them, even if it means breaking the law. White and black Africans recorded decreases in agreement with this statement. Again the biggest increase occurred amongst coloured respondents from 25% to 31% in the year between April 2004 and 2005.

Cross-cutting political relationship is a third hypothesis being forwarded by this research project. It suggests that if citizens are able to form working political relationships that cross divisions, reconciliation is more likely to

advance. Desire for the creation of national unity and the extent to which individuals are willing to form racially-mixed political parties have been employed as indicators in this regard.

African, coloured and Indian respondents have by far shown the highest levels of agreement with the statement that it is desireable to create one nation, consisting of all the country´s constitutive groups. Responses for these group fell within the 80% to 90% band. White support comes in much lower at 66%, but have increased by about 10% over the past year. As far as racially-mixed political parties are concerned, it is interesting to note that almost 45% of respondents indicated that they prefer not to belong to a political party where their population group constitutes a minority.

The hypothesis regarding social dialogue contends that if citizens are committed to deep dialogue, reconciliation is more likely to be advanced. As in previous rounds of the SARB survey, strong agreement was recorded for an increased role of the broadcast media and religious institutions to promote dialogue.

The fifth hypothesis proposes that 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. The indicators here were acknowledgement of the past, forgiveness where necessary, and the extent to which victims prefer vengeance to deal with the abuse that they have suffered. Amongst the formerly disadvantaged groups high levels of agreement exist about the fact that apartheid was a crime against humanity and secondly, that the state committed violent atrocities during this period. Although levels of agreement have been increasing slowly amongst white respondents in recent years, far fewer feel comfortable with these notions. Vast majorities within the three formerly disadvantaged groups have indicated that they are trying to forgive apartheid perpetrators, but 36% of all South Africans indicated that perpetrators should be punished, even if it means breaking the law. This sentiment is strongest amongst black African respondents with 39% and, as expected, weakest amongst white respondents, who registered a 12,1% level of agreement.

For the largest part of the past three centuries, race has been a definitive characteristic that determined the conventions of social relations in South Africa. The pervasive impact of the apartheid on all spheres of South Africa made the race the criteria for the extension of social rights and the distribution of critical material resources. Its collective impact has been to forge a material and social divide amongst ordinary South Africans, but also between political elites that represent different sides of the political spectrum. While material schisms can be addressed partially by remedial redistributive policies, change in social attitudes are more complex to bring about. These relations cannot be forced; they have to be the product of a longer term change in the attitudes that determine how we relate to each other. For this reason, the last guiding hypothesis of this project is that if citizens of different races hold fewer negative perceptions of each other, they are more likely to form workable relationships that will advance reconciliation. Three indicators have been used to measure progress in this regard: cross-racial contact, cross-racial preconceptions and cross-racial social distance.

To establish the extent of basic contact between groups, a first measurement prompted respondents to indicate the frequency of general communication with somebody from another racial group. In the most recent round of the survey almost a third of South Africans indicated that they never have any form of cross-racial contact on an average day. This is a marginal decline compared to responses a year ago. While this measurement investigated levels of basic contact, a second question asked of respondents to indicate the frequency with which they had voluntary, informal contact with people from groups other than their own in their spare time. Here 54,5% replied that they have never cross-racial contact of this nature. Black Africans with 60% were the most likely to indicate no contact, while the smaller groups recorded significantly smaller percentages of under 25%.

Analyses in terms of living standard categories show a general pattern that suggests a higher likelihood of social contact amongst the more affluent. LSM1 recorded the highest percentage of respondents that have not had any informal contact with people from different population groups . Affirmative responses declined stepwise with every living standard segment. LSM10, therefore, contains the lowest percentage of respondents with no cross-racial contact.

When asked about their desire to increase the frequency of contact with other groups, coloured respondents with 58% were the most likely to express the need for more interaction, followed by black African (34,9%) and Indian(33,9%) respondents. Whites remained the most cautious with 15,4%. Affirmative responses to this measurement is often based on a lack of trust, that is informed by specific preconceptions that groups have of each other´s customs and practices.

In the most recent round of the survey 60,3% of the total sample indicated that they lack understanding of the customs and ways of people from groups other than their own. Over the past two years affirmative responses amongst black Africans, whites and Indians declined steadily to below their first measurements in April 2003. The only group that has shown a significant increase (18%) compared to a year ago is coloured South Africans.

Ignorance about the social dynamics that operate within a particular population group, provides fertile breeding ground for negative stereotyping and prejudice. This complicates cooperation that is needed to breed the trust that eliminates obstacles to meaningful and unforced integration. In the latest round of the survey 41,5% of respondents indicated that they find it hard to trust people that do not belong to the same population group as themselves. The highest level of agreement resides amongst black Africans, but there has also been a significant increase in the percentage of coloured respondents that indicated sentiment to this extent. Amongst whites, however, there has been a drop of 11% in the number of respondents that do not trust South Africans from other groups.

As far as the integration of the personal private sphere is concerned, the support for integrated neighbourhoods and schools remain high. 60% of respondents indicated agreement with the former and 68% with the latter. Responses to these measurements have shown remarkable convergence over the past two years. The gap in the response patterns pertaining to the issue of cross-racial marriages have also narrowed, but not as significantly as those in the former two measurements. White respondents remain the most cautious to express agreement, but it is interesting to note that approval for inter-racial marriages have almost doubled to a quarter amongst this segment of the population.

These results are encouraging as they point to an attitudinal convergence in opinion about the need for, and acceptance of, social integration. Although it may be too early to define this movement as a longer-term trend, it does bode well for the greater national reconciliation process.

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