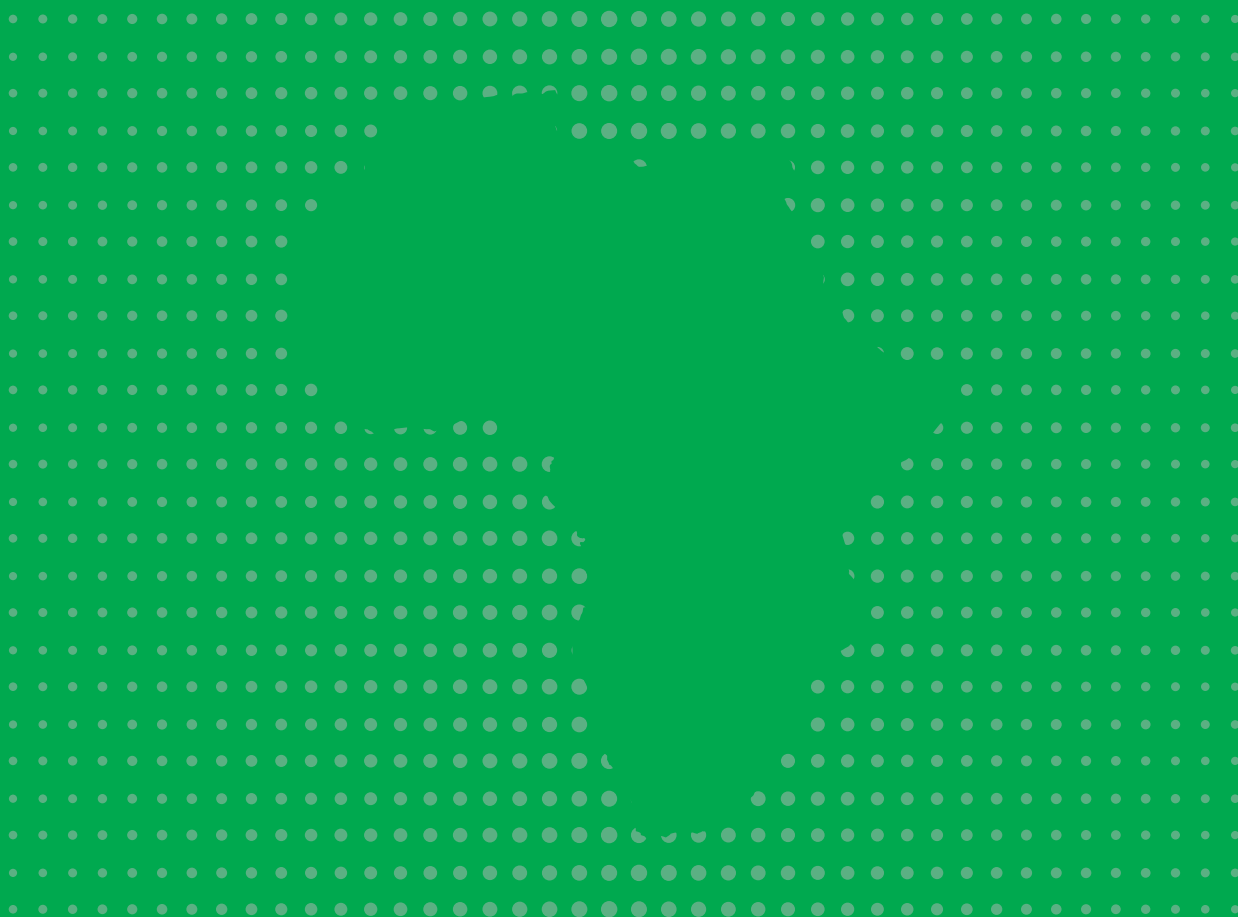




RECONCILIATION & DEVELOPMENT

OCCASIONAL PAPERS | NUMBER 2

A people's state of the nation assessment 2018



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About the Reconciliation and Development series

The Reconciliation and Development Series is a multidisciplinary publication focused on the themes of peacebuilding and development. Peacebuilding research includes the study of the causes of armed violence and war, the processes of conflict, the preconditions for peaceful resolution and peacebuilding, and the processes and nature of social cohesion and reconciliation. Development research, in turn, is concerned with poverty, structural inequalities, the reasons for underdevelopment, issues of socio-economic justice, and the nature of inclusive development. This publication serves to build up a knowledge base of research topics in the fields of peacebuilding and development, and the nexus between them, by studying the relationship between conflict and poverty, and exclusion and inequality, as well as between peace and development, in positive terms.

Research in the publication follows a problem-driven methodology in which the scientific research problem decides the methodological approach. Geographically, the publication has a particular focus on post-conflict societies on the African continent.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
MP	Member of Parliament
NEC	National Executive Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
PIC	Public Investment Corporation
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARB	South African Reconciliation Barometer
SOE	State-owned enterprise
SONA	State of the Nation Address
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Introduction

On 8 February 2018, South African President Jacob Zuma was set to deliver his ninth (and possibly final) State of the Nation Address (SONA) at the opening of Parliament. On 6 February, SONA was postponed. The purpose of SONA is to allow the President of the Republic to address both houses of Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, and the public to reflect on the present state of affairs in the country. SONA is a largely ceremonial affair that marks the opening of Parliament, but in recent years the event has gained more significant political traction.*

SONA has recently become an event of major political interest, as Zuma's presidency has come under increasing criticism from the public, civil society, business, opposition parties, and even members of his own governing party, the African National Congress (ANC). Are South Africans satisfied with the present state of South Africa? If not, what issues should President Zuma address in SONA 2018? This report reflects on the work of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) and aims to provide some tentative answers to these pertinent questions.

This report will include perspectives from all facets of the IJR's work, utilising both quantitative evidence from nationally representative surveys and qualitative evidence from fieldwork with participants from many different communities and spheres of society. In the first section, we briefly explore the major developments in South Africa over the past year, and contextualise the importance of SONA 2018. In the second section, we explore the state of reconciliation in South Africa, using recent data from the 2017 South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB), and canvass the opinions of South Africans on a range of social issues, using data from Round 6 of the Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2015. In the third section, we share people's experiences of contemporary South Africa and focus on specific lived experiences, such as race, gender and class relations. Finally, we highlight the major issues that need to be addressed in SONA 2018, and suggest several proposals for what a people's state of the nation assessment would entail.

* This publication was finalised on 7 February 2018 at a time when SONA had been postponed but no further decisions had been communicated. The content and purpose of this publication remains highly relevant as it tries to depict the sentiments of ordinary South Africans, whose voices are often silenced, especially in times of political turmoil.

1. A year in review

In 2017, much commentary on South Africa focused on national-level political crises. Scandals in high-level national government dominated media headlines and conversation: the president faced his fourth ‘motion of no confidence’ in three years (surviving the latest motion by only 23 votes),¹ cabinet ministers were scrutinised for allegations of mismanagement, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) experienced crises of leadership amid evidence of corruption and misuse of public funds.

Local and provincial government did not fare much better. Currently, the City of Cape Town is preparing to become the first major city in the world to run out of piped water, while the local governing party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), is embroiled in a corruption scandal and the mayor has become increasingly sidelined. In other parts of the country, major municipalities, including Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni, are experiencing the shortcomings of tenuous coalition government between opposition parties.

Importantly, the private sector endured its fair share of criticism, as many companies were directly involved in allegations of corruption. International auditing firm KPMG, and international consultancy McKinsey & Company, were implicated in alleged corrupt procurement contracts between the state’s power utility, Eskom, and companies linked to the notorious Gupta family. South African multinational, Steinhoff, was embroiled in an auditing scandal, which revealed widespread accounting irregularities leading to suspicions of fraud, which has cost the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) billions in investments.

Crucially, however, 2017 ended with the election of a new president of the ANC. The party held its national elective conference in mid-December and elected a new national executive committee (NEC) and a new ‘Top Six’ to lead the party.² The election of Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa to ANC president is significant for several reasons. Firstly, Zuma is now vulnerable to prosecution on 18 charges of corruption, fraud and racketeering,³ which the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) has failed to adequately pursue since the initial charges were laid in 2005. Secondly, Ramaphosa’s victory indicates the ANC’s internal frustration with Zuma’s presidency. Many commentators perceived Zuma’s preferred successor to be Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, a former minister and chairperson of the African Union (AU), who lost the presidential contest to Ramaphosa by a slim margin. The defeat of Zuma’s perceived successor indicates his own unpopularity and waning influence on ANC decisions.

Moreover, given Zuma’s unpopularity in- and outside his party, coupled with the reinstatement of criminal charges against him, many speculate that Ramaphosa could orchestrate his removal in the coming weeks or months. ‘Recalling’ Zuma as state president would be a significant attempt to reposition the ANC going into the 2019 national elections; Zuma has become an electoral liability, a figure easily attacked by the opposition, and removing him from his position would signal a process of reformation. In 2018, the state of the South African presidency, then, is precarious and uncertain.

While political manoeuvring continues at the highest levels of government, an important focus of this report is to reflect on how South Africans perceive the state of *their* nation. All too often the emphasis in portrayals of South African politics and society is placed on public representatives and party officials, but what do South Africans think of South Africa in 2018? According to most people, what is the state of the nation today? In the next section, we explore quantitative evidence in order to help answer these questions.

2. What does our data say?

Key questions

1. Do South Africans trust the president and other public representatives?
2. What effect does trust have on public participation?
3. What explains varying levels of trust in elected representatives?
4. Do South Africans trust each other?

Introduction to the datasets

IJR uses two quantitative surveys as a litmus test of South Africans' perceptions of various issues: Afrobarometer and the SARB. In this section, we utilise both datasets to explore South Africans' perception of government performance, in a broad sense, and levels of trust in a range of relations. Both datasets present longitudinal evidence for the above topics, which provides the opportunity to identify any changes in perception.

The Afrobarometer survey is carried out in many countries throughout Africa and focuses on citizens' views on political, economic and social issues. Importantly, Afrobarometer provides public opinion data to gauge the views of citizens, and is used by a variety of stakeholders in Africa. The latest available data for South Africa is from Round 6, carried out in 2015.

Since 2003, the IJR's Research and Policy programme has conducted the SARB survey. It is an annual national public opinion poll that measures citizens' attitudes towards reconciliation, transformation and national unity in post-apartheid South Africa. As the first of its kind, and one of the few dedicated social surveys on reconciliation in Africa and worldwide, the SARB has become an important resource for encouraging national debate, informing decision-makers, developing policy and provoking new analysis and theory on reconciliation in post-conflict societies. Given its unique focus, the SARB is consulted widely within government, business and civil society, and is increasingly becoming a source of further research for scholars of transitional justice. The most recent SARB survey was conducted in 2017.

This section combines findings from both Afrobarometer and the SARB to identify three key findings, namely: (1) levels of trust between South Africans

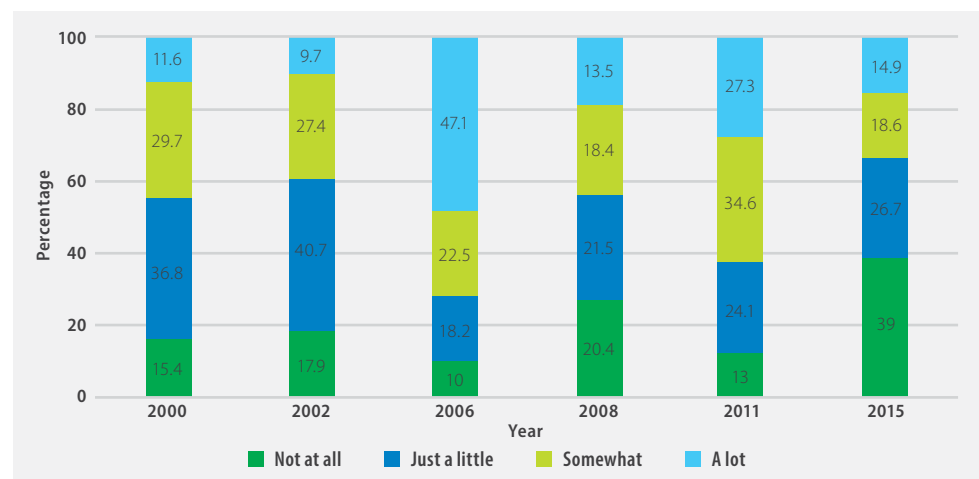
and trust in the state; (2) perceptions of progress and regression in interpersonal and state–society relations; and (3) the response to pressing issues in society.

2.1 Trust in public representatives

Trust is a central component to the goal of reconciliation in South Africa, and so forms part of both the Afrobarometer and SARB surveys. In one sense, measures of trust act as a means to assess the progress of state institutions in fulfilling their moral and constitutional obligations to the citizenry; a high degree of trust indicates a functioning ‘social contract’ between citizens and state. In another sense, individuals’ level of trust in their families, communities, or in other people can help suggest the level of reconciliation in society.

Data from Afrobarometer suggests that South Africans are losing trust in their public representatives. The latest evidence, from Round 6 in 2015, is particularly worrying. Figure 1 illustrates the South Africans’ lack of trust in the president.

Figure 1: Percentage of South Africans who trust the president⁴



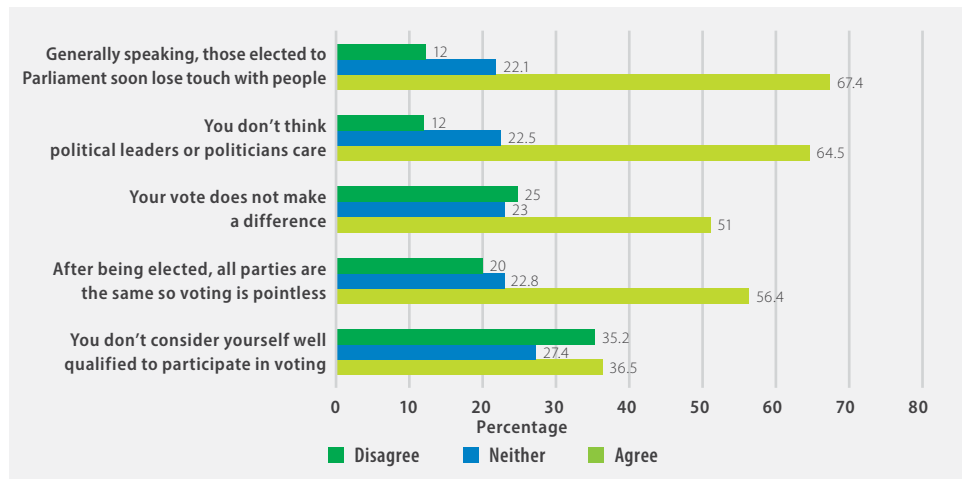
The Round 6 data for Afrobarometer reveals a significant decrease in levels of trust between South Africans and the president. As seen in Figure 1, 39 per cent of South Africans claim they do ‘not at all’ trust the president, the highest percentage for this response since polling started in Round 1 in 2000. Moreover, the sum total of the negative responses, ‘not at all’ and ‘just a little’, indicates that 65.7 per cent of South Africans place little to no trust in their president. In short, South Africans’ trust in the presidency is at its lowest levels since polling began.

Importantly, South Africans also expressed increasing distrust in the legislature. In 2015, 26.2 per cent respondents indicated they did ‘not at all’ trust parliament; similarly to the question referring to the president, this was the highest percentage for this response since polling began. The most negative response to the question of trust in parliament came in Round 2, in 2002, but responses were increasingly positive since then. However, evidence from Round 6 indicates a dangerous reversal in trust relations between the public and their elected representatives. In short, ‘political leaders are the least-trusted public officials in the country’.⁵

2.2 Trust and the political process

Data from the SARB 2017 supports many of the assertions in Afrobarometer's 2015 survey. Importantly, SARB data reveals not only citizens' dissatisfaction with the current state of political relations, but their high rates of apathy. Figure 2 illustrates South Africans' perceptions of political efficacy.

Figure 2: Perceptions of political efficacy in 2017⁶



The SARB data in Figure 2 demonstrates the negative consequences of a lack of trust in public representatives, as shown by Figure 1. The effects of low levels of trust are considerable in citizens' perceptions of political efficacy, or the ways in which they participate and influence the political process. The promise of the post-1994 liberal-democratic order was intended to increase citizens' perceptions that their stake in South African politics was significant. However, Figure 2 demonstrates high levels of disenchantment with the present nature of representative democracy in South Africa.

Despite a relatively ambivalent response, voters are not totally convinced they are unqualified to participate in political processes, which is a necessary basis for an electoral democracy. However, South Africans are decidedly more pessimistic about the power of their votes, with just over half (51 per cent) of all respondents agreeing that their 'vote makes no difference'. A more general trend that emerges from Figure 2 is the disappointment voters experience after the polls. The majority of South Africans (56.4 per cent) indicate that political parties are not substantially different once elections have been held. South Africans overwhelmingly (64.5 per cent) believe political leaders do not care about citizens, and are particularly sceptical (67.4 per cent) of political leaders who 'lose touch' with voters once elected to parliament.

2.3 What explains diminishing trust?

Analyses of quantitative studies where levels of trust decrease and levels of political apathy increase have tended to highlight another correlation, which

may have a causal explanation for these developments: an increasing perception of corruption. Scholars have argued that the perception of corruption has an inverse relationship to levels of trust in public representatives.⁷ In other words, an increase in the perception of corruption is likely to result in an increase public distrust of elected representatives, which, as Figure 2 shows, impairs levels of political engagement.

South Africa is an excellent case study to test this theory. Reports of public- (and private-) sector corruption have become commonplace in news media. However, citizens are most likely to encounter the pernicious effects of corruption at a hyper-local level – at a local police station, municipal court, or trying to access basic services. Figure 3 illustrates South Africans' perceptions of corruption in several important public institutions.

Figure 3: Perceptions of corruption in various sectors in 2017⁸

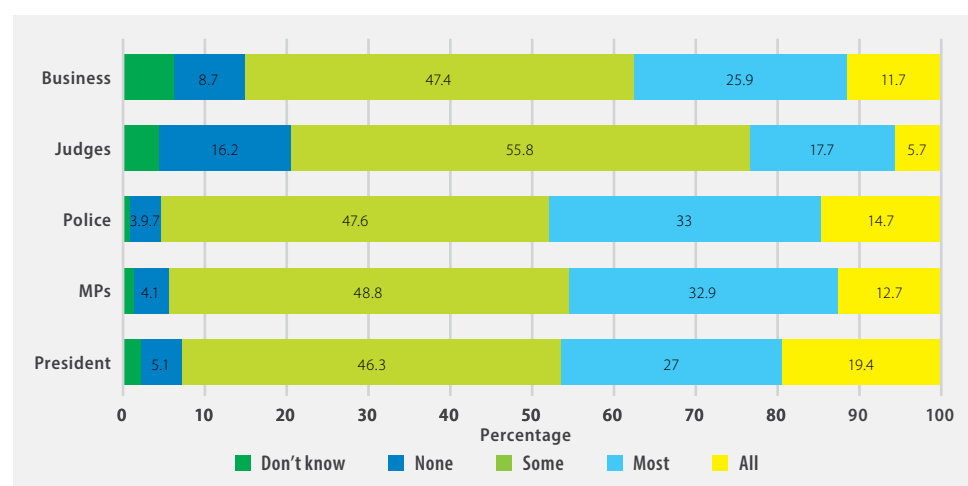


Figure 3 reveals similar trends to Figure 1; the presidency is seen as the least trusted and one of the most corrupt institutions, while other public figures do not fare much better. Importantly, however, Figure 3 reveals that South Africans perceive the police to be the most corrupt institution in the country, more so than the president. This finding is perhaps more worrying than declining trust and faith in the presidency, as all South Africans – irrespective of class, gender or racial divisions – depend on the South African Police Service (SAPS) for the provision of basic services and security. To assess whether South Africans believe corruption is being managed and stamped out, Afrobarometer asked respondents in 2015 to assess government's response over the last year; 63.8 per cent of respondents claimed the level of corruption increased 'a lot', and 19.5 per cent of respondents believed corruption increased 'somewhat'. In short, survey data reveals that South Africans believe many aspects of public life are subject to corruption, and overwhelming public opinion suggests that levels of corruption are increasing.

As data from Afrobarometer and the SARb indicates, South Africans' levels of trust in public representatives are declining and, in some instances, are at a new low for the post-apartheid era. A possible explanation for this diminishing

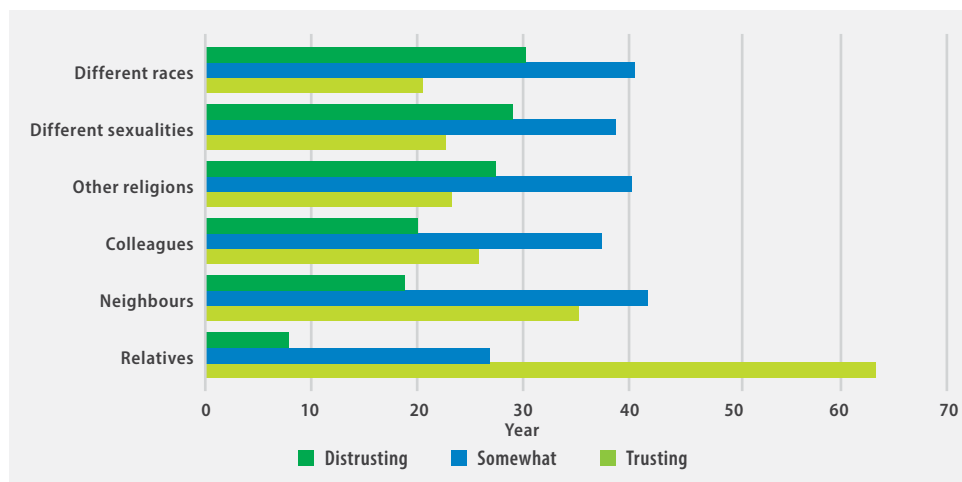
trust is the perception that many of these public representatives, and public institutions, are engaging in corruption. Evidence from the SARB suggests that corruption is the main perceived threat political leaders have to citizens' constitutional rights.⁹ However, corruption is not a recent phenomenon, especially in South Africa, but it is likely that the response to corruption (or lack thereof) is diminishing citizens' perceptions that institutions and representatives carry out their duties through fair, just and democratic processes.

2.4 Do South Africans trust each other?

Inasmuch as trust in institutions, elected representatives and the rule of law are necessary for democratic societies, one of the goals of South Africa's post-1994 reconciliation project has been to develop interpersonal trust. Apartheid and colonialism had sought to divide South Africans, and an important goal of the transition away from apartheid was the creation of a harmonious nation. More than two decades after the establishment of constitutional democracy, what do South Africans think about their fellow citizens?

Since 2003, the SARB has carried out nationally representative surveys to establish the nature of relations between South Africans. Some general trends emerge: South Africans' primary identity is typically tied to their home language; inequality is cited as the primary division in society; and most South Africans are in favour of reconciliation. These three factors are important to interpreting levels of interpersonal trust, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: South Africans' trust in various groups in 2017¹⁰



As Figure 4 demonstrates, South Africans have varying levels of interpersonal trust, depending on how far this trust is spread. Conceptually, Robert Putnam's theory of 'social capital' explains this relationship using the concepts of 'thick' and 'thin' trust, or 'bonding' and 'bridging' trust.¹¹ 'Bonding' trust refers to the strong bonds that develop in small units, and allows groups of people to feel confident. It is likely that South Africans have stronger bonding trust because of the history of separate development and influx control, where communities

were small, relatively isolated, and mixing with others from different groups was uncommon. ‘Bridging’ trust refers to the bonds of trust across multiple groups, and allows for sharing ideas and creating solidarity.¹² South Africans exhibit relatively weak bridging trust, indicating a slow pace of social transformation; where people are able to interact with other groups in post-apartheid South Africa, trust levels are still low.

Figure 4 also reveals that South Africans remain relatively conservative in their social relations. The perception of consistent inequality has meant that most South Africans are divided along class, but also racial and cultural lines. South Africans are trusting of their relatives and neighbours because they are likely to share similar social status, while colleagues and people from other religions are more distant. Distrust of members of other races and sexualities is likely a result of weak ‘bridging’ trust and persistent inequality.

Conclusion

This section has presented a brief outline of both recent and longitudinal quantitative data available to the IJR. The purpose of this section is to sketch a picture of South Africans’ public opinion on important issues, such as trust in public representatives, their perception of corruption, and interpersonal trust. In this sense, this section provides a quantitative picture of what the state of the nation is according to nationally representative survey evidence.

The data reveals some concerning trends and findings. With all the uncertainty surrounding the presidency, as outlined in Section 1, South Africans’ trust in the institution has diminished, with the latest data from Jacob Zuma’s second term representing the lowest levels of trust since polling began. It is likely that this lack of trust is driven by an increasing perception that the president is engaging in corruption, and the government is doing very little to curb it.

On an interpersonal level, the data is more ambivalent. South Africans firmly believe in the goal of reconciliation (75.3 per cent), and many still believe it is possible (68 per cent). However, South African society is still plagued by a lack of ‘bridging’ trust, or trust across social groups. Moreover, different groups of respondents, along racial and (sometimes) gender lines, express different perceptions on social issues. To expand on why group identity and institutionalised social systems, such as racism and patriarchy, continue to play a significant role, the following section will focus on qualitative analysis from the IJR.

3. What do the people say?

Key questions

1. Why is race still important in South Africa?
2. What is patriarchy, and how does it relate to interpersonal relations?

Introduction

This section is intended to highlight the qualitative aspect of the IJR's work, in order to supplement and complement the quantitative analysis in Section 2. Furthermore, this section provides a more critical lens through which to interpret the quantitative findings and, by combining public opinion with an analysis of social structure, we hope to establish a middle-ground, of sorts, on which to base *A people's state of the nation assessment*.

This section aims to elaborate and elucidate on three core issues in contemporary South Africa, namely: (1) the continued relevance of race; (2) the patriarchal structure of society; and (3) how to overcome these challenges.

3.1 Race in contemporary South Africa

For several centuries, racial identity has played an integral role in structuring South African society. In 1994, the country's first democratic elections ushered in the first government to represent the black majority. Formal apartheid and discriminatory laws had been repealed since the early 1990s, and the election in 1994 signalled the political shift from white minority dominance to black majority democracy.¹³ In principal, all citizens had equal political, social and legal rights according to South Africa's new constitution, enacted in 1996. However, the legacy of white minority rule and systematic underdevelopment of the vast majority of South Africans would not vanish overnight. But in post-apartheid South Africa, why are issues of race still at play?

Systemic racism

Racism is not only perpetuated in legal or political systems, and it is more profound than mere discrimination. In post-apartheid South Africa, it is useful to consider racism as a system of ideas which shape and determine conscious and unconscious attitudes and perceptions. The history of racially-enforced legislation has engendered and reproduced racialised assumptions in generations of South Africans. The history of racial categorisation functioned as 'a way of anchoring and affirming power'.¹⁴ Importantly, the hierarchy of racial logic has imbued white South Africans with nearly all desirable qualities, while black South Africans have been denigrated. Have these perceptions been sufficiently altered or dismantled in post-apartheid South Africa?

Controversies around race in popular media seem to have proliferated in 2017, but often these stories lack the necessary insight and introspection for the public to truly interrogate why racial issues continue in South Africa. Racism is perceived to be particular to specific individuals or incidences, rather than an endemic part of South African society. Outrage to racial incidences is vociferous and occasional, but sustained engagement with the presence and extent of racism in post-apartheid South Africa has almost been non-existent.

On a structural level, race continues to feature in conversations on control of important aspects of society. Senior members of South Africa's universities, major industries and media are overwhelmingly white and male. How can these institutions accurately reflect the composition of South Africa when they are dominated by a small, privileged minority? Moreover, why are powerful and lucrative positions in society out of reach for the vast majority of South Africans, despite more than two decades of 'equal access'?

These questions and contradictions should be given greater prominence on a national level, as South Africans take stock of the progress of the country in 2018. In order to explore how complex social structures and identities, such as race, intersect with one another, a comprehensive account of gender relations in South Africa is required.

3.2 Gender relations on the ground: Fraught and fractured

South Africa's revered Constitution espouses socio-economic rights that speak directly to equality, dignity and fairness. It commits itself to the healing of past divisions and the building of a new society founded on the democratic values of social justice and fundamental human rights. The Bill of Rights asserts the various basic and essential rights of each South African, regardless of race, gender or class. Yet the country's Constitution reads almost like an ironic tragedy in contrast to the very different reality and lived experiences of South Africans on the ground.

Every day, newspapers are inundated with reports of violence in its myriad forms with headlines and images that depict the gruesome deaths of womxn,¹⁵ men and members of the LGBTIQ+ community.¹⁶ Analysts and political commentators have accurately but inadequately identified the rising levels of unemployment, poverty and substance abuse as elements that significantly contribute to the violence we witness and read about. However, the systemic nature of patriarchy, including its subdivisions of misogyny and toxic masculinity, is not adequately critiqued in order to holistically comprehend gender violence. While discussions of racial identity are relatively common in South Africa's public discourse, gender identity is equally (if not more) integral to understanding the risks, implications and complexities of South African society. Gender-based violence is fuelled by perceptions, stereotypes and myths around gender and sexuality.

South Africa's level of gender-based violence is among the highest in the world for a country not engaged in war and, until recently, scant media attention had focused on this issue. Despite this improvement in public awareness, the ways in which we speak about gender remains violent, exclusionary, and largely ignorant. 2018 began with the horrific story of Siam Lee's murder and the nation united in outrage, yet once it was discovered that she may have been involved with sex work, public sympathy was withdrawn. This instance of gender-based violence vividly demonstrated South Africans' perceptions of sex work and ideas of what the perfect victim looks like. The ways in which South Africans communicate about gender is

harmful, and the performance of genders is rigid and self-righteous. Moreover, coercing people into binary gender categories breeds violence. There is no good story to tell here: we are in crisis.

Gender is not a single issue

More recently, in Bredasdorp, Jodine Pieters' body was found raped and murdered, and rather than concentrate on who Jodine was – her qualities and aspirations – there has been much sensationalising of her cause of death. Her death and the manner thereof evoked memories of the brutal murder of Anene Booysen in 2013 and Sulnita Manho in 2016, both of whom resided in rural Bredasdorp. Narratives about the broken community are emerging once again, yet the criticism is often boxed into specific categories, without analysing the broader structural causes.

When analysing the societal causes of unprecedented levels of gender violence, substance and alcohol abuse are frequently touted, without criticising how men are socialised to equate excessive drinking or expressions of violence with manhood. Alcohol and substance abuse, which are remnants of the *dop* system, only exacerbate an already existing unequal power dynamic that sanctions violence against vulnerable persons. To cite poverty and unemployment, or 'broken families', as adequate explanations of abuse ignores the cultural systems that perpetuate a socio-economic hierarchy, which situates people with certain genders above those with another. Violence committed against womxn and the LGBTQIA+ (who are most adversely affected) is not genderless, and it is an injustice to be unwilling to engage with it. Jodine Pieters' horrific end is an opportunity for South Africa to reflect on how power is gendered and structured, and position ourselves to effectively address it.

Audre Lorde, an American writer, activist and feminist, argues 'there is no thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives'. The construction of identity is multi-faceted and multi-layered. Black womxn, and specifically black queer womxn, simultaneously face multiple oppressions, chiefly racism and sexism. Furthermore, the historical construction of the idea of race 'draws extensively on the creation of sexual difference and sexual violence'.¹⁷ The sexism and misogyny faced in rural Bredasdorp and elsewhere in South Africa is evidence of a glaringly obvious problem experienced, especially by womxn of colour. The racialised nature of Pieters' murder is directly linked to the socio-economic ills faced by the predominantly black and Coloured population, and, more specifically, womxn. Patriarchy is the foundation upon which our society has been built and organised, and violence is the mechanism through which it is sustained. Until South Africans begin to grapple with that truth, all efforts to eradicate gendered violence will be ineffective.

Toxic masculinity and rape culture

The socialisation of men in South Africa is directly linked to gender-based and sexual violence. Violence, both structural and physical, perpetrated against womxn and non-binary people is legitimised by hegemonic and toxic ideas of

masculinity. Toxic masculinity refers to a constellation of social attitudes that describe the masculine gender as violent, sexually aggressive and unemotional. As such, toxic masculinity manifests as violence against womxn, non-binary people, and men. In order to combat gendered violence, this form of masculinity must be engaged and dismantled.

Gender-based violence is a systemic product of a culmination of flawed psychosocial beliefs and its manifestation in private and public space. The rhetoric of toxic masculinity does not infer all men to be rapists or abusers, but its reproduction creates the capacity for men to be violent. However, in order to truly subvert toxic masculinity, men need to form part of the dismantling process, as they are primarily responsible for upholding patriarchy.

Rape culture can be defined as situations in which ‘sexual assault, rape, and general violence are ignored, trivialised, normalised, or made into jokes’.¹⁸ Moreover, rape culture is entrenched in social structure and ranges from shifting the blame of sexual violence onto survivors, to trivialising sexual assault. In South Africa, rape culture is normalised and deeply entrenched in our social makeup. Post-apartheid South Africa has inherited and continues to nurture a violent culture, where South Africans are desensitised to regular instances of structural, physical and sexual violence.

Queer community

Violence against the LGBTQIA+ community is one that continues to be negated within the broader gender-based violence discourse. Pervasive violence against the LGBTQIA+ community undermines all efforts for transitional justice and reconciliation. Studies indicate that around 86 per cent of Black¹⁹ lesbian womxn in the Western Cape live in fear of sexual assault,²⁰ and that 41 per cent of Black queer South Africans know of people who have been murdered because of their queer identity.²¹

The normalisation of violence in South African society is a social ill that requires deliberate, brave and *intersectional* action at all levels of society. Conscientisation, punitive justice and instilling a collective culture of accountability are but a few steps that we can take to forge a path towards gender justice. It is this kind of national consciousness project that requires bold leadership and unflinching political will. There is no easy fix for this epidemic. South Africa’s leaders – political, religious and cultural – and all South Africans must take action fast. It is imperative to acknowledge that societal prejudices and hierarchies endanger those outside the norm; the women, the poor, the black, and the queer. Our democracy has afforded us the opportunity to observe the longstanding and deeply entrenched problem of patriarchy. We must begin to effectively utilise this opportunity to rethink our framing of gendered violence in present-day South Africa.

A gender-just society must dismantle national identity that perpetrates patriarchal violence and establish a collective consciousness characterised by accountability, justice and the full realisation of common humanity.

4. Conclusion: What should the president say?

President Jacob Zuma's SONA will be closely watched and critiqued for several reasons. Firstly, it is likely that this will be his last opportunity to deliver the speech, as many within the ruling ANC are unhappy with his leadership and might 'recall' him as state president in an effort to boost the party's public image ahead of national elections in 2019. South Africans sympathetic to both the ANC and the opposition will be anxious to hear what changes, if any, President Zuma will offer in SONA.

Secondly, South Africans have lost trust in institutions and public representatives, are becoming increasingly disengaged with the political process, and view corruption as an obstacle to effective governance. Quantitative evidence from Afrobarometer and the SARB shows waning trust, especially during Zuma's second term. SONA will need to outline processes of significant political reform in order to instil and restore trust between South Africans and their elected representatives.

Thirdly, issues of racism, inequality and gender violence have continued well into the post-apartheid era, facilitating an environment which limits the progress of reconciliation. If the goal of a fair, democratic, and inclusive society in South Africa is to be realised, SONA needs to outline a plan to combat pernicious racism, and a macroeconomic framework that works to minimise the vast inequalities in society. On a more practical and immediate level, the ANC needs to take issues of gender violence and patriarchy seriously, by not allowing perpetrators to be elected to their NEC and clamp down on victim-blaming statements.

In South Africa in 2018, the state of the nation is uneasy and uncertain. South Africans are concerned about many profound and systemic issues which relate to how they interact in the political process and also with how they relate to each other. Whatever changes and reforms have occurred since 1994, long-running problems such as inequality, a lack of interpersonal trust, racism and gender violence continue to trouble South Africans. Moreover, people are concerned with worsening levels of corruption and political accountability, which are perceived to be interrelated.

Despite whatever optimism President Zuma might profess in SONA, there are significant issues in South African society. Political leaders need to regain the trust of the South African public. More generally, public institutions must be reformed to function effectively to carry out service provision. Systemically, the way that South Africans perceive race and gender has not undergone a dramatic shift, and it has presented several pertinent issues in post-apartheid South Africa. It is only through strong, honest leadership coupled with an engaged, informed citizenry that South Africa will develop a fair, democratic and inclusive society.

ENDNOTES

1. Kate Wilkinson. 2017a. Factsheet: The 2 ways SA's parliament can boot a president from office. Africa Check. 28 June, updated 23 January 2018. Available: <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-many-motions-no-confidence-sa-president-zuma-faced/>
2. The term 'Top Six' is used colloquially to refer to the six most senior positions in the ANC, namely: president (Cyril Ramaphosa), deputy president (David Mabuza), secretary-general (Ace Magashule), deputy secretary-general (Jessie Duarte), treasurer-general (Paul Mashatile) and national chairperson (Gwede Mantashe).
3. Kate Wilkinson. 2017b. SA President Jacob Zuma charged with 18 crimes of fraud & corruption – not 783. *Africa Check*. Available: <https://africacheck.org/spot-check/sa-president-jacob-zuma-charged-18-crimes-fraud-corruption-not-783/>
4. Note: The original survey question was 'How much do you trust [the president], or haven't you heard enough about them to say?'. 'Don't know' responses are excluded.
5. Anyway Chingwete. 2016. In South Africa, citizens' trust in president, political institutions drops sharply. *Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 90*. 17 May. Available: http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r6_dispatchno90_south_africa_trust_in_officials.pdf
6. Elnari Potgieter. 2017. SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2017 Report. Institute for Justice and Reconciliation: Cape Town: 59.
7. Christopher J. Anderson and Yuliya V. Tverdova. 2003. Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(1): 91-109.
8. Original question in survey: 'How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?'
9. Elnari Potgieter and Rajen Govender. 2016. 'Sometimes Hope gets quite tired': 20 years of the SA Constitution – People, institutions and rights. *SARB Special Briefing Paper*. Institute for Justice and Reconciliation: Cape Town.
10. Potgieter, 2017: 58.
11. Robert Putnam. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.
12. Paul S. Adler and Seok-Woo Kwon. 2002. Social capital: prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(1): 17-40.
13. It is not the intent of the IJR to endorse the continued use of apartheid racial categories in South Africa. The use of such categories here is for analytic purposes only.
14. Achille Mbembe (trans. Laurent Dubois). 2017. *Critique of Black Reason*. Wits University Press: Johannesburg.
15. Womxn is a spelling of 'women' that is a more inclusive, indicating that gender is, in fact, a spectrum and thus void of binaries. It is a more progressive term that aims to shed light on the prejudice, discrimination, and institutional barriers womxn continue to face within political, economic and social spheres. This spelling aims to show that womxn are not an extension of men but their own free and separate entities. This spelling has become popular in feminist discourses and frameworks.
16. LGBTQIA+ is an abbreviation which refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual persons. The + refers to all identities also part of the LGBTQIA+ community. This includes (but is not limited to) pansexual, demisexual, polyamorous etc.
17. Pumla Dineo Gqola. 2015. *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. Jacana: Johannesburg.
18. Shannon Ridgway. 2014. 25 Everyday Examples of Rape Culture. *Everyday Feminism*. 10 March. Available: <https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/03/examples-of-rape-culture/>
19. Upper case used to collectively refer to all people who would have been formally oppressed under apartheid, including black African, Coloured, and Indian people.
20. *Rape Crisis*. Rape in South Africa. Available: <https://rapecrisis.org.za/rape-in-south-africa/#causes-of-rape>
21. Luiz de Barros. 2017. Murdered for being who we are. Love Not Hate. 6 April. Available: <https://www.lovenothate.org.za/2017/04/06/murdered-for-being-who-we-are/>

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

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