

# **Social Cohesion and Reconciliation in South Africa**

by

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## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

Social cohesion and reconciliation have important roles to play in the development and trajectory of conflict transformation in countries marked by past conflict. Given South Africa's divided past, based predominantly on racial divisions, conflict transformation between the country's racial groups is essential for ensuring future stability. Improved levels of social cohesion are an indication of the quality of social relations, particularly measured in terms of the levels of social and political trust and reconciliation, understood as the distance in social relations, specifically as observed in terms of inter-racial contact and inter-racial prejudice; improved levels of social and political trust and reconciliation would ultimately contribute towards sustained conflict transformation. The notions of 'conflict transformation' and 'political culture' provide the conceptual framework for the study of social cohesion and reconciliation, particularly in the South African context.

Survey data from the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) administered by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) were utilised for this study. This study was able to highlight how both social cohesion and reconciliation have changed, particularly in relation to the different race groups of South Africa. Employing a longitudinal study enabled the observation and analysis of the development of conflict transformation in South Africa through variables related to the dimensions of social cohesion and reconciliation from 2003 to 2013.

The findings showed an increase in contact and social trust, particularly for Black and White South Africans. Additionally, White South Africans' political trust increased significantly, whereas there was a decrease in political trust for Black South Africans. Levels of prejudice declined for White South Africans, whereas the levels of prejudice recorded for Black South Africans were more mixed as they decreased and increased. For both Indian and Coloured South Africans there was a decrease of acceptance of other race groups, albeit from a higher level of acceptance compared to Black and White South Africans.

Levels of social cohesion and reconciliation remain low and the need for sustained efforts towards conflict transformation is evident. Several factors have been highlighted as contributing towards the low levels for both dimensions recorded. In particular, inequality, high crime levels, national leadership challenges and corruption have all had an adverse effect for the realisation of sustained conflict transformation in South Africa.

## Opsomming

Sosiale kohesie en versoening het albei belangrike rolle in die ontwikkeling en toekomstige verloop van konflik transformasie in lande wat in die verlede gekenmerk is deur konflik. Gegewe dat Suid-Afrika se verdeelde verlede hoofsaaklik gebaseer was op ras, plaas konflik transformasie tussen die land se verskeie rasse groepe van uiterste belang vir die behoud van toekomstige stabiliteit. Verbeterde vlakke van sosiale kohesie as aanduiding van die kwaliteit van verhoudings in 'n samelewing, spesifiek gemeet in terme van sosiale en politieke vertroue; en versoening, verstaan as die afstand in sosiale verhoudings, gemeet in terme van inter-rasse kontak en inter-rasse vooroordeel, dra gesamentlik by tot die totstandkoming van volhoubare konflik transformasie. Beide konflik transformasie en politieke kultuur skep die konseptuele raamwerke vir die studie van sosial kohesie en versoening binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.

Opname data van die *South African Reconciliation Barometer* (SARB), behartig deur die *Institute for Justice and Reconciliation* (IJR) is gebruik vir die uitvoer van hierdie studie. Met die gebruik van die data kon die studie die verloop van beide sosiale kohesie en versoening meet veral ten opsigte van die verskillende rasse groepe in Suid-Afrika. Die gebruik van 'n longitudinale studie het hierdie navorsing in staat gestel om die ontwikkeling van konflik transformasie deur middel van verskeie aanwysers verbonde aan beide sosiale kohesie sowel as versoening tussen 2003 en 2013 te meet.

Die oorhoofse bevindinge toon dat daar 'n toename in kontak en sosiale vertroue was veral vir Swart en Wit Suid-Afrikaners. Waar Wit Suid-Afrikaners 'n toename in politieke vertroue getoon het, het Swart Suid-Afrikaners 'n afname getoon. Vlakke van vooroordeel het afgeneem vir Wit Suid-Afrikaners, terwyl die vlakke van vooroordeel vir Swart Suid-Afrikaners verbeter sowel as verswak het. Ofskoon van 'n hoër grondvlak in vergelyke met Swart en Wit Suid-Afrikaners, het beide Kleurling en Indiër Suid-Afrikaners 'n afname van aanvaarding van ander rasse groepe getoon.

Vlakke van sosiale kohesie en versoening bly egter laag en derhalwe is volhoubare pogings nodig ten opsigte van konflik transformasie. Verskeie faktore wat bydra tot die lae stand van beide sosiale kohesie sowel as versoening was geïdentifiseer. Veral ongelykheid, hoë misdadisyfers, nasionale leierskap uitdagings en korrupsie het almal bygedra tot die tekortkoming dusvêr in terme van volhoubare konflik transformasie in Suid-Afrika.

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## Glossary

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ACT    | Action for Cooperation and Trust                       |
| ANC    | African National Congress                              |
| BEE    | Black Economic Empowerment                             |
| CODESA | Convention for a Democratic South Africa               |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions                 |
| EEA    | Employment Equity Act                                  |
| GEAR   | Growth, Employment and Redistribution                  |
| IJR    | Institute for Justice and Reconciliation               |
| MISTRA | Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection          |
| NDP    | National Development Plan                              |
| NDR    | National Democratic Revolution                         |
| NP     | National Party   |
| NPA    | National Prosecuting Authority                         |
| OECD   | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PR     | Proportional Representation                            |
| RDP    | Reconstruction and Development Plan                    |
| SACP   | South African Communist Party                          |
| SARB   | South African Reconciliation Barometer                 |
| SCORE  | Social Cohesion and Reconciliation                     |
| SEED   | Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development           |
| SPSS   | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences            |
| TRC    | Truth and Reconciliation Commission                    |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                   |
| WB     | World Bank   |
| WEF    | World Economic Forum                                   |
| WVS    | World Values Survey                                    |

## **Chapter 1: Outline**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Following provisionally successful conflict resolution processes enabling a period of peace after various impasses in the past, it would seem that most peace settlements reached in deeply divided societies tend gradually to degenerate at one stage or another (Hampson 1996:3). South Africa has been hailed as a ‘miracle’ for its relatively peaceful transition, yet in reality reconciliation has failed or “at least has not lived up to the expectations” (Gibson 2004b:12). This, as South Africa as a nation during the crucial peacebuilding phase has tended to fall back onto previous fault lines because of, amongst other reasons, the insufficient sustained political will to build social capital amongst its ordinary citizens. In the aftermath of the transition from an oppressive to a democratic state, South Africa still faces numerous challenges related to the failure to reconcile past differences, rendering critical the need for continued and sustained conflict transformation (Gibson 2015). Given the importance of trust and inter-racial contact, it is believed that both social cohesion and reconciliation have valuable roles to play in enabling conflict transformation.

### **1.2 Background and Rationale**

Present-day South Africa, with all its challenges as well as its opportunities, has developed out of a long period of overt and covert conflict against a system of oppression and in particular apartheid racial segregation. Following the successful negotiations and the first democratic non-racial elections in 1994, South Africans embarked on a journey to come to grips with the divisive legacy of their past, while simultaneously attempting to build an inclusive future. Following the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was created to contribute to the transition, and in view of the subsequent peace-building phase, the question arises: given this history, where is contemporary South Africa in terms of conflict transformation?

A new social dispensation in a process of renewal after a conflict-ridden past faces a long road towards the rehabilitation of relations, while simultaneously attempting to align conflicting interests in order to ensure national prosperity. Conflict transformation shapes the capacity of a transitional state to deal with new conflicts and also influences the effectiveness and capacities of a ‘newly’ established society in general. Social cohesion and reconciliation are considered crucial elements in a post-conflict settlement phase in order to mend social divides and to enable conflict transformation.

Social cohesion refers to the “interdependence between members of the society and shared solidarity” (Berger-Schmitt 2000:3). In order for sustained conflict transformation to emerge, social cohesion is also required so as to enable all parties involved to overcome fears, suspicions and wariness of differences in order to enable cooperation (Sandole et al. 2009:233). Kaplan (2013) reiterates that two factors above all others determine how a country’s political, economic and societal life evolves: a population’s capacity to cooperate, and its ability to take advantage of productive institutions. Thus it is argued that when societies co-operate, they are in the fortunate position of being able to unlock their citizenries’ human potential (OECD 2001:39; Collier 2013:64; Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:9). And “a society that relies on generalised reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society [...] trust lubricates the inevitable frictions of social life” (Putnam 2000:135). Besides social trust, political trust is also recognised as being essential for the endurance of democratic structures (Almond & Verba 1963:504). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also regards trust, both political and social, as “an acceptable proxy [...] in the absence of a wider and more comprehensive set of indicators”<sup>1</sup> for determining social capital (Field 2003:125).

Furthermore, political trust can be regarded as a valuable indicator of citizen’s sense of inclusion and overall feeling towards a political dispensation (Blind 2006:4). Thus all institutions within a democracy have the responsibility for creating social order out of collective choices based on the trust that the citizenry have in these institutions (Jenson 2002:146; Heywood 2007:206). Moreover, a society in transition from conflict and in particular “from distrust to trustworthiness requires strong signals that the government agency in question has changed” (Rothstein 2005:166). Subsequent to attaining peace, the legitimacy that institutions in the new dispensation enjoy among the citizenry is of significant theoretical and practical importance for determining the level of political trust (Gibson 2004:297). Before 1994 Black South Africans had the least confidence in state institutions, while those which were most closely associated with the apartheid state enjoyed the least confidence in the new dispensation (Kotzè & du Toit 2011:45). Therefore, given South Africa’s divided past, it is the task of the current government to garner sufficient trust from all race groups, but particularly also from minority groups (Gouws 2015b).

Reconciliation assessed as a goal can be incorrectly understood as only being relevant to the domain of ‘high’ politics, or when it is believed that institutions alone would automatically contribute towards the goal of a reconciled nation. Consequently, interpreting reconciliation as a goal fails to acknowledge that reconciling divisive interpersonal relations between citizens is a continuous process and “not a singular event marking success” (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:186). It

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<sup>1</sup> In this study references to “indicators” are used interchangeably with “variables”.

is therefore beneficial to interpret reconciliation as a continuous or sustained process to mend fractured social relations. It is argued that reconciliation can be achieved through improved contact between former adversaries and a decrease in prejudice. In this sense, then, achieving a level of inter-racial reconciliation in South Africa also contributes towards the consolidation of democracy, when citizens are able to formulate coalitions on the basis of mutual interests rather than divisive racial distinctions (Gibson 2004b:5).

When conflict transformation is understood in terms of sustained effort, the imperative is not only to attain a political transition, but also to sustain a process of reconciliation, and nourish political and social trust. Hence, the need to measure whether there has been conflict transformation over a given period. This is especially needed in the case of South Africa where unresolved grievances not dealt with in the much lauded, and equally criticised, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), continue to resurface (Pienaar 2015).

In a bid to avoid the long-term entrenching of grievances, which could potentially stymie long-term developmental prospects and threaten the peace-building process, it is necessary to implement a process of conflict transformation, understood in this study as social cohesion and reconciliation. Govier and Verwoerd (2002:198) warn that if conflict transformation is not attainable, “any formal institutions stipulated for the society will simply be unworkable”. Therefore, if social cohesion and reconciliation lag in the long term, the initial peace settlement reached will remain fragile and precarious.

Since the historic source of the divisions in South Africa was based on racial identities, improving social trust between racial groups serves as an indication of “bridging social capital”, whereas political trust serves as an indication of the inclusion of all race groups in the new dispensation (IJR 2014:15). Furthermore, if reconciliation is understood as the restoration and continuation of “right relationships” (Philpott 2012:5) that would enable cooperation within society to grow, then it is necessary to study inter-racial prejudice and inter-racial contact. Consequently, within a deeply divided society the promotion of both social cohesion and reconciliation is deemed indispensable.

This research thus aims to contribute towards current knowledge regarding the probability of moving towards conflict transformation by studying the trends of both social cohesion and reconciliation in South Africa during the decade from 2003 to 2013. Ultimately, the objective of this study, based on secondary analysis, is to clarify and describe the development of both social cohesion and reconciliation for the purpose of sustained conflict transformation. The more general aim of the study is to contribute towards the literature and empirical evidence related to the “[b]uilding and sustaining of a relationship with sufficient closeness and trust [within society] to

handle the conflicts and problems that will inevitably arise in the course of time” (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:186).

### **1.3. Problem Statement and Research Questions**

Despite the fact that the new democratic dispensation in South Africa initially seemed to enjoy sufficient and widespread trust from the majority of South Africans, reconciliation has to date failed to live up to the ideals as envisioned by the TRC, while cooperation interpreted as social cohesion and more specifically measured in terms of trust across racial divides remains deficient (Gibson 2015). Following the post-conflict settlement and the current conflict transformation phase in South Africa, the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB), administered by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), hypothesises that in order for conflict transformation to be sustained, both reconciliation in terms of contact and social cohesion or trust amongst citizens across racial divisions are required (IJR 2014:17).

Nevertheless, trust across racial groups represents only one aspect of social capital and citizens also need to “view political leaders, public institutions and government as legitimate, accountable and responsive” (IJR 2014:17). Social cohesion, seen as the quality of social relations, along with reconciliation, viewed as the distance between social relations, is thus of critical importance for the development of conflict transformation (Ioannou 2014:2). Consequently, it is believed that studying the developments of both social cohesion and reconciliation would produce significant insights into the trajectory of sustained conflict transformation in South Africa.

#### **1.3.1 Research Questions**

Primary research question: To what extent has sustained conflict transformation occurred in South Africa?

Conflict transformation interpreted in terms of social cohesion and reconciliation is measured in terms of sub-questions related to both dimensions:

- To what extent did social cohesion improve between 2003 and 2013?
  - To what extent did inter-racial social trust improve?
  - To what extent did political trust improve?
- To what extent did reconciliation take root between 2003 and 2013?
  - To what extent did inter-racial prejudice decrease?
  - To what extent did inter-racial contact and socialisation improve?

## 1.4 Conceptual Framework

### 1.4.1 Social Cohesion

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2014) defines social cohesion as the “quality of coexistence amongst individuals and the institutions between them”. Cohesion implies the interdependence between members of a society is based on sufficient shared solidarity and refers to all relations which make a society more than a collection of individuals (Berger-Schmitt 2000:3). Social cohesion can also be understood as “shared normative sentiments” – how well a collective of people can be said to be “held together” (Moody & White 2003:106), and concurrently whether this collective of people realises the importance of “shared loyalties, which citizens owe to each other [and] the state” (Jenson 2002:145). Social capital, regarded “as key to democracy and development” and serves as an accepted indicator of social cohesion (Dexter, James & Chidester 2003:323). According to Putnam, the leading theorist of social capital, the term can be understood as:

Connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called civic culture. The difference is that social capital calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. (2000:19)

Social capital can be understood as being like any other form of capital such as financial or human capital, yet becomes “embodied in relations among persons” (Coleman 1988:118) and “facilitate[s] certain actions within a given structure” (Berger-Schmitt 2000:6). According to Field (2003:139), “what social capital brings to social theory is an emphasis on relationships and values as well as significant factors in explaining structures and behaviour [...] integrating elements between individuals and wider social structures”. Social capital exists within the structure of relationships. This implies that in order for social capital to exist, a person must be present in a social milieu, along with all other members of society, in order for a certain level of trust to be built and to remain present. It is this relation to others that serves as the source of advantage or ‘capital’ (Portes 1998:7).

In addition, political trust also plays a pivotal role in building or ensuring conflict transformation. According to Berger-Schmitt (2000:8), the perceived quality of public institutions as determined by the “trust in, satisfaction with or approval” of such institutions becomes important. The level to which there is sufficient interpersonal or social trust becomes an essential aspect in analysing



the level of social capital and thus serves as an indispensable indicator for determining the level of social cohesion (2000:28).

The pioneering theorists of political culture, Almond and Verba (1963:284), emphasise the importance of trust for enabling cooperation and argue that “high valuation of cooperative behaviour can be expected to affect actual interpersonal behaviour if those who value such behaviour also believe that people will in fact behave cooperatively in their relations with each other”. The prevalence or deficiency of trust could affect social cohesion. A deficiency of trust could potentially also stymie future prospects for sustained reconciliation. The inverse also holds true – namely, that if and when a high degree of interpersonal or social and political trust exists within a society, there is a higher likelihood that reconciliation would be prevalent, which will ultimately lead to sustained conflict transformation.

Furthermore, Norris (2011:25) expanded on Easton’s (1965) conceptualisation of trust through creating a five dimension concept to measure trust or political support comprising of trust in: institutions, political actors, community, regime principles and regime performance. However, given the fact that social and political trust are interrelated, Jenson (2002:144) warns that a lack of trust in public institutions, especially those institutions tasked with managing pluralism such as Parliament, constrains participation by citizenry and hence fails to garner feelings of belonging to a political community and essentially limits interpersonal relations. It is therefore self-evident that “a high-trust network will function more smoothly and easily than is the case for a low-trust one” (Field 2003:63). In turn, understanding social capital requires different levels and units of analysis (World Bank 2011), but for the purposes of this study, social and political trust will serve as the main analytical measures for assessing social cohesion.

#### 1.4.2 Reconciliation

As a broad understanding, reconciliation refers to a condition of “nonviolent, mutually acceptable coexistence where former enemies come to re-envision one another as fellow citizens” (Verdeja 2014) as well as entailing the restoration of broken relationships amongst citizens (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2012:247). It is equally understood as “the rebuilding of relationships in terms of ‘repairing’ or building trust between the parties in a relationship” (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:188). Political reconciliation, used interchangeably with reconciliation in this study, refers to the development of “restorative justices into an ethic for dealing with past injustices” (Philpott 2012:6) and “to a condition of right relationships within a political order” (2012:58).

This investigation favours reconciliation as a requirement for successful democratisation (Gibson 2004:7). The condition regarded as manifesting ‘right’ relationships consists of: human rights,

democracy, the rule of law, and respect for and widespread recognition of these values. As noted by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999:221), “reconciliation is liable to be a long drawn-out process with ups and downs, not something accomplished overnight, and certainly not by a commission, however effective”. Sustained reconciliation, also understood as peacebuilding, is specifically used in this study to refer to the continued process of moving beyond the initial phase of conflict resolution towards the long-term process of repairing fractured relations and enabling trust and cooperation to emerge.

It should be noted that reconciliation moves in different dimensions or stages, of which the first deals with the voluntary acceptance of the new social dispensation along with the subsequent peace settlement (Ramsbotham et al. 2012:247). The second stage refers to the consolidation of different accounts of the conflict so as to overcome polarisation, while the penultimate stage refers to the bridging of opposites to enable collective non-divisive change. The final stage of reconciliation is achieved when sufficient space has been created to move towards forging a new collective identity and when former adversaries are able to go beyond their former enmity. Reconciliation is attained when perceptions regarding identities are transformed and provide scope for a shift in people’s own self-understanding and acceptance of one another as fellow human beings. This study is premised on the assumption that “a reconciled South African is one [who] respects and trusts those of other races” (Gibson 2004b:4).

Acknowledgment is herewith also made of the seminal work done by Gibson (2004) to measure reconciliation. Gibson (2004a:135) conceptualised a reconciled South Africa as “reconciliation between people, among groups, with basic constitutional principles, and with the institutions essential to the new South African democracy.” Subsequently, Gibson’s measurement of reconciliation consisted of indicators encompassing these different aspects.

Additionally, Pettigrew and Tropp (2005:1146) argues that it would be beneficial if a “wider range of measures is used” to determine the salient effects of contact prejudice. The continued advances in longitudinal research provide more in-depth understanding of the benefits derived from inter-group contact, which have shown the “persistence of the prejudice reduction achieved by contact” (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:768).

In order to describe the changes in the development of reconciliation in South Africa, inter-racial contact is measured through inter-racial interaction or social distance, and in terms of inter-racial enmity as measured through prejudice. Reconciliation focuses on the extent of mending the relations between fractured groups, whereas social cohesion measures the quality of social relationships. For the purposes of this study reconciliation is identified as declining inter-racial enmity and increasing inter-racial contact. Ultimately, the analysis will assist with the study’s

overall goal to gauge trends in both social cohesion and reconciliation, so as to provide a comprehensive overview of the state of conflict transformation in South Africa.

## **1.5 Research Design and Methods**

This study is based on a longitudinal design focused on the changing attitudes of South African citizens towards social cohesion and reconciliation. By employing a quantitative research method based on a secondary data analysis of survey research, this study set out to descriptively study the trends of social cohesion and reconciliation so as to provide an assessment of conflict transformation in South Africa.

Establishing the level of social cohesion, or the quality of social relations, will be based on the measurements of social capital: social and political trust. Similarly, measuring reconciliation in this study will be done by focusing on race relations: social distance and inter-racial prejudice (IJR 2014:15). Through analysing both dimensions comparatively, this study will be able to elaborate descriptively on the development and level of conflict transformation in South Africa.

### 1.5.1 Longitudinal Research Design

According to White and Arzi (2005:148), in order to understand long-term-changes, and in particular changes in people's attitudes, the research should "stretch over time" and "must attempt to provide evidence of change within the same people or entities" (White & Arzi 2005:138). In order to determine the pattern of change in social relations, a longitudinal design serves as the best research design for the purpose of this study as it enables the researcher to collect data on a "continuing basis" (Kumar 2011:110).

A longitudinal design also enables the researcher to compare the study sample over different time periods to provide more accurate and detailed accounts of changes (White & Arzi 2005:147). It can be regarded as a series of repetitive cross-sectional studies and thus "primarily forms a retrospective study of the data gathered" (Kumar 2011:111) with the benefit of increased validity (2011:110). Consequently, the logic of this study is based on a longitudinal design and measures the same variables related to social cohesion and reconciliation during the period 2003-2013 in order to observe and explicate trends in the samples used.

### 1.5.2 Research Methodology

By using a secondary data analysis, the research conducted will be mostly quantitative and descriptive in nature and entail quantification of the related variables by creating numerical data or functional statistics for the purposes of describing the variables related to both social cohesion and reconciliation (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey 2005:2). The benefit of using

a descriptive approach is that it strives to provide an accurate and valid representation of the applicable variables required for the research question (Mouton 2009:113). This study will adopt a deductive approach to describe the trends and/or significant patterns in the survey data analysed, so as to provide an assessment of the state of conflict transformation in South Africa (Mouton 2009:117).

This study consists of a secondary data analysis of survey data from the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) as compiled by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliations (IJR). The research instruments utilised will be based on, and limited to, the datasets from 2003 to 2013. Given the availability of SARB and its reliable indicators as primary research instrument, the research population and unit of analysis of this study are the South African citizens and their attitudes. This study sets out to measure and establish the levels of social cohesion and reconciliation in South Africa. In order to establish the status of conflict transformation in South Africa, both social cohesion and reconciliation are studied on an annual basis so as to observe the trends in the population sample.

Social cohesion entails measuring social capital in terms of trust, which is divided into two separate variables: political trust and social trust. Social trust is measured through establishing the level of inter-racial trust, while political trust is measured in terms of trust in institutions and specifically Parliament and trust in the country's national leadership. Reconciliation is measured by observing changes in respondents' attitudes in terms of prejudice and inter-racial distance. The level of prejudice is observed in terms of respondents' attitudes regarding racial integration, measured in terms of inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours (IJR 2014:25). Social distance between the different race groups is measured through the frequency of inter-racial contact and socialisation.

The specific variables that will be used from the SARB in this study are limited to, and based on, the questionnaires for which the IJR collected. Consequently this study is limited to the availability of data and hence employs different measurements comparative to those used by both Gibson and Norris.

Moreover, this study was driven by and will draw on the conceptual and methodological framework as utilised in the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index, based on a study by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SEED). The SCORE index was specifically designed as a tool to determine the extent to which social cohesion and reconciliation within communities exists and the likelihood of conflict transformation between groups (Ioannou 2014:2). Furthermore, the SCORE index works with the hypothesis that improved social cohesion will enable reconciliation to take root (UNDP 2014). Consequently, this study will

draw on the SCORE index to identify appropriate measures for social cohesion and reconciliation. However, in order to achieve the aims and objective of this study, the model will not be used in its entirety for this thesis. Instead, it will be adjusted in accordance with the research questions posed and will be specifically based on the South African context. As this is a longitudinal study, the same variables will be used over a specified period of time from the various SARB survey rounds.

## **1.6 Research Limitations and Delimitations**

This study is by no means a comprehensive account of all the aspects related to social cohesion or reconciliation, and has been limited to the data collected by the SARB and the specific variables mentioned in 1.5.2. All secondary analyses conducted in this study stem from the SARB data, which was initially compiled to address a wider survey scope and focus. Consequently, the possibility of survey bias could serve as a limitation in this study, given that the SARB data was not specifically designed for the exclusive purposes and focus of this study. The scope of the investigation covers South Africa and the time period 2003-2013.

## **1.7 Outline of the Study**

This thesis consists of five chapters, of which Chapter One serves as the introduction and overview of the study to be conducted. Chapter Two elaborates on the conceptual framework and the related theoretical perspectives, and offers an in-depth literature review of social cohesion and reconciliation in terms of political culture and conflict transformation. Chapter Three provides a detailed outline of the research design and methodology, with an overview of the type of analyses that will be consulted. Also included in this chapter is all the related information regarding the data employed and the relevant data measurements as described in terms of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the related variables used for this study.

Chapter Four presents the findings of this study and contextualises this study within the South African setting; it will be predominantly comprised of quantitative results consisting of tables and graphs to illustrate the development of the various variables studied. This chapter will also descriptively highlight significant findings of the variables related to social cohesion and reconciliation and provides possible explanations for the findings in South Africa. The final and concluding chapter, Chapter Five, provides a comprehensive overview of this study as it specifically relates to the research questions posed through relating the relevant findings to the literature and conceptual frameworks consulted. Finally, recommendations are also made for further research beyond this study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Peace-building research forms the principal basis of this study and as such the focus is on certain ways in which South Africa has attempted to overcome its past divisions. Lederach (1997:157) forewarns that it is imperative that any society transitioning from a divided past needs to reduce and eliminate the structures that were the cause of conflict in the past, and hence the need for conflict transformation. Conflict transformation can subsequently be evinced through social cohesion and sustained reconciliation. Researching the various aspects related to these conceptual frameworks necessitates a literature review to situate the research problem within the broader area of interest as well as to establish the current state of research within the respective sub-fields of political science.

The first section includes the relevant theory associated with social cohesion within the broader field of political culture and provides an overview of the most recent literature for measuring social cohesion in terms of social capital and more specifically trust. The second section deals with the concepts related to reconciliation within the broader framework of conflict transformation and the current state of peace research in deeply divided societies as well as the different interpretations of reconciliation. The focus also falls on the importance of changing forms of prejudice and the effects of inter-group contact specifically for measuring reconciliation. Lastly, the importance of both social cohesion and reconciliation for the purpose of studying conflict transformation in South Africa will also be discussed.

### **2.2 Political Culture and Social Cohesion**

Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd (2000:148) emphasise that “apartheid left its mark on three fundamental dimensions of the South African political system: its value system, its structure and its political culture”. It is thus appropriate to focus on political culture, which captures the dominant subjective sentiment of citizens and the prevalent perceptions as conveyed in the way in which citizens engage with one another and the political system (Almond 2000:10; Mahler 2013:16). According to Almond (2000:10), the content of political culture is the result of socialisation and experiences as influenced through social and governmental structures that become “expressed in beliefs, symbols and values” (Heywood 2007:206) and “the orientations that people have to the political process” (Almond & Verba 1963:498). Political culture is thus context dependable (Almond 2000:14) and demands the inclusion “of the indigenous cultural values” (Dexter, James & Chidester 2003:326).

Given that political culture consists of “cognitive-level attitudes and expectations” (Almond 2000:17), it therefore serves as an indicator for understanding human behaviour and, more significantly, explicating the types of differences and similarities that exist between people (Smith, Owens & Baylis 2008:42; Mahler 2013:16). According to Field (2003:8), there has been an increased focus in political science on studying people’s attitudes in order to understand “individual behaviour and experience”.

However, Elkins and Simeon (2000:31) note that there are several limitations when it comes to measuring political culture, as it is “an abstract concept, not a concrete thing” that can be observed directly. While individuals participate in a culture, as a collective attribute of society, “we do not describe culture by simply aggregating all the individuals”, but rather it “must be inferred from other clues” such as people’s attitudes. Almond (2000:17) notes that although most attitudinal data “is fluid and plastic”, in contrast to primordial attachments and basic political beliefs, which are more “persistent and stable components”.

Political culture cannot directly determine government performance and structure, but it can affect and “even constrain it” for the “causal arrows between culture and structure and performance go both ways” (Almond 2000:10). Consequently, political culture has been regarded as “significant in the process of political development”, particularly for dealing with issues such as social integration (Mahler 2013:17), which separates “well-governed communities from poorly governed ones” (Almond & Verba 1963:498). According to Hague and Harrop (2010:124), the most ‘successful’ societies have had a positive political culture and are generally regarded as socially cohesive, characterised by trust that enables cooperation (Putnam 1993:171; Portes 1998:20).

Likewise, Almond and Verba (1963:498) in their publication *The Civic Culture* are convinced that effective democratic governments depend on “civic culture” or a “set of attitudes concerning confidence in other people”. The authors also note that the likelihood of engaging in cooperative activity tends to be “rooted at least partially in a set of values that stress cooperative behaviour among individuals” (1963:284). According to Putnam (1993:185), civic virtue is underscored by social capital and “is the key to making democracy work”. Putnam notes that:

Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Virtuous circles results in social equilibria with high levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement and collective well-being. These traits define the civic community. (1993:177)

Given the prevalence of diversity and the continued remnants of deep divisions within a society, for democracy to take root demands that there be at least some presence of trust, as this forms the



basic foundation for cooperation (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:193; Daly & Sarkin 2007:19). According to Axelrod (1984:191), it is by understanding the process of cooperation, and by implication trust, that “we can use our foresight to speed up the evolution of cooperation”. In turn, Elkins and Simeon (2000:34) note that if political culture is to be a useful concept, “culture needs to be much more clearly specified and so must the dependent variables it is designed to explain”. Consequently, in this study the notion of political culture will be based on the dependent variable, social cohesion, understood in terms of social capital and specifically measured in terms of trust.

### 2.2.1 Social Cohesion and Social Capital

In recent history the concept of social cohesion has received more attention from social scientists and particularly politicians as a vital objective towards enabling a functioning state (Berger-Schmitt 2000:28). Social cohesion as a concept was initially advocated by the European Union (EU) so as to signal a move away from “homogenising” towards an “open and multicultural society” (MISTRA 2014:94), which “refers to the degree to which members of the group desire to remain in the group” (Ioannou 2015:3). It signifies the value of inclusion and relationships that foster the coherent functioning of communities (Field 2003:12). Similarly, it can be understood as a multidimensional strategy, supported by values which inform social conduct and promote social cooperation, interdependence and shared solidarity, which jointly define the interaction amongst communities and state institutions (MISTRA 2014:95; Berger-Schmitt 2000:3). As a result, social cohesion is understood and defined in terms of values of collective identities, generating a feeling of belonging to a community, while simultaneously seen as an infinitely continuous cycle to ensure a healthy and functioning democracy (Jenson 2002:143). Yet social cohesion “does not necessarily mean the uncritical acceptance of the rules of a democratic society” (Gouws 2003:63).

For the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001:13) social cohesion denotes the commitment to the values of solidarity and mutual support that “describe outcomes or states of social harmony, which are the result of various factors, including human and social capital”. Additionally, cohesive societies “are effective in realising collective goals” that enable them to protect “individuals and groups at risk of exclusion”. Although there are different perspectives on and approaches to social cohesion (OECD 2001:13), social capital serves as one of the sub-indicators which can be used to describe the development of social cohesion (Berger-Schmitt 2000:5). Thus, social capital is understood as social networks that in turn provide “a basis for social cohesion because they enable people to cooperate with one another – and not just with people they know directly – for mutual advantage” (Field 2003:12).



### *Social Capital*

Social capital is a “broad concept” (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:153) which, according to the key social capital theorist Putnam (1993:176), stems from, amongst other things, voluntary association, for it is a “feature of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks”. Social capital can be seen as the quality of relationships and connections that provide “a source of meaning and order”, and which are embedded in the relations amongst people and serve as the bonds which bind individuals and communities together (Field 2003:3). Social capital is necessary for “building mutual understanding and commitment”, which in turn enable collective action (Stoker 2006:55).<sup>2</sup>

Field (2003:1) notes that in recent years the concept of social capital has enjoyed increased popularity in the social sciences. This is because social capital does not only benefit those who participate directly in the exchange, but also because it “has external effects on the wider community” (Herreros 2004:20). Hence it “is ordinarily a public good” (Putnam 1993:170), which tends to be “under-produced” by society (Woolcock 1998:156). Social capital also serves as the “link between the micro-level of individual experiences and everyday activity and the meso-level of institutions, associations and community” (Field 2003:7). Moreover, social capital is the “information derived from membership in social networks [...] and the obligations of reciprocity derived from trust” (Herreros 2004:44); it thus serves as the “source of network-mediated benefits beyond the immediate family” (Portes 1998:12).

Additionally, Putnam (2000:362) is of the opinion that social capital is “mutually reinforcing” at various levels, because people who are generally more involved in community affairs are more likely to be trusting and trustworthy in comparison to those who are “civically disengaged” (2000:137). Therefore, apart from all the benefits attributed to social relations, social capital can also “sometimes serve to exclude and deny as well as include and enable” (Field 2003:3).

Thus, it is necessary to include Putnam’s (2000:22) distinction within the social capital discourse between bridging or outward (inclusive) and bonding or inward (exclusive) capital. Bonding capital tend to reinforce “identities and homogeneous groups” (Field 2003:32) and mostly denotes relations among “members of families and ethnic groups” or fraternal organisations (OECD 2001:42). In contrast, bridging social capital enables people across ethnic or other divisions to connect (Field 2003:32) as exemplified through relations with “distant friends, associates and colleagues” and broad-based social movements (OECD 2001:42).

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<sup>2</sup> See also Coleman 1988:100, 118; Herreros 2004:6; Berger-Schmitt 2000:6; Moody & White 2003:105; Portes 1998:19; Keefer & Knack 2003:2, 29; MISTRA 2014:98.

Both bonding and bridging capital each has its own benefits: bonding capital “is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (Putnam 2000:22), whereas bridging capital enables “linkage to external assets and for information diffusion” (Putnam 2000:22) and can “generate broader identities and reciprocity” (Field 2003:33). As a result, bridging capital is particularly sought after in divided societies (Cox 2009:197).

Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain functions that in its absence would not be possible (Coleman 1988:98). Based on cross-country studies, it is believed that “social capital is likely to have positive economic, social and personal benefits” (OECD 2001:61), hence the imperative exists to “maximise cohesiveness and minimise the radius of distrust” (Fukuyama 2001:15). However, according to Fukuyama (2001:12), there is lack of consensus on how to measure social capital; nevertheless, most measurements of social capital “centre around trust and levels of engagement or interaction in social or group activities” (OECD 2001:43) Herreros (2004:44) notes that the “positive externalities associated with social capital are largely linked to the presence of social trust”. Given the importance of trust, this study focuses on social capital in terms of both social and political trust.

### 2.2.2 Trust as Social Capital

Trust is a “complex and varied phenomenon” (Field 2003:64) and it is consequently regarded as a multi-level concept (Levi & Stoker 2000:475, 467) and used interchangeably with faith and confidence (Barber 1983:1). As it is relational or inheres in the relationship between entities (Portes 1998:7; Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:153), trust is the “least transferable dimension of social capital” (Field 2003:137). Trust can be embedded in various social groups ranging from families to nations and becomes “transmitted through cultural mechanisms like religion, tradition, or historical habit” (Fukuyama 1995:26).

Additionally, trust is formed when separate entities hold certain favourable perceptions of each other and all parties involved are able to ensure that the exchange would be in accordance with the expected outcome (Blind 2006:3; Hardin 1992:153). Most definitions of trust “imply expectations of some kind” (Barber 1983:7) as well the “fiduciary obligation and responsibility” on behalf of the trustee “to honour that trust” (Herreros 2004:10). It can therefore be stated that “trust is reflected in the expectation about the other individual’s trustworthiness” (2004:8).

Trust can be regarded as the necessary “lubricant” (Field 2003:63) that enables cooperation, for “the greater the level of trust within a community, the greater the likelihood of cooperation” (Putnam 1993:171). Hence, trust serves as one of the most important underpinnings of all human and institutional interaction (Blind 2006:3).

The empirical interest in understanding trust is not only derived from the fact that there is generally a declining trend in trust, “reducing the capacity of the political system to achieve shared goals” (Hague & Harrop 2010:124), but also because trust is regarded as an essential ingredient to enable a ‘good’ society (Levi & Stoker 2000:475). Barber (1983:19, 21) notes that trust enables social ordering and social control, but also serves to maintain shared values.

Conceptually defined, trust refers to an “attitude that enables us to cope with risk in a certain way” (Lahno 2001:171). Levi and Stoker (2000:467) note that trust is mostly conditional and “given to specific individuals or institutions over specific domains”, for trust is dependent on the cooperation of everyone else; hence if there is reason to suspect that others will not cooperate, opting also not to cooperate “may be rational” (Rothstein 2005:12). Seeing as people either gain or lose from trust (Hardin 1992:155), Coleman (1988:101) warns that “misplaced trust entails large loss, while forgone trust entails only a small loss”. However, Hardin (1992:154) notes that “forgone trust entails enormous losses if it blocks establishing a longer-term relationship”. Thus when analysed in divided countries, forgone trust could inhibit the realisation of cohesion and social development.

According to Hay (2011:162), “politics depends ultimately on our capacity to trust one another” and hence when trust is increasingly conditional or fragile (Collier 2013:62), the political framework for co-operation will suffer. Therefore, when trust is absent within a given society, people will only cooperate “under a system of formal rules and regulations, which have to be negotiated, agreed to, litigated, and enforced, sometimes by coercive means” (Fukuyama 1995:28). Consequently, this lack of trust results in an added tax – “a tax that high trust societies do not have to pay”.

Additionally, Walters (2009:190) offers a valuable explanation of interrelatedness and trust in a democracy, explaining it as a “complex web of interlocking relationships built upon reciprocal acts of trust and tolerance”. Thus, understanding trust through this continuum of a “web”, a person can be connected to several other people; some of those links amount to relationships within groups that are in turn related to others, “whether those others be of commensurate size or not” (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:188). However, within the relationships anywhere on the ‘web’, there is the possibility of estrangement or undermining of trust, particularly in terms of real or perceived transgression (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:188).

Trust, which by implication entails social interaction, requires risk taking (Herreros 2004:7), for when people engage in any type of social interaction, it will at some stage be necessary for them to delegate responsibility to others (Earle & Cvetkovich 1995:4). However, “risk-taking will, as far as others are involved, require trust” (Luhmann 2000:105). Trust also denotes vulnerability on behalf of the individual (Lahno 2001:171) and therefore, given the vulnerability associated with

trust, it becomes understandable why it is such an “extraordinarily fragile” and scarce commodity (Dwyer 1999:93).

However, this risk involved in trusting “does not imply, of course, that it is a judgment made blindly or arbitrarily” (Earle & Cvetkovich 1995:108). Yet Hardin (1992:174) makes the important point that trusting behaviour and the related expectation is based on subjective interpretations of “what the individual knows”. Hardin thinks that people make their judgments through “generalisation from past encounters with other people”; therefore the “degree of trust in the new person has been learned” (Hardin 1992:154). However, in order for people to change their behaviour and trust, more prior interactions would have had to pay off, otherwise people would be less inclined to engage in these interactions (Hardin 1992:165).

#### *Trust as Source or Consequence?*

Based on his research of rotating credit associations in Italy, Putnam found in *Making Democracy Work* (1993:168) that “reputation for honesty and reliability is an important asset for any would be participant” and explicates that trust and reciprocity are norms that arise from social networks. However, seeing as trust is not only derived from interpersonal relations but can also be “an attribute of institutions and groups as well as individuals”, trust is “often based on reputation which is mediated through third parties” (Field 2003:63). Levi and Stoker (2000:485) and Stolle (2001:131) agree that trust is regarded a consequence of social capital (Field 2003:32; Herreros 2004:14). However, trust can also emerge as a result of personal experience and from certain institutions that enforce trust rather than from membership of an association only. Given that some relations can function with limited trust, trust is not necessarily the outcome of shared norms and networks (Field 2003:64).

However, Field (2003:65) emphasises that trust is certainly closely related to social capital, yet “it is almost certainly best treated as an independent factor”, or as a “product of social capital, not one of its components”. Similarly, Herreros (2004:7) states that “although the analysis of trust is crucial for the social capital research agenda, trust is not in itself social capital”, for trust does not “exist independently of social relations” (Field 2003:137). Given this account, all attributes associated with social capital “are all epiphenomenal, arising as a result of social capital but not constituting social capital itself” (Fukuyama 2001:7). Although social capital is simultaneously “a cause and an effect” (Portes 1998:19), trust is considered “a result rather than a precondition of cooperation” (Hardin 1992:161). In turn, Herreros (2004:26) argues that “the argument that social capital is created as a by-product is incomplete, since it fails to account for differences in social capital between communities”. Despite these disagreements within the literature, the OECD (2001:41)

identifies trust as both a source and outcome of social capital “as well as being a very close proxy for many of the norms, understandings and values which underpin social co-operation”.

Additionally, Woolcock (1998:156) notes that trust is best seen as a consequence of social capital over time. Robins (2003:246) is of the opinion that the theory of social capital and trust assumes that trust is the *de facto* outcome of rational mutual calculations of interests, but that it fails “to acknowledge the domain of cultural expectations, social pressure and community conceptions of reciprocity and obligation”.

Consequently, various other “non-calculative, habituated practices and social relations that are not reducible to economic or other forms of self-interest” also play a role in determining the extent of trust within a society (Robins 2003:246). Collier (2013:62) also make the point noting that cooperation is boosted by trust which can reasonably be presumed to be reciprocated. For Collier the basis of a cooperative society is characterised by “mutual regard”, for it is reasoned that when people have “some sympathy for each other, it is sensible to presume that a cooperative action will be reciprocated”.

However, if trust is limited to rational objectives as propagated by Hardin (1999:23), then according to Rothstein (2005:62), “trust will be something exceedingly rare, at least outside of the close family and equivalent relationships”. Instead, Rothstein (2005:56) contends that “trust in other people is based upon a fundamental ethical assumption that other people share your fundamental values”. Irrespective of differences in terms religious or political beliefs, moral trust implies “even if others are different, you share some common bonds that make cooperation vital”. Therefore, the decision to trust or distrust reflects “actual experiences rather than different psychic predispositions to distrust” (Putnam 2000:138).

In contrast, when trust is manifested in terms of particularised trust, it is limited to a person’s “own observations and experiences over time of a particular actor’s trustworthiness” (Field 2003:63). This is because, as Earle and Cvetkovich (1995:108) note that “we trust persons we take to be similar to us in salient ways, persons who share our cultural values”. Moreover, the benefit of particularised trust is the fact that “opportunist behaviour will be less frequent than in the case of one-shot relationships” (Herreros 2004:22). However, the problem with particularised trust is that it perpetuates the problem of social stratification (Rothstein 2005:45, 56) as each group would necessarily only look out for their own interests and “places little faith in the good intentions of others” (Field 2003:63). According to Collier (2013:63), “there should also be sufficient people who go the extra mile” in order to enable a trusting society regardless of ‘free riders’ making co-operation “unstable”.

*The Negative Side of Trust*

It should be noted that although social ties “can bring about greater control over wayward behaviour”, it can also serve to limit access and restrict individual freedoms (Portes 1998:15, 21). Fukuyama (2001:9) notes that “solidarity reduces the ability of group members to co-operate with outsiders, and often imposes negative externalities on the latter”. Bonded groups with high levels of internal trust and reciprocity can misuse social capital “for socially destructive and undesirable purposes” (OECD 2001:42), either directly through organised crime or indirectly via “informal norms and networks in underpinning institutional discrimination” (Field 2003:71). Fukuyama explains the cycle of social capital as operating in a ‘radius’ of trust:

The wider the radius of trust reaches beyond a group’s membership, the more benign and positive the externalities; the more the radius of trust is confined to the group’s own members, the greater the probability of negative externalities. (2001:8)

Since social capital interlinks with other less benign factors in society, trust cannot always be the cure for society’s ills, as particularly evinced by the fact that the best connected people do not always use their networks to improve their own position or that of society (Field 2003:81). Barber (1983:21) notes that “trust is only one of the mechanisms by which the functions of social ordering and social control and the expression and maintenance of solidarity are maintained”. Field (2003:38, 40) is of the opinion that “Putnam has developed a romanticised image of community, failing to see that networks can foster both trust and distrust” and ignoring the importance of power and inequalities as influencing the ability of social capital to take root. Consequently, social capital cannot be limited to merely the benefits derived from associations or voluntary activity, but instead credence needs also to be given to other inhibiting structural factors such as inequality, for “the key factor underlying trust is the level of equality in a society” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:47).

Despite these limitations of social capital, according to Rothstein (2005:210), there is a definite link between trust and democracy in that “if we have no trust in the other side, we will not be prepared to listen and consider their arguments either”. Essentially then, trust becomes an important catalyst for enabling cooperation, which is required for a democracy to flourish as it “provides a climate of confidence and an enduring basis for mass support” (Misztal 2001:373).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, trust is fundamental to good governance, for the two are mutually reciprocal: trust breeds good governance, and *vice versa* (Heywood 2007:210; Dexter, James & Chidester 2003:325; Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:163).

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<sup>3</sup> See also Woolcock 1998:4; Dekker & Uslaner 2001:1; Fukuyama 1995:11.

Therefore, given that trust can be misused and is dependent on other external factors such as equality, it therefore becomes critical to create an environment that would enable a more equitable democratic dispensation. Keefer and Knack (2003:11) contend that the more people within a society adhere to norms of cooperative or trustworthy behaviour, “the more likely is the society to have overcome problems of credible commitment in the economic, political and social sphere”. However, regardless of whether trust is seen as a source and/or outcome of social capital, there is agreement within the political culture literature that political and social trust are essential for creating a cohesive society (Ioannou 2015:10), as becomes particularly evident when they are absent.

### *Social and Political Trust*

According to Earle and Cvetkovich (1995:13), as the demand for more research on trust within societies increased, there was a heightened need to distinguish between the various forms of trust and how they influence one another. Almond and Verba (1963:297) contend that “social trust affects political trust and willingness to cooperate with others”. Improved social trust is associated with more political participation (Blind 2006:6, 13).<sup>4</sup> Almond and Verba (1963:285) note that “political trust generally tends to encourage cooperation amongst strangers within a society” with the effect that the “belief in the benignity of one’s fellow citizen is directly related to one’s propensity to join others in political activity”.

Therefore, it can be stated that general trust is translated into politically relevant trust (Almond & Verba 1963:297). This is corroborated by Levi and Stoker (2000:494), who highlighted that “political and social trust are correlated”, for it is believed that social trust amongst people greatly influences whether people have trust in their government.

Blind (2006:13) finds a direct relation between social trust and political trust, and contends that when people are more trusting of their immediate social sphere within their community, “they will extend their trust to their local and national representatives and government, even when the latter do poorly at times”. This trend is also prevalent in societies that were marked by authoritarianism in the past as they tended to be more acquiescent to the state, “even if there is some degree of perceived and/or real corruption” (Blind 2006:13). However, new institutionalists are of the opinion that a trustworthy government generates interpersonal trust, and hence it is not necessarily social trust that results in political trust, but instead “it is the state, and the political trust it embodies, which in turn promote social trust” (Blind 2006:6).

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<sup>4</sup> See also Hague & Harrop 2010:122; Levi & Stoker 2000:493, 501; Berger-Schmitt 2000:28; Woolcock 1998:41.



Fukuyama (1995:29) emphasises the role of the government to promote trust and notes that a “strong community can emerge in the absence of a strong state”. Therefore, although there is a clear link between social trust and political trust, it should be noted that this link is not prevalent in all societies. Putnam (2000:137) contends that “trust in government may be a cause or a consequence of social trust, but is not the same thing as social trust”, arguing that “trust in other people is logically quite different from trust in institutions and political authorities” and hence “empirically, social and political trust may or may not be correlated, but theoretically, they must be kept distinct”. However, according to Misztal (2001:373), “Putnam’s approach overlooks the role of the state in generating trust relations, while Fukuyama’s vision of trust does not provide the foundations for modern democratic interaction”. Moreover, under certain circumstances it has been proven that social distrust might generate increased political participation, which further complicates the causal link between social trust and political trust (Blind 2006:6).

### *Social Trust*

Given the decline of primordial institutions as derived from familial relations, and with that “their replacement by purposively constructed organizations”, people were increasingly required to engage in social relations to enable a modern functioning life (Portes 1998:10). Social trust can be said to be cultural, because “social trust requires social individuals, and social individuals require social trust” (Earle & Cvetkovich 1995:11). Social trust can also be described as “the process by which individuals assign to other persons, groups, agencies, or institutions the responsibility to work on certain tasks” (Earle & Cvetkovich 1995:3). Moreover, “trust and cooperation beyond the family are acquired as part of the functional attitudes that accumulate in a modern prosperous society” (Collier 2013:64).

It is clear that social trust is vital for “stable social relations” and aids in reducing the complexity of social systems (Barber 1983:8). Social trust or horizontal trust denotes the experience of normality in everyday life, “a level of predictability that is dependent upon people sharing a similar interpretative scheme for making sense of and acting in the world” (Rigby 2012:243).

So when social capital is understood in terms of social trust, it entails “the development of interpersonal trust and cooperative experiences between members [and] tends to be generalized to the society as a whole”, enabling “cooperation between people for all sorts of purposes” (Stolle 2001:119). According to Stolle (2001:119), society is in need of more “generalized attitudes of trust” that can go beyond “boundaries of face-to-face interaction and incorporate people not personally known”. This because interpersonal trust serves to establish and contribute to general social trust within society at large (Blind 2006:5). In turn, generalised trust, defined as “trust in



unknown people about whom no information about their trustworthiness is available”, elicits only “conditional cooperation” (Herrerros 2004:23).

Furthermore, generalised trust “may be extended to all individuals and institutions resembling those whom one has direct experience [of]” (Field 2003:63) and refers to the bond between separate groups of people that “go beyond the boundaries of kinship and friendships” (Stolle 2001:119). Generalised trust cuts across economic or social differences and “links” people from different groups (Rothstein 2005:45). However, the denser these horizontal relations are between people, coupled with a larger fraction of the population that participates in the economic and political spheres of a society, the greater the need for social capital or trust to provide a sense of predictability in everyday social relations (Keefer & Knack 2003:15).

‘Thick’ trust denotes trust that is concentrated in particular groups and becomes embedded in “personal relations that are strong, frequent, and nested in wider networks” (Putnam 2000:136). Thick trust also refers to relations between family, friends and limited acquaintances with whom people regularly interact “to know the limits of their trustworthiness” (Hardin 1992:157). Accordingly, people tend to feel more at ease when they are able to predict the behaviour of others who are more similar to themselves. This dynamic is also embodied in “ethnic groupings, and can be used to foster cooperation [...] among dominant groups” (Field 2003:78).

However, Putnam (2000:136) argues that ‘thin’ trust is more beneficial for society, as “it extends the radius of trust beyond the roster of people whom we can know personally” and entails “giving others the benefit of the doubt”. Fukuyama (2001:14) concurs, stating that “strong moral bonds within a group in some cases may actually serve to decrease the degree to which members of that group are able to trust outsiders and work effectively with them”. However, particularly societies that were marked by ethno-political violence where the conflict has destroyed confidence in the social contract, the creation of political agreement requires the restoration of social relations on an interpersonal and inter-group basis (Fischer 2011:416). This requires a “networks of civic engagement that cut across social cleavages [to] nourish wider cooperation” (Putnam 2000:136).

### *Political Trust*

Political trust can be understood as a “central organizing concept” through which activism and other forms of political mobilization become possible (Levi & Stoker 2000:477). Barber (1983:68) notes that “when there is sufficient trust, the political system can work to define values and goals, use power effectively, and forestall abuses of power”. Hay summarises the importance of political trust for enabling co-operation, stating that:

Politics is a social activity, and like most social activities, it works best in situations of co-operation and trust. If we assume that others cannot be trusted, or we assume (as in the precautionary principle) that they must demonstrate themselves trustworthy before we will reciprocate, then we foreclose the very possibility of deliberation, co-operation and the provision of collective goods. In short we disavow politics. (2011:161)

Although Almond and Verba (1963) emphasised the importance of political trust, they did not specify “which kinds and how much will suffice for this social task” (Barber 1983:68). Easton’s (1965:153) book *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* served as the theoretical starting point for the analysis of political trust and clarified the distinction between specific support, as expressed towards public leaders, and diffuse support for the political system or institutions. Political or vertical trust refers to the institutional infrastructure that facilitates levels of security between citizens (Rigby 2012:244; Levi & Stoker 2000:480).

The World Values Survey (WVS) uses confidence in certain institutions and public authorities (WVS 2013:19) in order to determine the extent to which people trust and feel represented by various public institutions (Ioannou 2014:6). Support or trust from citizens can be viewed in terms of long-term trust as bestowed on institutions, or as embodied on a more short-term basis for political leaders (Gouws 2015b). Hardin (1992:157) notes that “trust is still vital in personal relations, but participation in functional systems such as the economy or politics is no longer a matter of personal relations. It requires confidence, not trust”. However, according to Luhmann (2000:104), “the withdrawal of trust is not an immediate and necessary result of lack of confidence”.

According to Hay (2011:9), “the motivational assumptions we project onto political actors and public officials largely determine whether we see politics as a good, a necessarily evil or an innately malevolent force”. Similarly, there is a causal link between trust and political credibility for Keefer and Knack (2003:14), as “government credibility is significantly greater in higher-trust nations”. Consequently, confidence is related to trust, but “the relation between the two is not easy to establish” (Barber 1983:87). Conversely, political cynicism or lack of confidence denotes the pessimism of citizens towards politicians and “a suspicion about their motives that stretches into scorn or disparagement of their actual role” (Stoker 2006:119). For Hay (2011:157) the capacity of politicians to be effective is directly linked to whether citizens feel that they can trust them.

A political system can be regarded as legitimate if citizens bestow their trust on the political system that is governed to benefit all citizens equally (Gouws 2015b). Stoker (2006:83) notes that political legitimacy is not an “all-or-nothing” outcome, but instead demands “consent having been granted,

either by the people as a whole or by their representatives”. Therefore, political disaffection can be considered worrisome if it is directed towards the system or the regime. In summary, it can be stated that trust in government, and at times interchangeable used with political trust, confidence and support, is a judgement made by citizens “that the system is responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny” (Levi & Stoker 2000:498).

Rigby (2012:244) found that what is particularly relevant for the peace-building agenda is democratic structures being equipped with improved capacity at a national level; this might contribute towards building trust and enthusiasm for the reconstruction process at large. This links with the assertion made by Hague and Harrop (2010:124) that a “culture of trust oils the wheels of collective action” and hence societies with higher reserves of trust are in a better position to achieve social objectives such as economic development and poverty reduction (Coleman 1988:101). It is therefore clear that the effectiveness of post-conflict governments, and their capacity to deliver, is mostly derived from the level of trust people have in the post-conflict administration (Ioannou 2015:9; Blind 2006:16).

Therefore, when government structures are seen as credible and inclusive, trust would most likely be bestowed (Blind 2006:4). Political trust can therefore be regarded as a valuable indicator of citizens’ overall feelings regarding a political dispensation. This is because “political trust, as a potent form of social capital, is crucial for enabling citizens to participate in public institutions, in the public interest and for the public good”, for it is argued that there cannot be any “productive relations” between citizens and the government in the absence of social capital and, more specifically, political trust (Dexter, James & Chidester 2003:324).

Furthermore, it is widely believed that a scarcity of social and political trust tends to be indicative of “low scores of democracy” (Blind 2006:7). However, this is not to disregard the danger of too much trust or the danger of total deferral towards state institutions by the citizenry (Monare 2015; Hay 2011:11). Field (2003:65) notes that “mistrust of government may be a healthy aspect of modern democracy”. Similarly, Stoker (2006:131) emphasises that the paradox of political trust lies in the fact “that a little cynicism is healthy, but too much a corrosive force”. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between declining trust that threatens the basic democratic foundations of a state, and constructive scepticism, which is necessary for the development of a healthy democracy (IJR 2014:17; Hay 2011:47).

However, some democratic dispensations have shown that although democratic values still enjoy widespread acceptance and respect in mature democracies (Hay 2011:31), citizens have started to become more critical of the state and the institutions associated with democracy. This has resulted

in the trend whereby political trust tends to decline, but “without threatening the survival of liberal democracy itself” (Hague & Harrop 2010:124).<sup>5</sup>

For Misztal (2001:374) societies that have achieved a balance between political and social trust “are in a position to create conditions for cooperation and healthy democracy”. Thus, it would seem that improvement in trust, and in particular generalised trust, is dependent on enabling a more egalitarian society through “equitable distribution of resources and opportunities”, and that “greater equality and less corruption lead to more [...] generalized trust” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:44).

Given that different settings or relations require different types of trust and is dependent on the nature of the social relation (Levi & Stoker 2000:493), focusing only on social or political trust (2000:501) should be treated with caution, as social cohesion also consists of other and different facets (MISTRA 2014:102). This is because social cohesion is the result of different “qualities and conditions within a society” (Hague & Harrop 2010:122).

Lederach (1997:43) states in his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* that the “top, middle and bottom” aspects of society all impact on the design and implementation of the peace process. A focus on social and political trust collectively enable more in-depth analysis, particularly in terms of ensuring adequate peace research. This is because social and political trust research is inclusive of both the horizontal dimension, between people, and the vertical, how people relate to the political realm (Department of Arts and Culture 2010:ii; Blind 2006:13). Given that enough measures have been developed for measuring social cohesion, particularly in terms of trust, and given the significance of trust, as indicated by the literature consulted, “efforts to assess them [trust] are amply justified” (Keefer & Knack 2003:33).

Govier and Verwoerd (2002:193) emphasise that trust forms the foundation of any relationship, interpersonal or institutional, and it consequently affects what that particular relationship or interaction is capable of achieving. Therefore, particularly in deeply divided societies, “the interplay of social and political trust” is essential for building a more inclusive society (Blind 2006:6). Ioannou (2015:12) claims that successful inter-group interaction or reconciliation requires social and political trust, along with the necessary positive endorsement of the state, for this enables a framework for improved cross-divide interaction. Consequently, in order for conflict transformation to transpire, both social and political trust are crucial forms of social capital that need to be restored (Philpott 2012:58). But it is necessary to study the political culture and in particular social cohesion to determine the quality of relations in terms of trust.

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<sup>5</sup> See also IJR 2014:17; Dalton 2005:133.

### 2.3 Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation

In order to contextualise the issue of reconciliation, it is beneficial to situate it within the broader field of peace studies, which is the sub-field of political science that is concerned with exploring the relevant interventions for conflict transformation (Sandole et al. 2009:267). Interpreting this definition of reconciliation within a framework of peace research and conflict transformation, it can be understood as a value pursued by a society that strives to engender peace in a sustained attempt to mitigate differences which have been a cause for conflict and divisions in the past. In noting that political science primarily entails the study of power and its consequence, Johan Galtung (2010:24), the architect of peace research, states that peace politics is constructed on the basis of soft forms of power. He argues that peace politics is derived from the establishment of “equitable, defensive, peaceful and democratic institutions centred on basic human needs and rights” (2010:24).

Given that politics designates the domain within which divisive issues are dealt with, reconciliation serves as a corresponding process to redesign the relationship between people within a given society so as to foster a better understanding between them and simultaneously equip them to better handle issues that tend to cause division (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:12). Recognising that non-violent coexistence is not viable without adequate efforts beyond the initial containment of violence, this reality necessitates moving from peacekeeping to peacebuilding through reconciliation as a means and a goal to ultimately achieve conflict transformation (Ramsbotham et al. 2012:247). Moreover, reconciliation is most appropriate in cases where traditional mechanisms for justice are either not possible, or simply not feasible, and where there are deep-seated animosities and distrust (Dwyer 1999:82). For the purposes of this study, reconciliation can be thought of as beginning where active and overt conflict resolution ends (Brouneus 2003:53).

Conflict resolution and the ensuing conflict transformation indicate the processes which either generate cooperation and spur inter-dependence through mutual goals, or ignite competition that further generates competitive behaviour and action (Sandole et al. 2009:569). Johan Galtung’s “Hourglass” model describes conflict resolution as operating on a spectrum of responses: starting from the conflict settlement and moving towards conflict transformation, thus moving from normalisation or structural peacebuilding to cultural peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al. 2012:14). Thus, conflict transformation and cultural peacebuilding essentially set out to build commonality through engagement and redefining previously held interests (Sandole et al. 2009:248). This process of moving beyond conflict resolution and conflict management towards conflict transformation is evinced in the level of reconciliation, and stands as the underlying task of structural and cultural peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al. 2012:246). Within the trajectory of

conflict transformation, reconciliation is regarded as the “on-going” or sustained effort to establish peace between previous adversaries through, amongst other things, social contact and moving beyond prejudice so as to eventually enable cooperation (UNDP 2014).

### 2.3.1 Conflict in Multicultural Democratic Political Entities

Conflict within states generally stems from what is initially regarded as irreconcilable differences. This necessitates the accommodation of differences and moving towards a unifying political culture. The subsequent imperative for the conflicting parties is to negotiate and construct a political order which enables an inclusive and legitimate state whereby diverse groups of people are able to co-exist (MISTRA 2014:33). As a starting point, broad agreement is needed for what constitutes the geographical and political legitimacy of a particular society in order for it to move from a state of conflict and division towards a stable unified political entity. Only once the social contract on which the nation-state is based has been endorsed by the people as agents and co-creators of the new inclusive nation can it be stated that the nation has been endorsed and founded by its subjects and long-term peacebuilding in terms of conflict transformation take root (MISTRA 2014:33).

#### *Structural Changes*

The design of political institutions in terms of conflict transformation aims at transcending conflicting identities and strives to promote cooperation through the creation of some form of common political identity so as to enable reconciliation to take root. Additionally, the recognition and acceptance of common political institutions by all citizens are important for conflict mitigation and to enable reconciliation, as in the case of South Africa (Ioannou 2015:5).

Given the significance attributed to the utility of political engineering and in particular institutional designs to alter political outcomes, especially in countries characterised by ethnic divisions, a number of alternative approaches, or ideal institutional designs, are available to manage diversity and would assist the process of conflict transformation. Dividing power is regarded as one of the most pragmatic steps that can be taken within deeply divided societies in order to instil more moderate mechanisms through which limited objectives can be achieved by different groups without threatening the constitutional foundation or derailing the reconciliation agenda (Wolff & Yakinthou 2012:81). This is mostly expressed in institutional designs such as consociationalism, where there is no clear majority within a given society, and where there is a need to function on an elite agreement between the leaders of the different groups on a continued consultative basis.

As an alternative, centripetalism aims to limit the direct institutional imitation of the already prevalent ethnic divisions of a society within the legislatures or other structures of government. In

a bid to enforce mutual accommodation between adversaries, centripetalism strives to promote institutional incentives that are necessary for cross-ethnic cooperative behaviour (Wolff & Yakinthou 2012:58). As an electoral option, Proportional Representation (PR) is generally upheld as a sufficient mechanism for purposes of reform within divided societies to ensure that minorities are also included, such as in the case of South Africa, (Butler 2009:139). However, centripetalists believe that the PR system merely reinforces ethnic divisions instead of enabling structures that would require mutually reciprocal behaviour through increased cooperation (Wolff & Yakinthou 2012:57).

Apart from their implicitly different approaches, the various institutional mechanisms for conflict management do share a common denominator, that is the conviction that all deeply divided nations need to deal directly with the effects of covert and overt differences as caused *inter alia* by ethnic divisions, and hence they all advocate for the need to manage diversity as opposed to omitting it from the subsequent institutional designs adopted (Wolff & Yakinthou 2012:64). Numerous researchers and practitioners of conflict resolution note the vital importance of reconciliation for entrenching and securing the sustainability of peace. Therefore, in cases where all grievances are not sufficiently mitigated by the institutional design adopted, as is the case in South Africa, additional attempts should be made to entrench a new inclusive political culture, particularly in the post-peace agreement phase.

Given the ominous outlook for renewed sources of conflict within most post-conflict settlement dispensations, reconciliation is the necessary remedy and ultimate goal for conflict transformation (Ramsbotham et al. 2012:246). In recent years reconciliation has emerged as an important part of political theory and peace practices, for it has been put forward as a way of “building peaceful relations between ethnic, cultural, and religious communities after periods of conflict and oppression” (Walters 2009:165). This elevated status of reconciliation is further affirmed by the fact that multilateral donors and global actors have come to realise the importance of reconciliation as necessary for affecting conflict transformation and social development (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:17; Fischer 2011:406).

### 2.3.2 Democratisation, Reconciliation and Justice

A global shift towards human-centred principles whereby each individual has rights by virtue of being born has contributed to the discourse on conciliatory policies within countries and in terms of international law (Daly & Sarkin 2007:9). This is because as Daly and Sarkin (2007:12) point out that “reconciliation initiatives are appealing because they can respond to the multifarious needs of each nation as it transitions from one dispensation to another. [...] the appeal of reconciliation



is broad because its promise is virtually infinite” (Daly & Sarkin 2007:12). Underlining this broad motivation for achieving reconciliation is the notion that it is held up as the framework within which democracy can take root.

### *Democratisation*

Democracy is both a set of formal institutions and a set of cultural values, as it requires a society which has opted to be governed as a collective and not as unrelated factions (Gibson 2004b:16). It can therefore be stated that “reconciliation underpins democracy by developing the working relationship necessary for its successful implementation” (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:11). Gibson (2004b:7) states that reconciliation is regarded as a necessary aspect for successful democratisation and *vice versa*; reconciliation should be supported by the recognition of democratic principles (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:21). There is also a clear linkage between reconciliation and other liberal conceptions in terms of legality and principles, along with a “richer” sense of reconciliation as a relationship for enabling inclusivity (Walters 2009:189).

Steyn-Kotze (2012:91) summarises that issues related to political inclusivity within the structure of a democratic process can be traced back to ancient Greek Athenian society. The Athenian democratic system stands as the first example through which the rule of the people had guaranteed political equality and inclusion of the polity in affairs of the state and whereby ‘democracy’ originally came to be understood as the ‘rule of the people’. Hence there is a causal link between democracy and inclusivity. This causality can be attributed to the fact that “democratic construction invariably translates into the politics of inclusion” (Steyn-Kotze 2012:91). Therefore, it can be stated that a democracy is constructed upon a dual foundation: “a set of fair procedures for peacefully handling the issues that divide a society (the political and social structures of governance) and a set of working relationships between the groups involved” (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:10). Reconciliation thus aids in cementing and sustaining such working relations of inclusivity within a society and serves to reinforce the foundation of democracy by cultivating inclusivity into an ethic for engagement (Philpott 2012:5).

Analysing reconciliation from the perspective of establishing a functioning democracy shifts the interpretation of reconciliation to include a forward-looking dimension. Originally reconciliation emerged as an alternative mechanism within the criminal justice discourse, a discourse which is predominantly based on retrospective justifications. In contrast, democracy can be established in the present (for the sake of the future) regardless of what happened in the past. If reconciliation is to be engendered in terms of the values of democracy, “the past recedes while the present and the future predominate” (Daly & Sarkin 2007:19). This emphasises that the durability and sustainability of reconciliation can be improved in the present for the future despite past obstacles.



Gibson (2004b:5) contends that in order for reconciliation to endure, at minimum the behaviour and attitudes of citizens should not be contrary to the principles championed by democracy, but rather citizens ought to be the defenders of, and drive the support for, the main institutions of democratic governance. Democracy cannot endure when certain sections of a society do not have a “modest” level of cooperation (Misztal 2001:373). Regardless of whether reconciliation is assessed in terms of institutional democratisation such as institution building, or through the prism of peace as observed in political culture, when interpreted through the lens of “stable peace” (Feldman 2012:10), reconciliation requires a commitment to work with and not against the newly established structures (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:15).

### *Reconciliation*

Reconciliation can be understood as both a “focus” and a “locus” (Lederach 1997:30). As a focus, or perspective, reconciliation signifies the “relational aspects of conflict” and denotes the processes of building new and better relationships, whereas the locus refers to the conjunctive space where the coming together of fragments that have been separated in the past can be enabled (Lederach 1997:30). Lederach (1997:151) holds that reconciliation should ultimately be seen as entailing a relationship in all spheres of society. Reconciliation interpreted as a relationship implies that it is a reciprocal affair, and consequently “it has a degree of intrinsic moral worth or value about it and involves different states of mind” (Walters 2009:168). When reconciliation is interpreted in terms of a relationship, it is seen as the extent to which parties can move forward on the basis of peace through accepting each other’s integrity (James & Van de Vijver 2000:70). Doxtader offers a summary view of reconciliation noting that:

Between relationships of (mutual) exclusivity, it [reconciliation] attempts to craft a middle ground, a space that does not negate (history’s) violence but which gathers it into a shared opposition. In this turn, from enmity to (civic) friendship, reconciliation entails both movement and exchange, a shifting that crafts the common ground needed to tarry. Thus the most distracting thing about reconciliation is that it is a process. (2004:122)

In summary, reconciliation – as opposed to an end state or outcome – can be seen as describing a process that aims at building relationships (Fischer 2011:415; Rigby 2012:234; Govier & Verwoerd 2002:186). Rigby (2012:235) frames reconciliation in terms of non-lethal co-existence (thin sense of reconciliation) and democratic reciprocity (the thicker ideal of reconciliation), stating that the former is more likely to be realised than the latter, which involves mutual compassion. In addition, reconciliation can be regarded as a mechanism to deal with the past while simultaneously being vested in the future, uniquely being both constructive and transformative as

opposed to being regressive through punitive and retributive means (Daly & Sarkin 2007:13). Reconciliation in the minimalist sense is seen as the end of overt political violence; the start of political tolerance with the implementation of the formal rule of law; a mutual commitment of all parties involved to remain part of the same political community; and being committed to the process of building trust (Verdeja 2014; Gibson 2004:18; Govier & Verwoerd: 195). In turn, the maximalist interpretation of reconciliation entails the renewal of social and personal relations through a process of repentance and forgiveness.

It is also important to make the distinction between reconciliation as an empirical state or a normative value. As an empirical fact, it is possible to declare that previously conflicting parties have been able to reconcile and thrash out their differences. However, as a normative objective, which guides decision-making on an ongoing basis, the term signifies the indefinite pursuit of conciliatory practices, particularly between entities with opposing cultural traditions (Walters 2009:169). Therefore, analysing reconciliation within a normative political theory is predominantly understood to involve symbolic acts of forgiveness in an attempt to advance the reciprocal respect narrative necessary for basic human rights to be engendered and relationships between people to be cultivated (Walters 2009:183).

### *Justice*

According to Philpot (2012:58), there are several different aspects that need to be in place before reconciliation can take root so as to enable a move towards “a condition of right relationships within a political order”. This process involves *inter alia* democracy, human rights, the rule of law and social capital, but also the development of “restorative justices into an ethic for dealing with past injustices” (Philpott 2012:6). The aftermath of conflict requires protecting the peace settlement by limiting the impact of the remaining unresolved grievances through addressing the outstanding issues and demands that “once a top-down political settlement has been reached, a bottom-up process should take place” (Fischer 2011:406). Furthermore, Philpott (2012:5) argues that political injustice is distinctive from other “disasters” in that the perpetrators of the injustice, for purposes of regime survival or ideologically based reasons, deliberately sought to “violate their victims’ human rights” (2012:32).

Along with the concept of transitional justice, the notion of reconciliation has gained increased traction by practitioners engaged in peacebuilding efforts (Daly & Sarkin 2007:5). Transitional justice can be thought of as the judicial attempts to address aspects of human rights abuses that occurred under the previous regime and implemented during the transition from a conflictual past (Boraine 2006:23). Transitional justice mainly entails the processing of “war crimes and massive human rights abuses committed by violent conflict” (Fischer 2011:409) and it redefines citizens’

sense of identity, particularly in relation to one another so as to enable a sense of collective belonging (van der Merwe 2008:300). Transformational justice, on the other hand, denotes “justice that drives and also legitimises the process of transition and transformation [...] implies a vision – a dream of what the country could or should become; a picture of the kind of future destination” (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:151).

By focusing on reconciliation as a relationship, the prospect for retribution is negated and instead the emphasis is on restorative justice, “which focuses on restoring relations between victims and perpetrators and the moral transformation of citizens” (Verdeja 2014). The foundation of a democratic dispensation where human rights are protected and enshrined in the Constitution is the recognition that all have the right to exist; both majorities and minorities are central to a liberal democracy (Steyn-Kotze 2012:92). Villa-Vicencio and du Toit (2007:204) note that “this is not to deny the importance of retributive, reconstructive and restorative initiatives, but to help create conditions for these”.

Reconciliation as a relationship requires moving beyond peace between communities divided by conflict, but also establishing a sense of self-worth or internal peace within those communities. All parties are regarded as having an influence in affecting the relationship and as such conflict-resolution practitioners contend that conflicts are “subjective phenomena” and that all parties in a society need to reconcile (Sandole et al. 2009:266). Gibson (2004b:132) agrees and notes that within the South African context reconciliation should be understood in terms of a continuum of a relationship between those “who were masters and slaves under the old apartheid system, not just those who were victims or perpetrators of gross human rights violations”.

At the same time, the need to re-establish the rule of law after a period of conflict is also essential (Brouneus 2003:28; Hamber & van der Merwe 1998). Thus, one of the ways in which a new regime distinguishes itself from the previous regime and instils a sense of equality is by attempting to ensure that the rule of law reigns supreme (Daly & Sarkin 2007:127). This was illustrated by the TRC process in South Africa, which endeavoured to institute individual culpability so as to confirm and establish the central tenet of the rule of law (James & Van de Vijver 2000:198).

However, although the rule of law is regarded as forming the basis of stability within the nation-state (Daly & Sarkin 2007:127), it could be thus argued that the move towards reconciliation is not compatible with that of justice. This is because particularly during the transitional phase, reconciliation cannot ‘restore’ order because it limits the state’s ability to intervene and could potentially fail to garner respect for the rule of law in the future (2007:14).

Critics are of the opinion that reconciliation mostly amounts to forgoing the principle of the rule of law and therefore instead prefer to either speak of justice or peacebuilding (Daly & Sarkin 2007:134). Yet, contrary to this, Walters (2009:166) finds that some conceptions of reconciliation already form an intrinsic part of what is meant by the rule of law, particularly when interpreted as liberal democracies overcoming past conflict. This suggests that concerns that reconciliation necessarily conflicts with the objective of the rule of law is the exception and not the norm, as Walters argues “the politics of reconciliation is a jurisprudence of reconciliation” (2009:166).

Fullard and Rousseau (2003:80) express a related concern and note that “truth commission-type mechanisms cannot simply be concerned with issues of justice, but are intricately involved in and reflective of [a] broader process of nation building”. Given that the more all-encompassing ideal of reconciliation requires mutual acknowledgment and forgiveness of past suffering, it was reasoned that restorative justice, through “forgiving victims and remorseful perpetrators”, would enable a conducive framework for reconciliation to take root (James & Van de Vijver 2000:43).

#### *South Africa’s Transitional Justice Mechanism: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

When a modicum of peace has been achieved, and in order to recognise and act in accordance with these ideals, unity demands a strong commitment by the people towards democratic institutions and procedures (Gibson 2004b:180). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa formed part of a much larger attempt to foster democratic values, institutions and practices (James & Van de Vijver 2000:198; Fullard & Rousseau 2003:81). The TRC was tasked with the mandate to investigate “politically motivated gross human rights violations” (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:156) and construct a collective memory for the new dispensation so as to foster new values, while also portraying what was to be regarded as proper and respectful civil conduct within a democracy (James & Van de Vijver 2000:198).

It should be noted that in order to reframe a new collective future or “co-existence”, sufficient consideration must be given to the causes of conflict and division in the past to achieve the goal of reconciliation (Rigby 2012:235). However, in South Africa the ideal of co-existence was moulded and promoted in the rhetoric and the principle of *ubuntu*, denoting mutual interconnectedness where the individual is dependent on the whole and held as the “very essence of being human” (Tutu 1999:34).<sup>6</sup> According to du Toit & Doxtader (2010:166), the principle of *ubuntu* was a more realistic objective for reconciliation as it is essential for South Africans at the very least to co-exist.

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<sup>6</sup> See also Rigby 2012:235; James & Van de Vijver 2000:200; MISTRA 2014:93.

Furthermore, depending on the level of reconciliation desired, different degrees of reconciliation with the past are needed (Rigby 2012:237). In order to achieve more in-depth forms of co-existence, a greater degree of reconciliation with past losses is needed, particularly with regard to letting go of the need for retaliation for past injustices. Redvers (2015) highlights that the “development of a country is also the capacity of its people to confront their taboos, their mistakes, their weaknesses, even if that brings bitterness and opens wounds thought to be healed”.

Distinctively, however, the TRC was utilised as an alternative mechanism to mere prosecution, but instead endeavoured to forestall a post-peace settlement culture of denial (Fischer 2011:410). Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chairperson of the TRC, noted that “truth commissions offer a third way, a compromise between the Nuremberg trials at the end of World War II or the International Criminal Court and blanket amnesty or national amnesia” (van der Merwe 2008:2). This is because truth commissions are regarded as the institutions most likely to promote reconciliation, as they are also designed for that specific purpose (Daly & Sarkin 2007:33). Consequently, the TRC was mandated to establish the truth regarding past atrocities in a bid to achieve a sense of legal justice, while remaining explicitly cognisant of the fact that “full justice is not always possible in a society in transition” (Brouneus 2003:30).

Given the prevalent tendency of denial often present in a post-conflict settlement, seeking the truth might increase the viability of trust and potentially not only enable coexistence, but might even in the long term effect cooperation (van der Merwe 2008:45). Daly and Sarkin (2007:134) caution that a country in transition needs to be extremely mindful of the purpose of revisiting the past and they warn that the objectives must be made explicitly clear. Nonetheless, the value of seeking the ‘truth’ assists in mitigating the continued ambiguity of past wrongs and also limits the simplistic dichotomy of ‘right and wrong’ interpretations of the past. Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd (2000:152) note that “in these moments of truth the past and present are seen in a completely different light”.

Brouneus (2003:36) notes that at the very least a truth commission limits the possibility of public denial of past actions and sacrifices, but disagree that truth can lead to justice or even reconciliation. James & Van de Vijver (2000:200) states that, if nothing else, the TRC implicitly provided South Africa with “the memories of the unjust and the values of the just”. Yet some scholars draw a direct causal link between the act of truth finding and the promotion of reconciliation (van der Merwe 2008:15). Gibson (2004a:131) notes that the “truth-finding process contributed to at least some forms of reconciliation among some groups. Perhaps just as important, there is no evidence whatsoever that the ‘truth’ proclaimed by the South African TRC damaged reconciliation, as so many feared”.

The TRC process in South Africa invoked a process of restorative justice, which was based on the needs of victims and perpetrators forgoing punishment in favour of reconciliation. This was based on the assumption and rationale that “revealing is healing” and subsequently held as an alternative to continued suffering. However, according to Rigby (2012:235), this was an unrealistic and unrealisable ideal for reconciliation. Other critics of reconciliation tended to falsely equate the notion as being merely dependent on forgiveness (Dwyer 1999:84; Gibson 2004b:132) Brouneus (2003:14, 19) argues that the TRC conceptualised the notion of reconciliation incorrectly, with the consequence that it became popularly equated with forgiveness and noting that while forgiveness might occur, it should not be the major aim of conflict transformation.

Dwyer (1999:96) emphasises that the “coherent incorporation of an unpleasant fact, or new belief about an enemy, into the story of one’s life might involve the issuance of an apology and an offer of forgiveness. But it need not” (Dwyer 1999:96). Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd (2000:209) concur, noting that “forgiveness involves more. It is a coveted ideal to be gently pursued. It cannot be imposed”. Therefore, the danger exists that unless reconciliation is simultaneously paired with the acknowledgment of the past, *inter alia* acceptance of responsibility or justice, the truth risks being reduced to mere rhetoric without substance, making forgiveness improbable (Boraine 2006:22).

### 2.3.3 Identifying Reconciliation and its Indicators

Reconciliation is an extremely convoluted socio-political concept to investigate, particularly given its “heterogeneity” and the difficulties involved in analysing the possibilities for its application (Dwyer 1999:85).<sup>7</sup> Hamber and van der Merwe (1998) poignantly note that “very seldom is anyone in South Africa talking about the same thing when they refer to reconciliation”, which adds to the difficulty of assessing the outcome. Similarly, semantics plays an important part in attempts at reconciliation. This is because the language used inherently allows for varying interpretations of what reconciliation encompasses and raises different expectations. Dwyer (1999:82) notes that until reconciliation has been defined and what it entails delineated, we cannot know whether it is the right call of action in terms of the agenda for conflict transformation.

Given this predicament, within the South African context Hamber and van der Merwe (1998) identified five broad interpretations of reconciliation, which were employed in varying degrees during the TRC process. One of the central interpretations of reconciliation is the notion of non-racialism “dissolving the racial identities arising from the policies of the past” and attempting to move society toward “a harmoniously integrated social setting”. Alternatively, the inter-communal

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<sup>7</sup> See also Gouws 2003:42; Gibson, 2004b:131.



interpretation is derived from the fact that “divisions of the past are fundamentally a consequence of the fact that South Africa is made up of separate communities with different cultures and histories”. Finally, the religious understanding of reconciliation places the emphasis on “honesty and forgiveness” and the “conscience of individuals and society through moral reflection”.

The community-building approach places the emphasis on individual relationships and regards the lack of interdependent relations between communities as the most destructive legacy of the past. This implies that “reconciliation in this context requires the clearing up of mistrust between previously conflicting parties and rebuilding personal bonds at the local level” (Hamber & van der Merwe 1998). Lastly, the human rights interpretation of reconciliation emphasises the regulation of social interaction through the implementation of the rule of law to prevent future violations of rights by condemning inappropriate behaviour through “institutional and social safeguards”.

### *Sustained Reconciliation*

Irrespective of the different interpretations of the idea of reconciliation, achieving sustainable peace ultimately requires that the ethos of conflict needs to be transformed into an ethos of peace (Brouneus 2003:50). This objective primarily involves altering destructive patterns of behaviour and enabling a framework for “constructive relationships in society” (Brouneus 2003:51). Reconciling the interpersonal relations between citizens, within the normative understanding of reconciliation, is a continuous process and “not a singular event marking success” (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:186). However, the need for sustained effort towards achieving reconciliation “lingers as an unfilled need [...] towards the achievements not yet realised” (du Toit & Doxtader 2010:168). As former President Thabo Mbeki noted, enabling a reconciled nation will “require a conscious and sustained effort” (2010:6).

Rigby (2012:243) cautions that those societies that want to launch a process of sustainable peace faces the hard work of eroding the sources of negative emotions that have generated the past conflict and constructing a different narrative to be permeated by positive attitudes such as trust. The author goes on to note that as long as negative emotions continue to inform the present and future, people “cannot develop the trust necessary for social reconstruction and co-existence” (Rigby 2012:243). Hence, in attempting to study the development of reconciliation, it should be assessed in terms of the altering of relations between people, which fundamentally necessitates changing attitudes (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:185).

Reconciliation in deeply divided societies is therefore regarded as a prerequisite for national prosperity and cooperation, and understood as a process of building and constructing relationships (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:185; Lederach 1997:151). According to Galtung (2010:25), the emphasis on reconciling relations after peace has been attained is in line with many other scholars’

interpretation that reconciliation is a necessity for enabling conflict transformation and long-term peace. Sustaining this process requires a process of reconciliation consisting of a psychological change of attitude and shift in perspective (Dwyer 1999:83). In fact, “the reduction of prejudice may subsequently prove vital to longer-term stability and acceptance of diversity” (Tropp, Durrheim, Tredoux & Dixon 2010:80). Thus, two indicators of the level of reconciliation – prejudice and social distance – will be discussed next.

### *Prejudice*

Oskamp (2000:1) notes that inter-group prejudice is one of the most investigated aspects of the social sciences. Earle and Cvetkovich (1995:105) point out that “each of us is constituted by cultures that are shaped by groups of similar others. Our cultures identify the values we use to make judgements, with the values varying across cultures”. However, Gibson and Claassen (2010:258) found that in-group identities, or the degree to which people identify with the in-group, are less important when determining the state of inter-racial prejudice.

Allport (1954:264) found that people “are sensitized to perceive signs that will confirm our stereotypes”. Inter-racial ignorance or negative sentiments regarding the out-group, which is perceived as being hostile to the in-group, lead to the perception that the out-group is alien *vis-à-vis* the in-group and hence could further foster a sense of indifference and social divisions. Elkins and Simeon outlines the problem of inter-group ignorance:

Each person assumes that everyone else shares the same belief; or an assumption is so basic to people’s outlook that it is literally impossible for them to conceive how it could be different. One would become conscious of such assumptions only when they are challenged; given the homogeneity of the primary groups in which most people participate, such challenges are infrequent. (2000:31)

Given the continuous need to address prejudice, the research on prejudice reduction has had several focal points over the years, predominantly devoting attention to reactions between advantaged and disadvantage groups, while also working on the “antipathy in those reactions” which spawns discriminatory attitudes and behaviour (Tropp, Durrheim, Tredoux & Dixon 2010:76, 79). Ultimately it would seem that the aim of the research on prejudice reduction is to “nurture positive emotional responses such as empathy and trust, and to diminish the potential for inter-group conflict”.

Hewstone and Brown (1986:10) note that ignorance about the so-called ‘other’ as cause of prejudice has been intensively explored as have efforts in terms of propaganda to expand “knowledge and understanding of differences” (1986:11). However, Hewstone and Brown



(1986:11) contend that “ample evidence shows that intergroup discrimination and hostility are often caused by factors other than mere lack of knowledge or inaccurate perceptions”. Therefore, merely categorising people into different groups could also enable some form of discrimination, since “individuals perceive racial identities and act on them in both exclusionary and inclusionary ways” (Dobratz, Waldner & Buzzell 2011:176). Thus, there is unequivocal consensus amongst scholars about the adverse effects of stereotypes (Ioannou 2015:17) and hence the need for changing various forms of prejudice, which is generally accepted as a precondition for reconciliation (2015:18).

Various questionnaires have been developed to track changes in social prejudice. This applies specifically to attitudes to inter-racial marriage or racial preference of potential neighbours, which are regarded as a “reliable ‘x-ray’ of the heart” to indicate the degree of inter-racial prejudice (Golebiowska 2007:283). Nevertheless, it should be noted that using inter-racial marriage as a variable could be considered problematic as it relates to cultural values. However, despite this limitation Golebiowska (2007:283) is of the opinion that the value of measures related to attitudes of a more personal nature, such as people’s opinion on inter-racial marriage, is the fact that it “may be less vulnerable to social desirability effects” thus negating a scenario where a respondent would give what is expected as a politically correct response.

Additionally, Golebiowska (2007:268) notes that people’s prejudice against inter-racial marriages can be used as a barometer as to whether inter-racial prejudice is declining or not and, for example, establish “whether whites and blacks regard one another as equals” (2007:281). It appears that those groups “who have more benevolent views of inter-racial marriage” are less likely to endorse negative stereotypes towards the perceived opposing race group (Golebiowska 2007:281). However, given that stereotypes also serve an “explicit psychological and social function”, the purpose for inter-group contact should rather be aimed at “increas[ing] the complexity of outgroup perceptions” in order to challenge prejudices instead of completely removing all forms of prejudice within a society (Hewstone & Brown 1986:30).

### *Social Distance*

Social distance measurements indicate what kind of relationships exists between groups and therefore studying the prevalence of inter-racial interaction is considered a valuable tool to study the status of reconciliation as it serves as a “proximal predictor of peaceful coexistence” (Ioannou 2015:29). Consequently, the more an individual tends to steer away from what is regarded as the out-group or ‘other’, the more this particular individual will remain uninformed about the out-group and its culture and would hence be more likely to be prejudiced against the out-group. Dwyer (1999:96) proclaims that the nucleus of reconciliation stems from reducing tensions in people’s

personal narratives and providing “strategies of narrative revision”. Moreover, changing people’s prejudice through contact might be the most salient strategy to enable this revision of narratives.

The contact hypothesis states that increased contact between people of different groups would to a certain extent reduce the prejudice that a person feels toward a specific group (Gibson 2015). Pettigrew and Tropp (2000:95) define inter-group contact as “as actual face-to-face interaction between members of clearly distinguishable and defined groups”. It is noted that reconciliation benefits if and when people from different groupings share, even in a minimalist sense, a form of intimacy, particularly when a society have been characterised by racial isolation, for such contact could lead to improvement in the levels of trust observed (Gibson 2004b:18). Numerous other theorists have expanded on the possibility of saliency of contact reducing prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:751; Oskamp 2000:7).

According to Stephan and Stephan (2000:40), some of the most beneficial effects of contact are achieved when feelings regarding threats are modified so that cognitive causes of prejudice such as ignorance can be addressed through “uncertainty reduction” (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:767). Allport (1954:281) in his seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, expressed the view that “prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals”. However, this is not just about the contact itself, for the effects of contact also depend “upon the kind of association that occurs, and upon the kinds of persons who are involved” (Allport 1954:262, 272).

One of the main purposes of inter-group contact is to “individuate out-group members so that some lack of conformity within the out-group is perceived” (Hewstone & Brown 1986:29). Conversely, the contact opportunity enables sharing of information that might be inconsistent with the stereotypes held (Stephan & Stephan 2000:42), and could potentially lead to improved understanding between groups and the acceptance of differences (Gibson 2004b:133). Gibson and Claasen (2010:269) note that “intimate contact has more direct and powerful consequences” for it “offers the possibility of multiple disconfirmations” (Hewstone & Brown 1986:19).

According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2005:1147), “attitudes are defined as evaluative responses to objects or classes of objects” and consequently cognitive and affective dimensions serve as distinctive dimensions for determining attitudes. However, affective or emotional indicators of prejudice typically yield stronger, inverse contact prejudice results as opposed to cognitive indicators such as stereotypes (2005:1145). Moreover, affective ties with out-group members are deemed to promote positive feelings toward the out-group as a whole (2005:1146).

Hewstone and Brown (1986:23) argue that unless inter-group contact is augmented and enhanced through other contributory factors, contact per se will not change inter-group prejudice. This might explain why there has been a continued emphasis on finding mechanisms that would “enhance the tendency for positive contact outcomes to emerge” (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:766). These conditions confirm Allport’s (1954:281) view and the importance of equal status as well as support from authorities to enable the most conducive environment for inter-group contact.

Longitudinal studies have also revealed that optimal contact reduces prejudice over time (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:753; Stein, Post & Rinden 2000:285). This is further substantiated by global indicators of Allport’s optimal conditions that “lead to relatively large effect sizes between contact and prejudice” (Pettigrew & Tropp 2000:110). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006:766) found that “94% of the samples [...] show an inverse relationship between inter-group contact and prejudice” (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:766). However, it is not always necessary for inter-group contact to adhere to Allport’s optimal conditions, as “samples with no claim to these key conditions still show significant relationships between contact and prejudice” (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006:766).

It should be noted that the contact hypothesis is mostly critiqued for not establishing causality between contact and reduced prejudice, for it can be argued that a person who is willing to make contact with a different group already exhibits reduced prejudice for merely wanting to have contact with someone of a different group (Gibson 2015). It is true that extremely prejudiced people tend to avoid contact and “resist the influences of contact” (Allport 1954:279), yet the causal sequence from contact to diminished prejudice is stronger (Pettigrew & Tropp 2000:109; Gibson & Claasen 2010:266).

Contact does not always produce positive results and may sometimes prove to be counterproductive (Lepper et al. 1991:543). Allport (1954:264) notes that by “the law of frequency” all contact with the out-group could also strengthen negative mental associations. Hewstone and Brown (1986:19) are of the opinion that if people do not interact as ‘representatives’ of their group, the chances of getting salient results are lower as the interaction could be attributed to “situational influences” (Hewstone & Brown 1986:20,30).<sup>8</sup> However, new research into inter-group contact reveals that regular positive contact, regardless of the platform or context, lessens inter-group hostilities and in the long term could lead to less social distance between the in- and out-group (Ioannou 2015:30; Stein, Blind 2006:21, Post & Rinden 2000:289).

Given the positive effects of inter-group contact as demonstrated by several meta-analyses, it appears that “inter-group contact can promote reductions in inter-group prejudice” (Pettigrew &

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<sup>8</sup> See also Lepper, Desforges, Lord, Ramsey, Mason, Van Leeuwen & West 1991:543.

Tropp 2006:768). Moreover, the positive effects of inter-group contact can be generalised to the broader group (Pettigrew & Tropp 2005:1145) as it can “simultaneously impact large numbers of people” (Christ 2014:3996). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006:766) elaborate on these positive effects of contact, stating that “not only do attitudes toward the immediate participants usually become more favourable, but so do attitudes toward the entire outgroup, outgroup members in other situations, and even outgroups not involved in the contact”.

The findings of Gibson and Claassen (2010:266) specifically related to contact in South Africa emphasise that Blacks are more racially isolated and even when they do come into contact with White South Africans, the exchange is marked “by lower levels of intimacy”. In summary, it seems that “inter-racial contact has a positive effect on racial attitudes [...] and that in general the three racial minorities [Whites, Coloured and Indians] are more affected by interracial contact than the racial majority [Blacks]” (Gibson & Claassen 2010:269).

Given that societies with a history of racial divisions are beleaguered with the phenomenon of selective remembrance (Fischer 2011:418), certain indicators can help to reveal whether members of society are able to move beyond prejudice towards reconciliation. Racial isolation and less inter-racial contact tend to exacerbate social cleavages and thus limit the possibilities for inter-racial reconciliation (Gibson 2004b:167) and “may reduce the likelihood of future inter-group contact” (Hewstone & Brown 1986:41). In this study changes in social distance and prejudice are regarded as key indicators in terms of measuring reconciliation (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:182).

Daly and Sarkin (2007:34) emphasise the importance of taking into account the unique elements of “each transitional state, [...] so as to alter the approach toward, and not necessarily the conception of, reconciliation”. As noted by Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd (2000:157) we cannot reduce reconciliation, interpreted as a relationship, to merely “inter-personal reconciliation between particular victims and perpetrators”. Consequently, within the South African context, using the prism of *ubuntu*’s “social healing through engagement” all South Africans needs to be reconciled (du Toit & Doxtader 2010:166).

Reconciliation can thus be thought of as beginning where active and overt conflict ends and moving beyond conflict resolution and conflict management towards conflict transformation. This objective can be achieved via the process of sustained reconciliation as measured in terms of inter-racial distance and reduced prejudice with a concerted move towards the ultimate aim of peacebuilding efforts through entrenching the values of cooperation and trust to transcend the conflict-causing identities.

## 2.4 Social Cohesion and Reconciliation both Needed for Conflict Transformation

The fundamental assumption regarding the process of reconciliation revolves around the ability of a society to enable a social framework “in which social integration has taken place” (Gouws 2003:43). However, how to arrive at this objective is mostly left unanswered and widely contested. In turn, there is no consensus in the literature as to whether social cohesion should be advantaged above other social objectives (Jenson 2002:145), as it is in need of “further theorisation” (MISTRA 2014:211). Nevertheless, particularly in societies going through a process of conflict transformation, social cohesion, interpreted in terms of social capital and measured in terms of trust, could offer some valuable insights into the development and trajectory of the process of conflict transformation.

Reconciliation is as important for conflict transformation as it “implies the restoration and sometimes the establishment of [a] hitherto non-existent relationship of trust” (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:208). Furthermore, reconciliation requires new and inclusive attitudes between people, something which is facilitated through building trust (du Toit & Doxtader 2010:165). Hence, trust also serves as a sign of reconciliation (IJR 2014:17; Keefer & Knack 2003:13) and there therefore is a strong relationship between trust or distrust, on the one hand, and whether the causes of division “are reduced or eliminated in a planned and sustained manner”, on the other (MISTRA 2014:95).

According to Haynes (2015), social cohesion is reinforced by bridging capital as expressed in “inter-racial, inter-ethnic, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural integration”. Therefore, social cohesion as based on inter-group trust can be said to be present when “social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large” has transpired. Social cohesion thus signals “the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties” (Berger-Schmitt 2000:28).

Furthermore, social cohesion interpreted in terms social capital enables “efficient cooperation for common purposes” (Rothstein 2005:12) and creates the necessary “prerequisites for cooperation and reciprocity” (Field 2003:70). Woolcock (1998:163) notes that “all forms of exchange are inherently embedded in social relationships”; therefore, in the absence of trust “social arrangements may be impossible to negotiate, much less to sustain” (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:153). But what is vital to the continued endurance of conflict transformation is the role of social cohesion or social capital and specifically trust.

It should also be noted that “the relationships developed through conciliatory efforts do not so much culminate as grow over time” (Doxtader 2004:136). Consequently, reconciliation entails an ongoing effort at establishing and maintaining a working relationship based on trust and it requires

concerted effort to continue working on and maintaining relations across previous fault lines (Govier & Verwoerd 2002:186). Boraine (2006:23) agrees, emphasising that if real coexistence is to be realised, then the building of trust is a valid expectation and requires that “trust and relations need to be (re)built [...] within society at large” (Cox 2009:190). Ultimately, conflict transformation requires the rebuilding of relationships (reconciliation) and the establishment of trust (social cohesion).

According to Gibson (2004b:138), “a reconciled South African is one who respects, understands, and trusts those of other races, and who rejects stereotypes about them”. In summary, it can be stated that this study concurs with Brouneus (2003:16) that conflict transformation, when interpreted as sustained reconciliation, entails the restoration of relationships by primarily changing attitudes and prejudices through, amongst other things, contact (Villa- Vicencio & du Toit 2007:79). This process entails *inter alia* social cohesion or enhancing trust.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter provided the necessary overview of some of the literature and theoretical concepts related to explicating both social cohesion and reconciliation for the purpose of sustained conflict transformation. This objective was achieved by situating social cohesion within the broader framework of political culture, while also emphasising the importance of social capital, specifically in terms of social and political trust for the rebuilding of relations. Subsequently, both social and political trust serve as valuable measurements for studying the level of social cohesion. The background for understanding reconciliation and situating it within the broader framework of political science and conflict transformation were also provided, emphasising the importance of contact for changing attitudes and prejudice, both of which are used as measurements for reconciliation.

Assessing conflict transformation in terms social cohesion and more specifically in terms of trust offers valuable insights into the quality of relationships within a society. In order for reconciliation to be sustained and ultimately enable cooperation, more shared understandings are needed to challenge inter-racial prejudice through reducing the social distance between the various racial groups. Sustained reconciliation is therefore not an isolated act, for it requires trust and sufficient interaction across dividing lines and moving beyond previously held perceptions in order to foster new social relations.

This theoretical framework provides a sound basis to study the development and the trajectory of South Africa’s conflict transformation process through measuring certain aspects related to both social cohesion and reconciliation. The related aspects and specific measurements that were used

to perform this study will be further explicated and operationalised in the methodological section in Chapter Three.



## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Social science research sets out to describe and measure certain social phenomena. However, the process towards the attainment of these investigative goals requires that the research process “be precise and logical [...] flexible and open ended, and be willing to share information widely” (Neuman 2011:14). This necessitates the analysis of data within a clear research structure (Kelly & Maxwell 2009:166).

The research process needs to be explained through a set methodology so as to also allow for external scrutiny (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias 2008:13). Gorard (2013:197) states that “this means a robust approach to research design from the outset, making research conclusions convincing to a sceptical audience”. Consequently, all stages of research involve an element of design that needs to be delineated in terms of the rationale and purpose of the study to be conducted (2013:6).

The focus of this study is the assessment of conflict transformation in South Africa by means of analysing the development of social cohesion and reconciliation. This will be undertaken through a longitudinal research design and utilising secondary analysis of survey data. This chapter provides an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of the research design and methodology employed as well as an overview of the survey datasets, namely the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB). Lastly, social cohesion and reconciliation will be conceptualised and operationalised.

### **3.2 Longitudinal Research Design**

Longitudinal research using secondary survey data aims to study changes within a variable over time (Creswell 2009:146), which Gorard (2003:96) argues is “richer” and “more accurate” compared to a cross-sectional research design. A longitudinal research design is considered valuable for it enables repeated observations in a focused and time-based manner so as to enhance the reliability of the research (Babbie 2013:188). Although there are different types of longitudinal designs including panel<sup>9</sup> or cohort studies,<sup>10</sup> they all refer to the “observation or data collection from the same cases at two or more points in time” (Gorard 2013:114). According to Elliot, Holland and Thomson (2009:229), longitudinal research “is currently gaining ground in the social

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<sup>9</sup> Panel studies follow the same sub-group consecutively for the duration of the study (Babbie 2013:106).

<sup>10</sup> Cohort studies refer to studying “a specific subpopulation or cohort as they change over time; although data may be collected from different members in each set of observations” (Babbie 2013:106).



sciences more generally, and is also becoming valued by policy-makers [...] having offered powerful input into government policy in many societies”.

Using a longitudinal design instead of a cross-sectional design<sup>11</sup> allows the researcher to retrospectively highlight certain trends and offer new insights (Babbie 2013:109). Moreover, White and Arzi (2005:143), posit that “one of the strengths of longitudinal studies is that they provide the time and deliver the mass of data that guide the researcher to a sounder insight than is likely to come from a brief encounter”. A longitudinal design therefore seems most appropriate to fully measure changes (if any) in the attitudes of South Africans.

The type of longitudinal design used in this study is a trend study, which is similar to a time-series design, but “examines changes of a given characteristic within a population over time” (Babbie 2013:106) and “focuses on average group characteristics or behaviour, rather than an individual’s circumstances over time” (Allum & Arber 2011:382). Trend studies in the form of historical analysis allow the researcher to conduct the measurement of specific changes for a given variable such as attitudes (Allum & Arber 2011:384; Elliot, Holland & Thomson 2009:228). Trend studies also enable the researcher to collect accurate data from large representative samples “about the nature and timing of a social phenomenon” (Elliot, Holland & Thomson 2009:242) and also enables the collection of data from different groups of people from the same population for each round, but forgoes the possibility of tracking changes in specific individuals (Gorard 2013:97).

Babbie (2013:481) notes that longitudinal research designs enable different forms of statistical analyses to be performed. Dale, Wathan and Higgins (2009:524) note that “quantitative data sources available for secondary analysis offer enormous potential for research on a wide range of topics”. But in order to ensure the integrity of the study, it is essential that “the type of information gathered each time is identical” (Kumar 2011:111).

Despite the advantages of using this type of research design, longitudinal research projects also have drawbacks as they require “more effort and resources than do short-term ones” (White & Arzi 2005:145). Longitudinal research is also regarded as a more passive form of research and “there are no specific controlled interventions” (Gorard 2013:17).

Moreover, the internal validity of the collected data could be jeopardised as the process necessitates that the same individuals or groups be tested over a given period. Dale, Wathan and Higgins (2009:527, 529) recommend that in cases where data are being compared over successive years, the sampling design and the specific wording of the questionnaires and categorisation be

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<sup>11</sup> Cross-sectional design is based on observations made at one point in time (Babbie 2013:120, 109).

consulted for changes, as this might affect the results observed in secondary analysis of the data. This means that “authors of longitudinal studies have to provide readers with sufficient detail of procedures for them to be able to judge whether the insights are well founded” (White & Arzi 2005:144). All the relevant information related to the data used for the purposes of the research conducted in this study is included in this chapter.

### 3.3 Survey Research

Surveys as a research instrument have been one of the key mechanisms through which the social sciences have been able to obtain data on people’s lived experiences, while quantitative measures have become mostly associated with survey research (Gorard 2003:90). Furthermore, with the improvement in interviewing methods, the data from surveys were increasingly also more reliable with the effect of making survey research more popular (Almond 2000:9). The development of scoring and scaling techniques enabled survey responses to be categorised “in homogeneous dimensions” (2000:9) which enabled the possibility for more statistical analysis and more complex inferences.

Surveys are regarded as “the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly” (Babbie 2013:229). Surveys are a form of data collection by means of standardised questionnaires and can be conducted through various means: interviews, self-administered questionnaires or structured observations (Creswell 2009:146). Elkins and Simeon (2000:31) note that the advantages of interviews or “observing respondents” is the fact that the scope for “fake or [...] self-serving and pragmatic answers” is slimmer; however, this is not the case with self-administered surveys, where respondents are more likely to give “short-run responses to transitory contemporary political phenomena”.

Different types of survey designs enable either descriptive, explanatory or exploratory research through means of quantitative measurements for the purposes of measuring trends, attitudes or opinions of a given population<sup>12</sup> (Babbie 2013:229). Nachmias and Frankfort-Nachmias (2008:233) state that attitudes are valuable measurements for social research as they provide an account of respondents’ “general inclination”. This is because survey data predominantly “focus on the individual-level causes and consequences” (Levi & Stoker 2000:467). However, groups, consisting of individuals, can also serve as units of analysis (Dale, Wathan & Higgins 2009:520) for the purposes of describing collective characteristics such as race and age (Babbie 2013:99).

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<sup>12</sup> The population refers to the “aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications” (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias 2008:163).

The standard method for being able to generalise to a broader social setting demands that surveys be based on representative samples<sup>13</sup> of a population (Ioannou 2014:2). Survey research is conducted through probing a sample of a population, enabling the researcher to make generalisations and descriptive findings and other claims about a specific population (Creswell 2009:145; Babbie 2013:262; Allum & Arber 2011:390).

The design of surveys involves the creation of applicable questions to be included in the questionnaire as this specific process also determines the relevance and success of a survey (Gorard 2003:109). Surveys can include open- or close-ended questions, with the latter being more difficult to design, but easier to analyse. Most surveys also include standard background and demographical questions (Gorard 2003:106). This process is then followed by the selection of a sample to be studied and the subsequent data-collection phase through either interviewing or self-administered questionnaires (Babbie 2013:264).

As a research method, surveys have certain strengths and weaknesses (Babbie 2013:262). Responses to the survey “will vary according to the way the question is phrased and who is asking it” (Fukuyama 2001:15). Similarly, when respondents are offered a set of responses in the format of close-ended responses, the particular format may introduce biases as the respondent is forced to select a response from the prescribed options available (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias 2008:233). Responses should be interpreted as being “approximate indicators” of the survey questions framed at the onset (Babbie 2013:263). However, Putnam (2000:138) notes that survey responses “should be interpreted *prima facie* as accurate accounts of respondent’s social experiences”.

Furthermore, survey research is regarded as weak on validity,<sup>14</sup> but strong on reliability<sup>15</sup>. Despite some factors inhibiting the utilisation of survey data, the World Bank (2011) notes that contemporary researchers are in a favourable position as they have access to “several long-standing surveys [...] to compile indexes from a range of approximate items, such as measures of trust in government”. Thus the availability of prior survey data further enables the possibility to make certain descriptive findings about a particular population sample or new research questions (Babbie 2013:262).

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<sup>13</sup> The sample design should be “as representative as possible of the population from which it is drawn” (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias 2008:167).

<sup>14</sup> Validity is “a measure that accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure” (Babbie 2013:191).

<sup>15</sup> Reliability refers to the “quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomena” (Babbie 2013:188).

### 3.3.1 Secondary Data Analysis

Secondary analysis involves the study of data collected (mostly through surveys) for the purposes of making statistical findings (Babbie 2013:266). Neuman (2011:374) notes that in the “past two decades many more social scientists have conducted secondary analysis as more data have become available”. Instead of subscribing to the “theory testing” model of social research, secondary analysts incorporate existing survey questions and theory to further corroborate research findings (Allum & Arber 2011:390). Significantly, secondary analysis allows for “meta-analysis in which a researcher brings together a body of past research on a particular topic” (Babbie 2013:266).

Secondary analysis enables a study of specific research questions, “while avoiding the enormous expenditure of time and money” necessitated by survey research (Babbie 2013:264). Moreover, it enables the utilisation of primary data, such as national surveys, to study different elements as proxy measures for the purposes of conducting new research questions (Dale, Wathan & Higgins 2009:523, 529; Neuman 2011:374). Babbie (2013:266) emphasises that if the original data had been collected by a reputable institution, conducting secondary research of survey data is of great value and provides additional credibility to the findings made by the secondary researcher. Neuman (2011:337) notes that the issues associated with the unit of analysis and variable attributes are “less of a problem for secondary survey analysis because [the researchers] obtain raw information on each respondent” as most reputable surveys provide all necessary information in technical reports.

According to Kelly and Maxwell (2009:166), the advantage of secondary data analysis is that it allows for statistical methods and quantitative analysis to extract information from primary data. The applicable statistical techniques employed by the researcher will be dependent on the research question under investigation as well as the type of variables used (Allum & Arber 2011:391). However, secondary data analysis also has certain disadvantages such as disagreement regarding the validity of the original data gathered and the suitability of questions posed in the original questionnaire to serve as valid measurements for the purposes of secondary analysis (Neuman 2011:374; Babbie 2013:266).

### 3.3.2 Descriptive Analysis

A central tenet of the social research process is to observe and describe social characteristics in a consecutive manner by means of descriptive observations (Babbie 2013:27, 91). Descriptive analysis is a valuable mechanism to avoid over-generalisation and swift conclusions based on only a few observed items. Moreover, descriptive research provides the researcher with an account of, amongst other things, “behaviour, which often leads to hypotheses” (White & Arzi 2005:139).

According to White and Arzi (2005:143), the outcome of descriptive research is “insights, rather than conclusions”. The main purpose of descriptive analysis is to delineate what is being observed so that general insights can be drawn from the observations made (Babbie 2013:21).

In this study the main rationale for describing the different variables is to analyse and track the development of social cohesion and reconciliation, so as to gain insights into conflict transformation in South Africa. Moreover, this study is predominantly based on inductive reasoning and adopts a more reflective approach (Hay 2011:153) as it “moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events” (Babbie 2013:21). According to Fox and Bayat (2007:106), induction implies “that the researcher collects the data and then extrapolates from that to achieve insights into human behaviour”. Therefore, when approached from an inductive point of view, theory is the outcome of the research (Bryman & Bell 2011:13).

### 3.3.3 Similar Studies: The SCORE index

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index and its framework was developed as a tool to measure two indicators of peace: reconciliation and social cohesion (Ioannou 2015:2). The index, based in Cyprus, was created in 2013 under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SEED) and the Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT). Up until 2014 the SCORE index was conducted only in Cyprus, Bosnia and Nepal (Ioannou 2014:5). The SCORE index measures social cohesion, in terms of “the quality of coexistence between individuals within their own group and the institutions that surround them”, and reconciliation, through the on-going effort to establish peace between conflicting groups (UNDP 2014). As the index works with the hypothesis that social cohesion affects and predicts reconciliation, it is therefore understood that improved social cohesion will lead to a greater degree of reconciliation (UNDP 2014).<sup>16</sup>

Given that both social cohesion and reconciliation represent multifaceted and abstract constructs, the SCORE methodology analyses social cohesion and reconciliation in terms of multi-component constructs. These constructs in turn consist of various other sub-components that are of a lesser degree of complexity to track (Ioannou 2014:2). These sub-components are then directly observed through various indicators or attitudes and measured through questionnaires (Ioannou 2014:3). This process is made possible as attitudes can be described by their “content (what the attitude is about), their direction (positive, neutral etc.) and their intensity” (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias

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<sup>16</sup> The study conducted in this thesis uses measures and not hypotheses.

2008:233). These indicators measure trust in institutions for social cohesion and the level of social distance between groups for the purposes of measuring reconciliation (Ioannou 2014:3); they include people's opinions on whether they would be in favour of having certain types of relations with an opposing group such as close relatives by marriage, friends, neighbours and as co-workers (Ioannou 2014:7).

Social capital or trust within a society is severely affected by inter-group anxiety and stereotypes as people with higher inter-group anxiety avoid having contact with members of other groups and hence are more likely to retain stereotypes of the opposing group (Ioannou 2015:20). Conversely, the quantity and intensity of horizontal interactions or contact among individuals in a community would facilitate the emergence of a decrease in inter-group anxiety, reducing stereotypes and giving rise to reconciliation and more desirable norms such as trust.

The SCORE index underpins the need for studying variables related to both social cohesion and reconciliation in order to gather more insights regarding conflict transformation. However, it should be noted that this study will not attempt to duplicate the SCORE index, but will draw on aspects of the SCORE index while offering a unique focus on South Africa and limited to the availability of indicators.

### **3.4 Description of Datasets: The South African Reconciliation Barometer**

Following the conclusion of the TRC, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) was launched in 2000 with the vision of contributing towards the task of national healing (IJR 2010a). The SARB, started from what were initially focus group discussions on reconciliation in 2001, spearheaded by the IJR. In 2003 the IJR started to measure public perceptions of reconciliation through an annual<sup>17</sup> national survey using questionnaires including approximately 100 survey items (IJR 2014:12). SARB is currently the only dedicated social survey on reconciliation in South Africa (IJR 2010b) while also being known as “the world's largest longitudinal data set on reconciliation” (Davis 2013). Ipsos<sup>18</sup> was commissioned to conduct the field work for the questionnaire on behalf of the IJR.

The rationale for these surveys is to probe the public's perceptions of reconciliation by, amongst other things, measuring citizens' confidence in institutions and to gain a sense of inter-racial distance and perceptions (Ipsos 2008:6). Each year on 16 December, the Day of Reconciliation, the results of the SARB survey data are released to provide an “overview of national public opinion

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<sup>17</sup> In 2003 and 2004 the survey was conducted on a 6-monthly basis. As of 2005 it has been conducted on an annual basis only (IJR 2014:13).

<sup>18</sup> Ipsos is an independent global marketing research group with a subsidiary based in South Africa (Ipsos 2013a).

in relation to the social, economic and political indicators” (IJR 2014:12).<sup>19</sup> The SARB data are of specific relevance for this study as the SARB gathers data on social and political trust (social cohesion) as well as measuring changes in social distance and prejudice (reconciliation) between South Africa’s different racial groups over time (Ipsos 2003:2; Ipsos 2008:6).

#### 3.4.1 The SARB Survey

The SARB survey is conducted through face-to-face interviews in the homes of respondents by means of a Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) (Ipsos 2013b:11). Interviews are conducted in six languages based on the preference of respondents: English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa and Tswana (Ipsos 2015). The participation in each survey was voluntary and no incentives were offered to the respondents (IJR 2014:12). To date, 13 rounds of survey data have been conducted by the IJR (IJR 2014:12).

#### 3.4.2 Sampling Methodology of the SARB

The standard sample size (N) of a national syndicate survey is 3 500 South Africans, 15 or 16 years and older, and comprised of both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. The sample used is weighted to reflect the race,<sup>20</sup> age,<sup>21</sup> gender,<sup>22</sup> province and community sizes of South Africa. A probability sample or random sample ensures that each person in the South African adult population has an equal chance of being selected for the interview (IJR 2014:12). The samples in the SARB survey are area-stratified probability samples of all adults living in residential<sup>23</sup> homes in South Africa (Ipsos 2013b:12). As a nationally representative sample, the findings gathered can be generalised to the South African population (Ipsos 2003:2).

#### 3.4.3 Datasets

The following table provides an overview of the datasets used in this study. All information is based on the Technical Reports for each round. Survey Round 2 and 3 were omitted because in 2003 and 2004 the survey was conducted on a 6-monthly basis, but as of 2005 it was conducted on an annual basis (IJR 2014:13).

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<sup>19</sup> No survey data were released for 2014; however, this was substituted with a reflective 10-year report (IJR 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Classified in South Africa as: Black, White, Coloured and Indian.

<sup>21</sup> According to the Technical Report of 2003, the age group is set at 16 and above, whereas in the Technical Reports of 2008, 2011 and 2013 it is set at 15 years and older.

<sup>22</sup> With an equal gender split (Ipsos 2008:9).

<sup>23</sup> Informal settlements are also included in the sampling frame; however, domestic workers, hostel dwellers and persons younger than 15 years of age are excluded (Ipsos 2013b:12).



**Table 3.1. Summary Information for Each Round Included in the Study<sup>24</sup>**

| Survey Round | Year | Date of Field Work | Number of Respondents (N) | Minimum Age | Margin of Error % |
|--------------|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1            | 2003 | 07/04 - 30/04      | 3498                      | 16          | 2.3               |
| 4            | 2004 | 26/10 - 23/11      | 3499                      | 16          | 2.3               |
| 5            | 2005 | 20/04 - 25/05      | 3500                      | 16          | 1.6               |
| 6            | 2006 | 01/04 - 30/04      | 3484                      | 16          | 1.6               |
| 7            | 2007 | 26/03 - 30/04      | 3500                      | 16          | *                 |
| 8            | 2008 | 04/04 - 29/04      | 3340                      | 15          | 1.7               |
| 9            | 2009 | 31/03 - 21/04      | 3487                      | 16          | 1.7               |
| 10           | 2010 | 06/04 - 07/05      | 3553                      | 16          | 1.7               |
| 11           | 2011 | 05/04 - 29/05      | 3544                      | 15          | 1.7               |
| 12           | 2012 | *                  | *                         | *           | *                 |
| 13           | 2013 | 22/04 - 20/05      | 3590                      | 15          | 1.7               |

### 3.5 Conceptualisation and Operationalisation

The findings of a descriptive analysis are intrinsically tied to the definitions used in the conceptualisation and operationalisation phase. This is because using different definitions would “inevitably result in different descriptive conclusions” (Babbie 2013:176). Conceptual definitions, according to Nachmias and Frankfort-Nachmias (2008:27), highlight the unique elements that are included and specify the scope of coverage. Given that conceptual dimensions such as social cohesion and reconciliation are abstract constructs, which cannot be directly measured or observed, indicators are needed to enable the measurement of these abstract constructs through a process of operationalisation (UNDP 2014).

The operationalisation that stems from conceptual definitions enables the meanings of concepts to be made more detailed through specifying the exact measuring procedures through certain indicators that will be used to provide the empirical criteria necessary for scientific study (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias 2008:28). However, any study of social cohesion and reconciliation based on a given set of indicators “can only provide a snapshot of specific approaches and experiences and do not claim to cover the totality of the conceptualisation” (MISTRA 2014:209).

<sup>24</sup> Information for Survey Round 12 (2012) and the margin of error for Survey Round 7 (2007) were unavailable.



Consequently, thorough specification regarding the conceptualisation and operationalisation of social cohesion and reconciliation is required. The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) (2014:101) cautions that deriving suitable indicators for social research requires “drawing on quantitative [data] that [...] must be rigorously grounded in the particulars of South Africa”. Moreover, the operationalisation of social cohesion and reconciliation in this research is dependent on the South African context and specifically based on the purpose of this study to determine the development and trajectory of sustained conflict transformation as based on social cohesion and reconciliation.

### 3.6.1 Social Cohesion<sup>25</sup>

Several research surveys have identified useful proxies for social capital in terms of trust (Levi & Stoker 2000:499; World Bank 2011; Grootaert 2001:22; OECD 2001:41). However, for the purposes of this research social cohesion will be studied by means of social capital as measured through social and political trust (Keefer & Knack 2003:6; Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:154). Thus, in this study social cohesion can be said to be present when citizens view public institutions and their leadership as well as fellow South Africans of different races as trustworthy (IJR 2014:12).

The operationalisation of social cohesion is achieved in this study through the following indicators and specific questions and/or statements in the SARB survey:

#### I. Social Trust

- *People [OTHER RACE GROUP]<sup>26</sup> are untrustworthy.*

#### II. Political Trust

- *The South African Parliament can usually be trusted to make decisions that are right for the country as a whole.*
- *Most of the time I can trust the country's national leaders to do what is right.*

Responses for both social and political trust were categorised as: strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree.

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<sup>25</sup> In order to quantify certain social trends, all questions in the SARB survey are closed-ended, and measured on a five-point Likert scale (IJR 2014:12). Also note that in this study all of the following responses are excluded from the analyses performed: “not applicable”; “don’t know”; “refused” and/or “missing”.

<sup>26</sup> [OTHER RACE GROUP] is replaced with the different race groups of which the respondent is not a member (IJR 2014:16).

### 3.6.2 Reconciliation

Given that the social divisions of the past were based on racial distinctions, the fulcrum of reconciliation in contemporary South Africa hinges on the conciliation and changes in inter-racial relations (Villa-Vicencio & du Toit 2007:79; Gibson 2004:15). Inter-racial reconciliation is defined as “the willingness of people of different races to trust each other, to reject stereotypes about those of other races, and generally to get along with each other” (IJR 2014:11). Reconciliation in this study is conceptualised as citizens of different races holding fewer negative perceptions of one another, having more inter-racial contact and maintaining less social distance (IJR 2014:12).

Reconciliation in this study is operationalised through the following indicators and specific questions and/or statements from the SARB survey:

#### I. Inter-racial Prejudice:

- *Having a close relative marry a [OTHER RACE GROUP]<sup>27</sup> person.*
- *Living in a neighbourhood where half my neighbours are [OTHER RACE GROUP]<sup>28</sup> people.*

Responses for inter-racial prejudice were categorised as follows: strongly disapprove, disapprove, neither disapprove nor approve, approve and strongly approve.

#### II. Inter-racial Contact and Inter-racial Socialising:

- *On a typical day during the week, whether at work or otherwise, how often do you talk [OTHER RACE GROUP]<sup>29</sup>*
- *When socialising in your own home or the homes of friends, how often you do you talk to [OTHER RACE GROUP]<sup>30</sup> people?*

Responses for both inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation were categorised as: never, rarely, sometimes, often and always.

## 3.6 Conclusion

This study has adopted a longitudinal research design to descriptively measure changes in specific indicators related to both social cohesion and reconciliation through a secondary analysis of data

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<sup>27</sup> [OTHER RACE GROUP] is replaced with the different race groups of which the respondent is not a member (IJR 2014:16).

<sup>28</sup> Respondents are first asked which race group they find the most difficult to associate with and then the response is inserted into the [OTHER RACE GROUP] slot (IJR 2014:25).

<sup>29</sup> [OTHER RACE GROUP] is replaced with the different race groups of which the respondent is not a member (IJR 2014:16).

<sup>30</sup> [OTHER RACE GROUP] is replaced with the different race groups of which the respondent is not a member (IJR 2014:16).

from surveys conducted by the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) between 2003-2013.

This chapter outlined the research design and methodologies as well as the significance of using the SARB survey data for this study. A longitudinal research design was selected to study the development of both social cohesion and reconciliation using a descriptive and quantitative method which will be based on the secondary analyses of survey data as compiled by the SARB. This chapter also elaborated on the benefit of survey research and secondary data analysis and identified the sample population.

After the conceptual framework as provided in the literature review had been outlined, social cohesion and reconciliation were further conceptualised and operationalised into specific indicators that will be employed for the purposes of conducting this study. Social cohesion was defined in terms of how trustworthy citizens view public institutions, the country's national leadership and people from different race groups to be. In turn, reconciliation was defined as citizens of different race groups holding fewer negative perceptions of one another, having more inter-racial contact and with less social distance between the different race groups. Chapter Four will elaborate on the contextual information required; it presents the findings of both dimensions studied, while also providing an interpretation of the findings.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the focus is predominantly on presenting and analysing the data from the SARB and the specific variables used for the purpose of the research questions as outlined in Chapter One. This process entails studying the extent of conflict transformation in South Africa through measuring social cohesion and reconciliation.

In order to contextualise the study, an overview of South Africa's transition to democracy will be provided. Furthermore, to explain why race is such an important aspect of this study, this chapter will also emphasise the salience of race as an independent variable.

In order to observe the changes in the population sample, both the dimensions of social cohesion and of reconciliation are measured by separate variables and studied from 2003 to 2013, as based on specific survey questions from the SARB. The first dimension of this study, social cohesion, will be studied in terms indicators linked to both social and political trust. The second dimension of this study, reconciliation, will be measured in terms of indicators related to inter-racial prejudice and inter-racial social distance.

The various indicators and associated descriptions will be followed by an overview of key findings. Finally, the central findings will also be discussed in terms of possible explanations for the levels and trends for social cohesion and reconciliation so as to ultimately provide an assessment of the state of conflict transformation in South Africa.

### **4.2 Contextualising the Study: South Africa**

In order to provide some understanding and appreciation of the prevalent trends in terms of both social cohesion and reconciliation, it is vital first to contextualise the findings within the broader framework of South African society before a discussion of these findings can ensue. The transitional phase made by the country and in particular by the TRC will also be discussed, while also highlighting the factors that either contribute towards or inhibit the realisation of conflict transformation in South Africa. The need to analyse racial relations within the South African context and more specifically as the independent variable for this study will also be emphasised.

#### *The Transition: Divided Past and United Future*

Contemporary South Africa is the outcome of, amongst other things, the struggle by the majority Black South African population against minority White South Africans and settler domination. The starting point for inter-racial divides, with some contemporary remnants still prevalent, was set in motion at the onset of colonialism, but became legally entrenched by the segregationist

policies of apartheid. Moreover the spatial planning on the basis of race of the apartheid era proves to be not easily undone since the advent of democracy in 1994.

In the past South Africa had been through numerous periods of systematic oppression; in an effort to divide and conquer, apartheid policies utilised the authority of the state to manipulate and structurally enforce divisions between and within various South African racial and political groups. This state-sanctioned oppression was further bolstered by the false propaganda on White superiority and Black inferiority, which gave way to the deeply rooted social divisions as well as “psychological scars, and distrust between groups” (van der Merwe 2008:6). As noted by Fukuyama (2001:17), people’s shared experience of history has implications for the formation or lack of social capital.

It should be noted that the apartheid structures regulated all aspects of life in South African society and represented an “experiment in social engineering that sustained complete racial separation and white domination” (Newman & Lannoy 2014:236). The discriminatory institutional character of apartheid enabled a situation through which the White minority were able to monopolise both economic and political power, and exercise authority over the Black majority, Coloureds and “people of Asian and Indian origin” (van der Merwe 2008:5). Additionally, in a bid to ensure that no Black South African could eventually be a citizen of the apartheid state, the government at the time denied citizenship to non-whites through the creation of separate political communities within the so called ‘homelands’ (Steyn-Kotze 2012:94).

In contrast, democratic political citizenship assumes that the nation-state is already in place consisting of a united people who have adopted the values of freedom, equality and the institutional rule of law. However, according to Steyn-Kotze (2012:93) this was not the case in South Africa at the time of the transition. Although, the Restoration and Extension of Citizenship Act (Republic of South Africa 1993) aided in this regard, since it effectively restored citizenship to “every former South African citizen”, the major imperative of the new dispensation was to create a framework conducive to enabling inter-racial conciliation within a new collective nation-state (Steyn-Kotze 2012:94). This also links to what Hewstone and Brown (1986:22) label the pluralist alternative that facilitates the “awareness and tolerance of diversity” and requires “the restoration of trust in order to support relationship-building and healing” (Fischer 2011:422).

The damaging stalemate between the liberation movement and the apartheid regime finally “pressured the two pivotal players in South Africa’s transition” (de Jager 2015:79) to reach a negotiated settlement that ultimately enabled the democratic transition in 1994. The negotiation phase at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), led by the chief negotiators of the African National Congress (ANC), Cyril Ramaphosa, and his counterpart Roelf Meyer,

representing the National Party (NP), which was still in government at the time, finally led to the Interim Constitution of 1993 (Hartley 2014:57). This negotiated Constitution served as the vital bridge between the past and new state by proclaiming that “[t]he pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society” (Doxtader & Salazer 2007:5).

However, the negotiated settlement reached at CODESA was also indicative of how the new government could go about dealing with grievances of the past in order to construct a new united future. The interim Constitution and the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 granted amnesty for all those who committed acts of violence associated with political objectives under apartheid, specifically between the period March 1960 and December 1993 (Hartley 2014:58; Doxtader & Salazer 2007:13). More importantly, this negotiation phase was a major contributing factor towards a legitimate transition and democratic dispensation in South Africa as it made most key stakeholders feel that they could trust the government to represent and protect their interest in the new dispensation (Ioannou 2015:13).

In 1994 the last official *de jure* racial order was abolished and a new unified national state was established (MISTRA 2014:42; 215), moving towards a majoritarian dispensation that is today based on the principle of sovereign rule by all its people, recognised as equal citizens regardless of race. Former Constitutional Judge Albie Sachs reiterates the importance of equal citizenship for restoring dignity as this enables people to “connect up with others” and create a common shared identity (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:207). Hartley summarises the overarching changes during the transitional phase:

The massive transitional task of ending political violence, reorganising the homelands and the apartheid administration into a single state with nine provinces, and giving birth to a new constitutional order were successfully undertaken, building a nation that has, with disquieting exceptions, cohered. (2014:255)

Constructing a maintainable united identity demands a collective vision for the future, while also simultaneously garnering and maintaining due respect for the uniqueness of each sub-group within the state (Ioannou 2015:5). This is a process that is best facilitated when reconciliation has firmly taken root and division have been bridged (MISTRA 2014:32), or what Lederach (1997:35) called the ‘reframing’ of a conflict. This objective was given credence in the the current democratic Constitution of 1996 that explicitly calls for unity and an inclusive future based on “the rule of law, pursuit of equal human rights, non-racialism, non-sexism, and the equality of all persons” (MISTRA 2014:80). These principles include promoting national unity by means of increased social cohesion and non-racialism through reconciliation (Department of Arts and Culture 2010:x).

Although former President Mandela at the time had made reconciliation a priority of his government, as marked by the numerous symbolic acts of reconciliation (Presidency 2014:78), he was also aware of the difficulties involved in creating a ‘better life for all’ and the fact that lasting reconciliation would require a more systemic and formal approach (Hartley 2014:33; 57). Three broad attempts were made by the ANC government to enable a break from the past regime: first nation-building was ignited through the creation of more inclusive national symbols and the construction of new collective meta-narratives; secondly, appropriate mechanisms were put in place to effect redress and enable reparations for past injustice; and third, the sharing of both wealth and opportunity amongst all citizens was, and continues to be, earnestly pursued by state in order to address inequality (Harris & Hatang 2015).

However, the economy inherited by the first democratically elected government was marked by a lack of foreign direct investment and a severe budget deficit as a result of “a spending programme that ignored the needs of the majority” (Hartley 2014:45). Given the societal discrepancies which were engrained in racial and economic realities, it was clear that the task of reconciliation in South Africa could not be limited to reconciling perpetrators with victims, but also necessitated long-term action (van der Merwe 2008:286). A start towards correcting the wrongs of the past was also needed and Mandela argued that “healing of the wounds” or reconciliation would serve as the fundamental prerequisite for mobilising South Africans behind his Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) (Hartley 2014:3). In order to balance the need to avoid blanket amnesty for past wrongdoings, while simultaneously ensuring continuity and stability, along with the institutional limitations at the time, it was decided to pursue truth and reconciliation by means of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which served as a crucial first step for creating a post-conflict society (Newman & Lannoy 2014:225; Rigby 2012:239; Hartley 2014:58).

#### *The Legacy of the TRC for Conflict Transformation in South Africa*

The preamble of the 1996 Constitution states that it aims to “heal the divisions of the past [and] build a united and democratic South Africa”, emphasising both the legacy of the past as well as the imperative for enabling remedial action (Hartley 2014:51). As Seedat (2015) notes, “South Africa’s democratisation-cum-development project was a national peace promotion initiative that incorporated the classical measures of conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation, all shaped by the country’s political and social particulars”. Consequently, truth sharing during the transition was considered to be vital for South Africans to deal with grievances related to human rights violations (Fischer 2011:406). The rationale of truth sharing was based on the premise that when high-profile perpetrators of past atrocities are able to publicly state their remorse for past actions, with sufficient credibility, “they can act as significant agents in promoting



reconciliation” (Rigby 2012:238). The TRC emerged as a compromise to ensure the restoration of the moral balance of the country through connecting the provision of amnesty to the objective of truth recovery (van der Merwe 2008:13; Fullard & Rousseau 2003:79).

Villa-Vicencio and du Toit (2007:90) are of the opinion that the TRC enabled the initial transcendence of race when it attempted to move towards a commitment to mutual human dignity and social cohesion indicating a “triumph over injustice” (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:159) and contributing to at least “some forms of reconciliation among some groups” (Gibson 2004a:134). The TRC enabled “antagonists to forge socially transformative space” (Seedat 2015). Gibson (2004a:148) explains that this process of acknowledgment and introspection enabled the acceptance of grievances and claims held by others “and ultimately to accept the new political dispensation in South Africa” which, according to van der Merwe (2008:300), served a valuable function towards preventing the past from being forgotten.

Although the international community praised the TRC process for contributing to the peaceful transition (Hartley 2014:62), South Africans have been more critical, claiming that the Commission was too vague on reconciliation, while most of the Commission’s work remained unfinished (James & Van de Vijver 2000:3; van der Merwe 2008:13; Doxtader & Salazer 2007:432; Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:22). Both Gibson (2004b:130) and van der Merwe (2008:viii) note that people erroneously tended to simplify and conflate the success of the relatively peaceful transition towards a new democratic dispensation as being tantamount to the success of the TRC.

Critics contended that the assumption that truth necessarily leads to reconciliation was demonstrably false (James & Van de Vijver 2000:69; Fischer 2011:417; Dwyer 1999:83). Instead, victims might opt to receive compensation in the form of socio-economic justice, while noting that the state should “compensate for the past, without indulging in it” (Feldman 2012:18). Similarly, Bloomfield & Barnes (2003:12) emphasise that reciprocity is crucial for enabling reconciliation, while for truth to be a catalyst of change, “the truth needs to be shared or at least acknowledged”.

Although national consensus at the time called for amnesty and restorative justice in the form of reparations (Doxtader & Salazer 2007:463), reconciliation in the long term requires “the credibility that can be established by [the] implementation of social and economic programs” as administered by the state (Dwyer 1999:95). The TRC relied heavily on the prerogative of the government to follow up on the recommendations made by the Commission in terms of prosecutions and reparations (Villa-Vicencio & du Toit 2007:168; Fischer 2011:410; Fullard & Rousseau 2003:86). The postponement in payment of reparations or monetary



'acknowledgments' issued to victims weakened the Commission's assertion that survivors were provided with a "serious alternative to retributive justice" (van der Merwe 2008:297).<sup>31</sup>

Given that truth recovery requires the recalling of past events, this process in itself can either greatly enhance or further diminish trust in the short to medium term. Equally, a truth commission can never serve as the unequivocal panacea for the host of problems associated with transforming a deeply divided society (van der Merwe 2008:3; 8; 286). And the unfulfilled objectives should not detract from "the remarkable progress the nation has already made on the journey of political coexistence" (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:286).

The chairperson of the Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999:229), noted that the commission was "flawed", but reiterates that it still was the best and only option at the time. The Commission also unequivocally emphasised the need for continued or sustained reconciliatory efforts from oppressors and the oppressed alike beyond the process of the TRC, as "reconciliation is necessary for all, because all need to be healed" (Doxtader & Salazer 2007:433). As a final recommendation for the way forward and specifically based on the principle of *ubuntu*, the Commission stated that "South Africans simply need to understand each other better and be more respectful of each other's culture" (Gibson 2004b:15).

In addition, as South Africa embarked on reconciliation under the leadership of Mandela, his administration also had to deal with numerous other challenges. Amongst these were re-igniting and opening up the economy coupled with budgetary constraints, while simultaneously ensuring adequate redress in the form of, amongst other things, basic services to all, but particularly those previously excluded (Hartley 2014:8).

Although the TRC served a valuable function in the initial transition, gaining full closure after the South Africa's past history continues to be a burden for the contemporary state (James & Van de Vijver 2000:109). In hindsight it would seem that more than just the truth and the call for justice were needed, but critically also structural changes in the form of visible 'transformation' (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000:153). However, this objective proved to be extremely difficult to achieve, given the slow pace of positive change and the continued centrality of race within South African society as specifically expressed in terms of both social cohesion and reconciliation.

### *The Centrality of Race*

Historically in South Africa material, social and psychological divisions were created and sustained on the basis of race. Thus race as a socially constructed category continues to occupy a

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<sup>31</sup> See also Brouneus 2003:25; Villa-Vicencio & du Toit 2007:165.

central position in the minds of all South Africans (Dwyer 1999:85). As a result, racial categories continue to influence contemporary South Africa and therefore an analysis on the basis of these constructs needs to take into account the influence that race still has on life in a democratic South Africa (IJR 2014:12). However, as noted by Ansell (2004:4), “post-apartheid racial identities have proved resilient to continuing appeals to forge a common, national South African identity and remain existentially salient in all sorts of affective expressions of cultural and political belonging and taste”. Given the historical and contemporary role played by race in South Africa, this category is still needed in an overview of the country’s racial demographics. As indicated in Table 4.1 Black South Africans are the largest population group in South Africa.

**Table 4.1. Contemporary Racial Demographics of South Africa**

|   | Race     | Population | Percentage |
|---|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Black    | 41 000 938 | 79.2       |
| 2 | Coloured | 4 615 401  | 8.9        |
| 3 | White    | 4 586 838  | 8.9        |
| 4 | Indian   | 1 286 930  | 2.5        |
|   | Other    | 280 454    | 0.5        |
|   | Total    | 51 770 560 | 100.0      |

Notes: Information is based on the Census 2011 Report (Stats SA 2012:21).

\*In this study the ‘Other’ race group category is not treated separately.

In this study the emphasis is placed on conflict transformation and the attempts made towards moving to one cohesive nation-state (Gibson 2004b:15). For the purposes of this analysis (based on the SARB data) race groups are classified as: Black, Coloured, Indian and White (see Table 4.1). Debratz, Waldner and Buzell (2011:176) caution against attributing too much value to race as a demographic variable, especially “to the detriment of other factors, including gender and social class”. However, while it would be prudent to include other demographic variables under other circumstances, it should be noted that for the purposes of this research study race remains the focal point of this research. Given the saliency of race in the South Africa context, race consequently serves as the independent variable of this study (IJR 2014:13).

#### **4.3.1 Overview and Analysis: Social Cohesion**

In order to describe how the first dimension of this study, social cohesion, has changed, variables related to both social and political trust are measured from 2003 to 2013. Social trust will be specifically measured in terms of inter-racial trust. Political trust will be described in terms of recorded trust in Parliament and the country’s national leaders respectively.

#### 4.3.1.1 Social Trust

##### *Inter-racial Trust*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups trust each other, respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *People [OTHER RACE GROUP] are untrustworthy*. The responses for each round under investigation are tabulated below (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2. Inter-racial Trust, 2003-2013**

|                          | 2003 <sup>32</sup> | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 5.7                | 4.8  | 7.9  | 7.1  | 7.2  | 8.6  | 8.6  | 6.0  | 6.8  | 12.8 | 13.7 |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 22.8               | 22.3 | 22.5 | 21.9 | 19.3 | 20.3 | 24.0 | 23.8 | 21.6 | 23.6 | 21.8 |
| <b>Uncertain</b>         | 30.9               | 29.3 | 25.7 | 27.2 | 26.5 | 33.6 | 31.1 | 32.3 | 33.1 | 30.5 | 33.3 |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 25.1               | 27.7 | 26.0 | 28.4 | 31.6 | 24.9 | 25.9 | 25.7 | 27.7 | 23.3 | 21.7 |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 15.5               | 15.9 | 17.9 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 12.6 | 10.5 | 12.2 | 10.9 | 9.9  | 9.4  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | 100                | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: “not applicable”; “don’t know”; “refused” and/or “missing”.

Source: Author’s own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

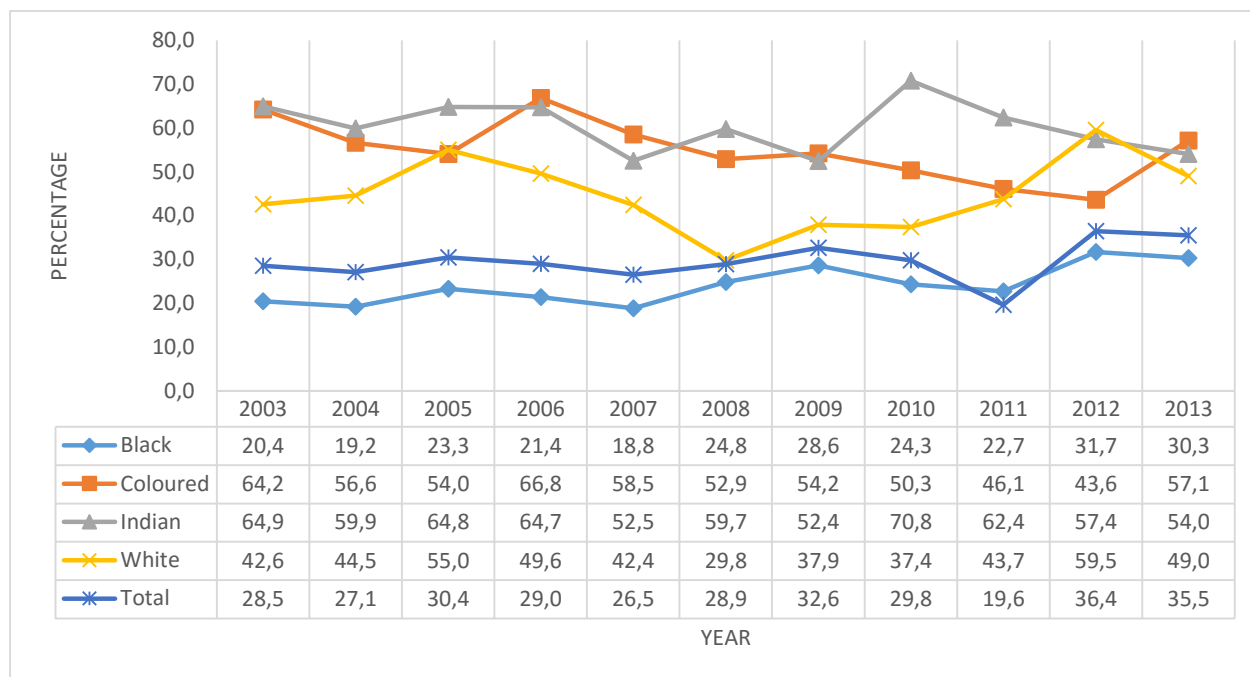
Measuring social trust, and in particular trust between the different race groups in South Africa, as a positive sign of social trust, the number of respondents who “strongly disagree” that people from a different race group are untrustworthy rose by 8% (from 5.7% to 13.7%). Concurrently, between 2003 and 2013 there was a declining trend of 6.1% (from 15.5% to 9.4%) of respondents who “strongly agree” that other race groups cannot be trusted.

When combining the responses for “agree” and “strongly agree”, there has been 9.5% decrease in respondents who felt they could not trust people from a different race (from 40.6% to 31.1% 2013). Table 4.2 shows that a large proportion of South Africans felt “uncertain” about whether they could trust people from a different race group. This specific category has also remained the most selected and increased by 2.4% (from 30.9% to 33.3%). Despite some positive trends, most notably the decrease amongst respondents who felt they could not trust other racial groups, the levels of recorded social trust remain low and this does not bode well for social cohesion in South Africa.

<sup>32</sup> 2003: Labels were recoded to run in the same direction as the later rounds.

Figure 4.1 below presents an overview of those respondents by race who indicated that they trust people (“strongly disagree” and “disagree”) from a different group between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.1. Inter-racial Trust per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “strongly disagree” and “disagree”.

In terms of the total percentage of inter-racial social trust there has been a 7% increase (from 28.5% to 35.5%), signalling a positive move towards social trust in South Africa. Amongst Black South Africans trust in other racial groups increased by the highest percentage, 9.9% (from 20.4% to 30.3%). Similarly, White South Africans also recorded a 6.4% increase of inter-racial trust (from 42.6% to 49.0%).

There has been a decline in social trust amongst both Indian South Africans with 10.9% (from 64.9% to 54.0%) and Coloured South Africans with 7.7% (from 64.2% to 57.1%). Given this decreasing trend, particularly for Indian South Africans, Coloured South Africans were the most trusting of other race groups in 2013, whereas Black South Africans continue to be the least trusting of other race groups

Despite the positive trend of an increase of trust amongst both Black and White South Africans, there has also been a decreasing trend of inter-racial trust for both Indian and Coloured South Africans. Given these concurrent increasing and decreasing trends, it can be stated that social trust remains low in South Africa.

### 4.3.1.2 Political Trust

#### *Trust in Parliament*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups trust Parliament, respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *The South African Parliament can usually be trusted to make decisions that are right for the country as a whole*. The responses for each round are tabulated below (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3. Trust in Parliament, 2003-2013**

|                          | 2003 <sup>33</sup> | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 2.7                | 2.3  | 4.0  | 2.7  | 4.7  | 5.6  | 6.5  | 3.6  | 3.7  | 5.3  | 6.9  |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 10.4               | 7.4  | 9.7  | 8.4  | 10.0 | 13.2 | 14.8 | 11.0 | 10.8 | 15.0 | 11.2 |
| <b>Uncertain</b>         | 23.3               | 16.3 | 14.9 | 16.2 | 18.4 | 16.1 | 16.9 | 14.7 | 22.3 | 27.2 | 30.9 |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 40.0               | 43.7 | 40.6 | 41.2 | 45.3 | 44.3 | 40.1 | 46.1 | 46.1 | 37.9 | 33.4 |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 23.7               | 30.3 | 30.8 | 31.5 | 21.6 | 20.8 | 21.8 | 24.5 | 17.0 | 14.6 | 17.6 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | 100                | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: “not applicable”; “don’t know”; “refused” and/or “missing”.

Source: Author’s own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

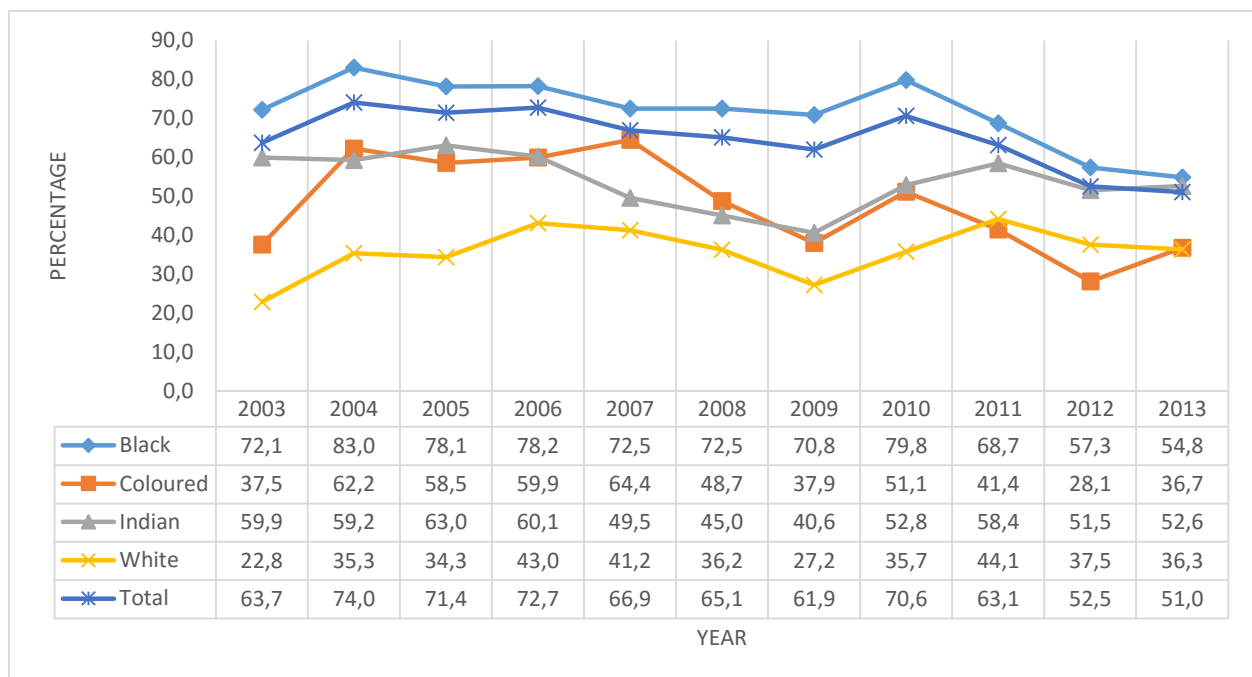
In measuring political trust and particularly institutional trust, it is evident that distrust in Parliament was marked by “strongly disagree” responses, which saw a gradual upward trend of 4.2% between 2003 and 2013. Correspondingly, those respondents that “disagree” for the same period also increased, albeit only marginally by 0.8%. When the percentage for both “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are combined, there has been a 5% increase of distrust in Parliament (from 13.1% to 18.1%).

Respondents who “agree” that Parliament can be trusted decreased by 6.6% (from 40.0% to 33.4%), but despite this downward trend, this category remained the most selected. There has also been an increase of 7.6% respondents who felt “uncertain” as to whether they could trust Parliament (from 23.3% to 30.9%). Given these dominant trends of decreasing trust and increasing distrust, it can be stated that in 2013 South Africans recorded lower levels of political trust when measured in terms of trust in Parliament. Although starting at a high base point in 2003 (40.0%), if the declining trend continues, this does not bode well for the development of social cohesion.

<sup>33</sup> 2003: Labels were recoded to run in the same direction as the later rounds.

Figure 4.2 below presents an overview of those respondents who indicated that they trust (“strongly agree” and “agree”) Parliament by race between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.2. Trust in Parliament per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “strongly agree” and “agree”.

In terms of the total percentage of trust in Parliament, there has been a noticeable decrease of 12.7% (from 63.7% to 51%). The highest percentage of trust in Parliament was recorded by Black South Africans. This was followed by Indians, Coloureds and lastly Whites. Whites recorded a 13.5% increase of trust in Parliament; however, the highest decrease of trust in Parliament of 17.3% was recorded amongst Black South Africans (from 72.1% to 54.8%).

Also, trust in Parliament among South African Indians decreased by 7.3% over the time period measured. Similarly, there was a decrease of trust in Parliament among Coloured South Africans, albeit only marginally by 0.8%. In addition, the lowest point measured in terms of the total percentage of trust in Parliament was recorded in the last Survey Round of 2013. Taking into account the recent trend of decreasing trust in Parliament amongst all groups, it can be stated that the gap in terms of differences in levels of trust among the various racial groups is decreasing. Furthermore, this trend signals that levels of political trust – especially for the majority of the country, Black South Africans – are stabilising. Trust in Parliament among White South Africans continues to remain low, albeit increasing gradually.

*Trust in the Country's National Leaders*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups trust the country's national leadership, respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *Most of the time the country's national leaders can be trusted to do what is right*. The responses for each round are tabulated below (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4. Trust in the Country's National Leaders, 2003-2013**

|                          | 2003 <sup>34</sup> | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 5.8                | 2.9  | 6.7  | 4.5  | 6.2  | 8.4  | 9.5  | 5.7  | 4.9  | 6.2  | 7.0  |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 13.0               | 10.6 | 15.0 | 12.7 | 14.6 | 19.4 | 22.2 | 15.2 | 14.7 | 16.3 | 14.5 |
| <b>Uncertain</b>         | 25.4               | 21.1 | 15.6 | 17.5 | 21.1 | 22.2 | 17.8 | 19.7 | 26.9 | 26.2 | 29.0 |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 39.5               | 40.8 | 39.4 | 42.1 | 43.8 | 38.3 | 36.8 | 42.4 | 39.8 | 37.9 | 34.4 |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 16.4               | 24.5 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 14.3 | 11.6 | 13.7 | 17.0 | 13.7 | 13.4 | 15.1 |
| <b>Total</b>             | 100                | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: "not applicable"; "don't know"; "refused" and/or "missing".

Source: Author's own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

As far as political trust measured in terms of trust in the country's national leaders is concerned, a significantly high percentage of South Africans felt that they could trust country's national leaders, with 34.4% selecting "agree" in 2013. However, this category was also marked by a decrease of 5.1% (from 39.5% in 2003); yet despite this decreasing trend, the category "agree" remained the most selected in 2013.

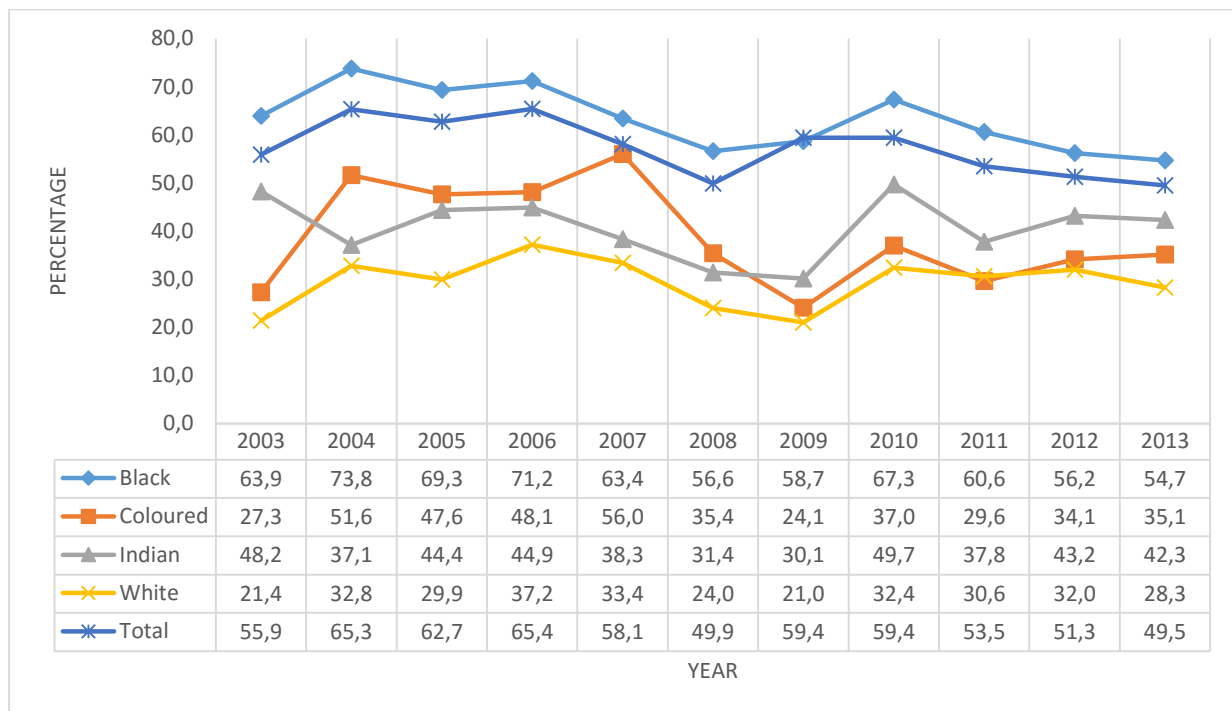
Respondents who felt that they could not trust the country's national leaders by selecting "strongly disagree" increased by 1.2%, while respondents who selected "disagree" increased by 1.5%. When combining both response categories of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" there has been a 2.7% increase in respondents who felt they could not trust the country's national leaders (from 18.8% to 21.5%). Furthermore, there has also been a 3.6% increase of respondents who felt "uncertain" as to whether they could trust the country's national leaders

This declining trend in terms of political trust could signal a stabilising trend (compared to high levels of recorded trust in 2003). Nevertheless, it could also point to disillusionment with the country's national leaders amongst South Africans, which in turn does not bode well for social cohesion.

<sup>34</sup> 2003: Labels were recoded to run in the same direction as the later rounds.

Figure 4.3 below presents an overview of those respondents by race who indicated that they trust (“strongly agree” and “agree”) the country’s national leadership between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.3. Trust in the Country’s National Leaders per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “strongly agree” and “agree”.

In terms of the total percentage of trust in the country’s national leaders there has been a 6.4% decrease in trust (from 55.9% to 49.5%). Amongst Black South Africans there has been a downward and stabilising trend, albeit from a higher percentage relative to other race groups, of trust in the country’s national leaders. Black South Africans recorded a 9.2% decrease of trust in the country’s national leaders (from 63.9% to 54.7%). Indian South Africans also showed a 5.9% decrease (from 48.2% to 42.3%).

Both Coloured and White South Africans reported an increase in trust in the country’s leadership. Coloured South Africans recorded a 7.8% increase, whereas White South Africans recorded a 6.9% increase of trust the country’s national leaders. Despite these trends, in 2013 Black South Africans reported the most trust in the country’s national leaders, while White South Africans continued to report the lowest trust in the country’s national leaders. Given these developments, it would seem that the gap in levels of recorded trust between the various race groups is narrowing slightly.



### 4.3.2 Overview and Analysis: Reconciliation

To provide an overview of the second dimension of this study, reconciliation, survey questions from the SARB related to contact and prejudice will be described in order to establish significant trends or patterns in terms of reconciliation between 2003 and 2013. Reconciliation will be measured in terms of inter-racial prejudice and inter-racial distance. Prejudice will be studied in terms of respondents' attitudes towards inter-racial marriage and inter-racial neighbours. Inter-racial distance will be measured in terms of inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation.

#### 4.3.2.1 Inter-racial Prejudice

##### *Inter-racial Marriage*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups have become accepting of inter-racial marriage, respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *Having a close relative marry a [OTHER RACE GROUP] person*. The responses for each round are tabulated below (Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5. Perception of Inter-racial Marriage, 2003-2013**

|                                       | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 <sup>35</sup> | 2012 | 2013 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|
| <b>Strongly Disapprove</b>            | 13.2 | 12.0 | 11.6 | 15.4 | 15.0 | 14.0 | 16.4 | 9.4  | 10.4               | 9.7  | 10.9 |
| <b>Disapprove</b>                     | 16.2 | 15.6 | 15.2 | 18.3 | 20.6 | 14.1 | 17.0 | 14.5 | 16.6               | 15.9 | 12.9 |
| <b>Neither Disapprove nor Approve</b> | 22.0 | 22.1 | 18.2 | 21.7 | 21.2 | 21.9 | 18.5 | 21.7 | 24.7               | 25.8 | 27.6 |
| <b>Approve</b>                        | 34.1 | 34.1 | 31.8 | 28.2 | 27.2 | 32.7 | 32.1 | 36.3 | 36.3               | 36.0 | 31.0 |
| <b>Strongly Approve</b>               | 14.5 | 16.2 | 23.2 | 16.6 | 15.9 | 17.4 | 16.1 | 18.2 | 12.1               | 12.6 | 17.6 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100                | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: "not applicable"; "don't know"; "refused" and/or "missing".

Source: Author's own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

When combining the respondents who either "strongly disapprove" or "disapprove" of inter-racial marriages, there was 7.4% decrease between 2003 and 2013 (from 31.2% to 23.8%). This signals a positive change towards decreasing levels of prejudice. Also, respondents who "strongly approve" showed a 3.1% increase (from 14.5% to 17.6%) of approval for inter-racial marriages.

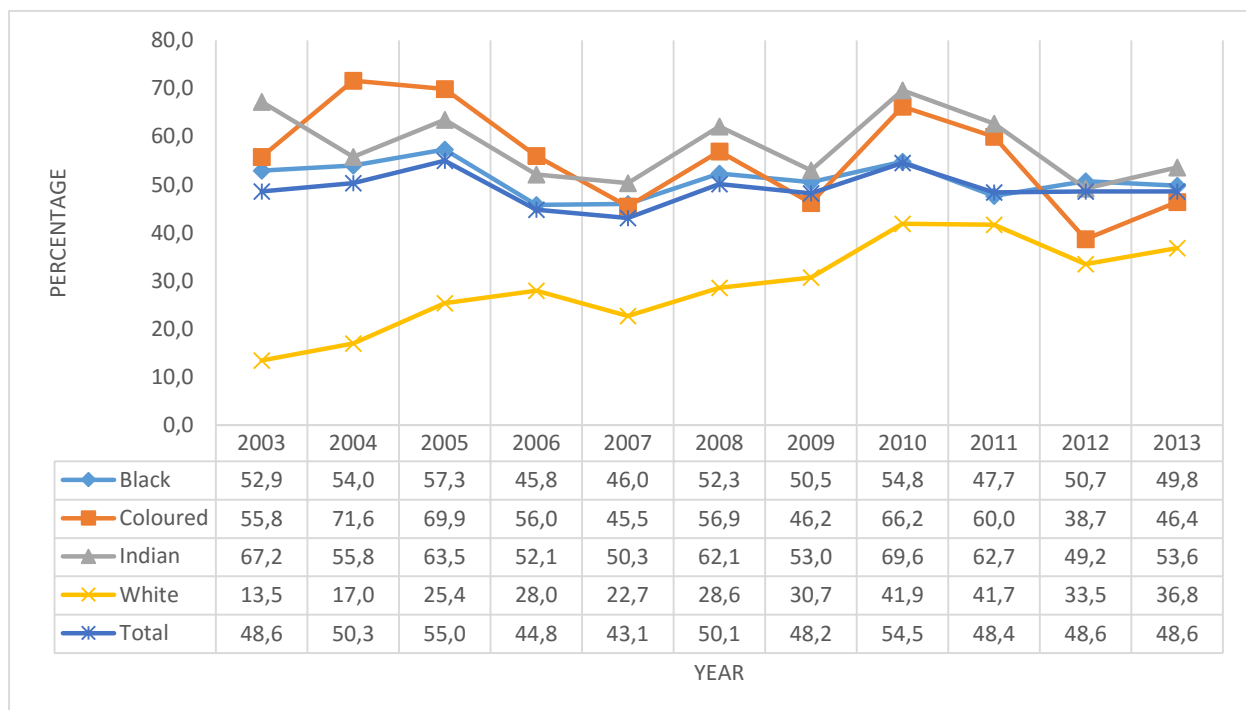
<sup>35</sup> 2011: Due to differences in coding of the original data, 15.1% of the respondents either did not know or did not answer this specific question and were consequently treated as "missing" and excluded from the analysis.

However, during the same period respondents who “approve” of inter-racial marriages decreased only marginally by 3.1%, but this remained the most selected category.

When combining responses for “approve” and “strongly approve”, the majority of respondents approved by 48.6% of inter-racial marriages in 2013. While this trend bodes well for decreasing prejudice, ever decreasing levels of prejudice are needed for sustained reconciliation.

Figure 4.4 below presents an overview of those respondents who indicated that they were (“often” and “always”) accepting of inter-racial marriage by race between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.4. Perception of Inter-racial Marriage per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “strongly agree” and “agree”.

When comparing the total percentage of approval recorded in 2003 with 2013, there was no difference in the data at 48.6%. Although there were changes within race group, this recorded trend highlights that, as a collective, approval of inter-racial marriages remained the same. Black South Africans reported a decrease of 3.1% between 2003 and 2013, albeit with a continued high approval rate of 49.8%. However, White South Africans recorded an increase of 23.3% of acceptance of inter-racial marriages (from 13.5% to 36.8%).

Indian South Africans reported a 13.6% decrease (from 67.2% to 53.6%), but have remained the most approving of inter-racial marriages. Similarly, amongst Coloured South Africans there was a 9.4% decrease of approval. Nevertheless, given that the acceptance of inter-racial marriages decreased for all race groups except for White South Africans, this is not good sign for fostering decreasing prejudice and hence serves to affect attempts at reconciliation negatively.

*Inter-racial Neighbours*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups have become accepting of inter-racial neighbours, respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *Living in a neighbourhood where half my neighbours are [OTHER RACE GROUP] people.* The responses for each round are tabulated below (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6. Perception of Inter-racial Neighbours, 2003-2013**

|                                       | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 <sup>36</sup> | 2012 | 2013 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|
| <b>Strongly Disapprove</b>            | 7.8  | 5.6  | 8.2  | 12.0 | 8.9  | 6.1  | 7.1  | 3.4  | 5.5                | 5.9  | 9.2  |
| <b>Disapprove</b>                     | 15.0 | 12.3 | 13.1 | 16.9 | 17.5 | 13.0 | 16.3 | 12.0 | 16.2               | 12.5 | 11.8 |
| <b>Neither Disapprove nor Approve</b> | 23.5 | 23.4 | 17.4 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 17.7 | 19.4 | 16.3 | 21.8               | 24.0 | 21.7 |
| <b>Approve</b>                        | 38.1 | 42.6 | 37.9 | 33.8 | 36.3 | 45.0 | 40.4 | 47.9 | 44.6               | 42.7 | 41.3 |
| <b>Strongly Approve</b>               | 15.6 | 16.1 | 23.4 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 18.3 | 16.8 | 20.4 | 12.0               | 15.0 | 16.0 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100                | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: “not applicable”; “don’t know”; “refused” and/or “missing”.

Source: Author’s own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

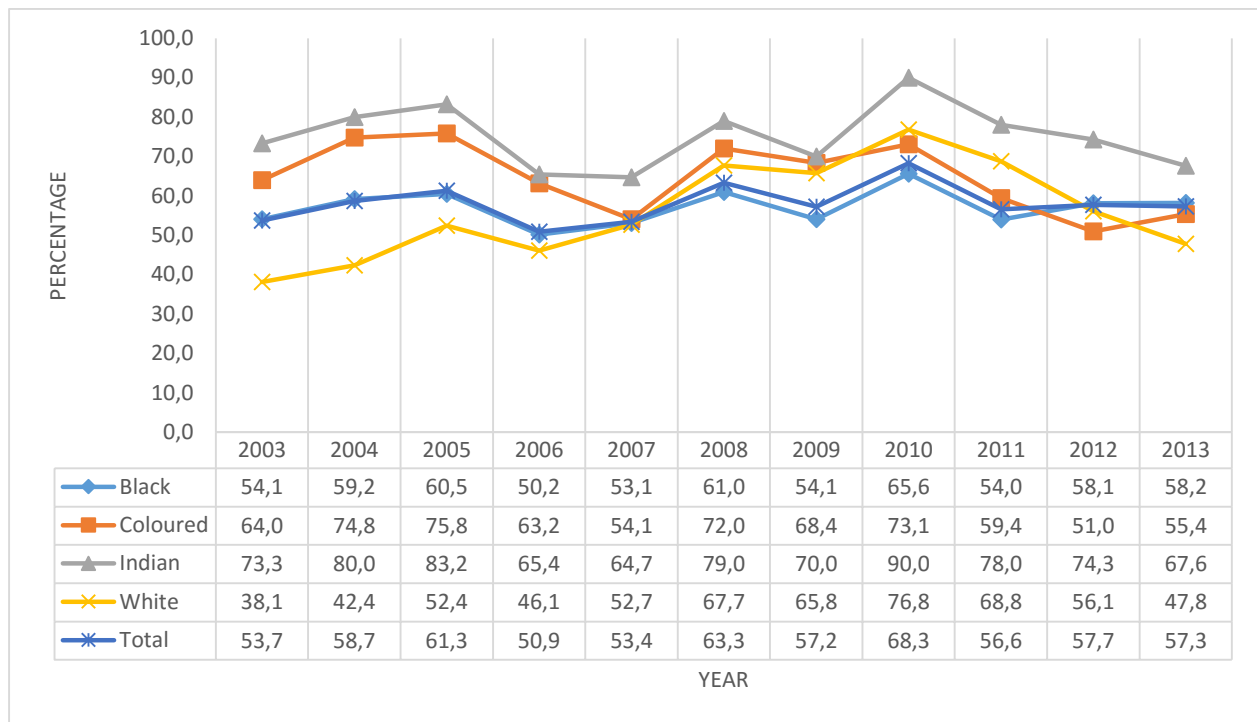
It can be concluded from Table 4.6 that in 2013 South Africans were more approving of inter-racial neighbours compared to 2003. Respondents who “approve” of inter-racial neighbours increased by 3.2% (from 38.1% to 41.3%), while this category also remained the most selected in 2013. Similarly, the number of respondents who “strongly approve” of inter-racial neighbours was also marked by a minimal increase of 0.4% (from 15.6% to 16.0%).

Combining the responses of both “strongly disagree” and “disagree” showed a minor decrease of 1.8% (from 22.8% to 21%). South Africans who “neither disapprove nor approve” decreased slightly by 1.8% (from 23.5% to 21.7%). Given the upswing in respondents who approve of inter-racial neighbours, coupled with the marginal decrease in those respondents who are not so accepting, serves as a positive sign of decreasing prejudice in South Africa.

<sup>36</sup> 2011: Due to differences in coding of the original data, 13.2% of the respondents either did not know or did not answer this specific question and were consequently treated as “missing” and excluded from the analysis.

Figure 4.4 below presents an overview of those respondents by race who indicated that they are accepting (“strongly agree” and “agree”) of inter-racial neighbours between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.4. Perception of Inter-racial Neighbours per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “strongly agree” and “agree”.

In terms of total percentages of approval, there was a 3.6% increase in approval of inter-racial neighbours between 2003 and 2013 (from 53.7% to 57.3%). White South Africans become more accepting of inter-racial neighbours, with an increase of 9.7% (from 38.1% to 47.8%). Similarly, Black South Africans’ acceptance of inter-racial neighbours increased by 4.1% (from 54.1% in 2003 to 58.2%). It can therefore be stated that Black and White South Africans became more approving of inter-racial neighbours during the period observed.

Coloured and Indian South Africans became less approving of inter-racial neighbours, albeit from a higher base of approval in 2003. Indian South Africans recorded a 5.7% decrease in approval (from 73.3% to 67.6%), but still remained the most approving group with regard to inter-racial neighbours. Similarly, the approval rate of Coloured South Africans witnessed a marked decline as their approval decreased by 8.6% (from 64.0% to 55.4%).

Given the increase of acceptance for Black and White South Africans coupled with the decrease in acceptance for Coloured and Indian South Africans, the gap between the different rates of approval between race groups is narrowing. However, in order for sustained reconciliation to be realised, it is necessary that all race groups become more accepting of other race groups.

### 4.3.2.2 Inter-racial Distance

#### *Inter-racial Contact*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups talk to each other, respondents were asked the following question: *On a typical day during the week, whether at work or otherwise, how often do you talk to [OTHER RACE GROUP]?* The responses for each round are tabulated below (Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7. Inter-racial Contact, 2003-2013**

|                  | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Never</b>     | 26.6 | 35.1 | 33.7 | 31.3 | 26.7 | 22.6 | 24.5 | 20.8 | 23.0 | 22.4 | 19.7 |
| <b>Rarely</b>    | 24.5 | 20.6 | 18.1 | 22.0 | 18.9 | 17.3 | 19.5 | 21.2 | 19.1 | 22.6 | 22.4 |
| <b>Sometimes</b> | 23.0 | 20.1 | 17.4 | 17.8 | 18.2 | 21.2 | 21.9 | 19.8 | 25.7 | 26.8 | 23.8 |
| <b>Often</b>     | 13.7 | 13.4 | 15.1 | 14.6 | 19.0 | 22.7 | 18.5 | 21.1 | 19.3 | 16.9 | 20.3 |
| <b>Always</b>    | 12.2 | 10.8 | 15.8 | 14.3 | 17.2 | 16.1 | 15.5 | 17.1 | 12.9 | 11.3 | 13.7 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: “not applicable”; “don’t know”; “refused” and/or “missing”.

Source: Author’s own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

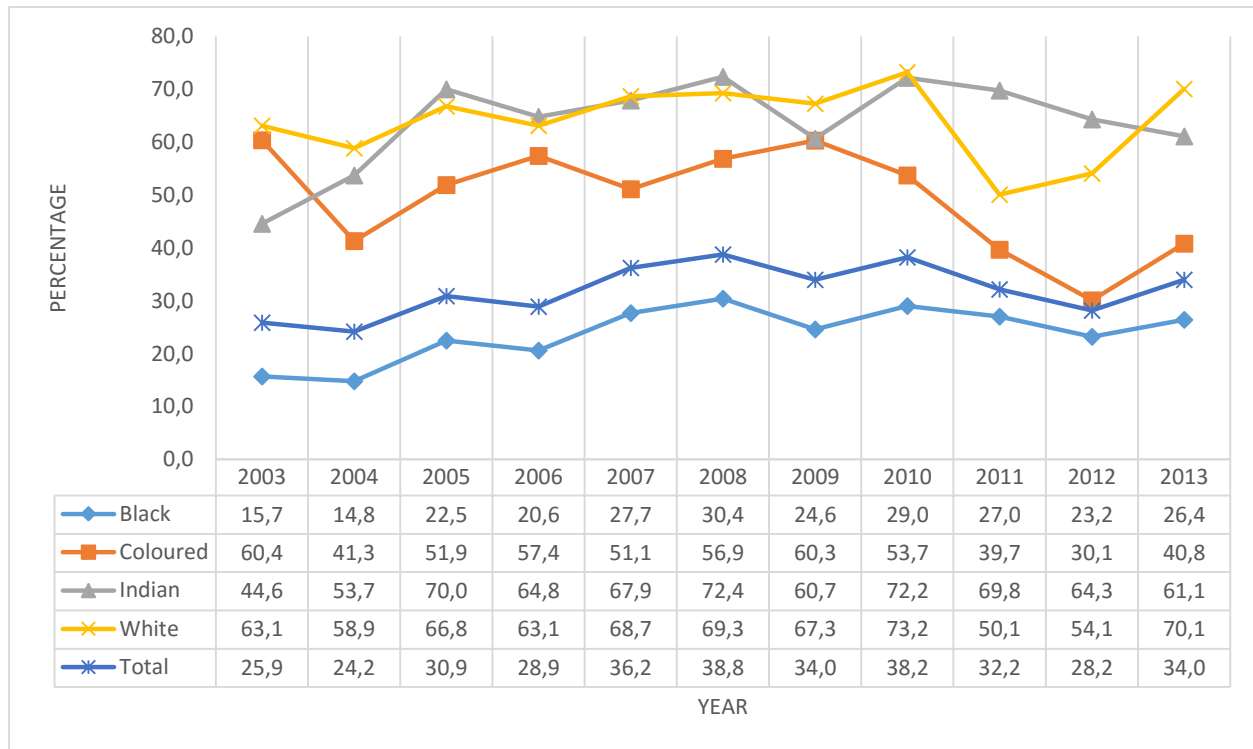
Inter-racial contact by means of talking to people of a different race has improved over the period under investigation; this is evident in the 8.1% increase in the percentage of those who make regular contact (“often” or “always”), while the percentage of respondents that “never” or “rarely” has contact declined by 9.0% (from 51.1% to 42.1%).

It would seem that gradually fewer people report having “never” had contact with people from a different race group. In 2013 the category “sometimes” surpassed “never” to become the most selected category. Nevertheless, in 2003 the majority of South Africans (51.1%) indicated that they “never” or “rarely” talk to people from another race, while roughly a quarter (23.0%) indicated they “sometimes” speak to people of another race and the remaining quarter (25.9%) “often” or “always” do. By 2013 little more than a third of South Africans (34.0%) indicated that they talk to people of different race “often” or always”; while 42.1% “never” or “rarely” do.

However, there are still more South Africans who do not make regular contact with people from other race groups (42.1%) than those who do (34.0%) in 2013. This finding signals a worrying trend for the pace at which reconciliation is taking place in South Africa.

Figure 4.6 below presents an overview of those respondents by race who indicated that they regularly (“often” and “always”) communicate with people from a different group between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.6. Inter-racial Contact per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “often” and “always”.

Figure 4.6 shows that there was an 8.1% increase in contact between 2003 and 2013 (from 25.9% to 34.0%). In 2003 the majority of only two race groups – White (63.1%) and Coloured (60.4%) South Africans – indicated that they talk to people of another race regularly, compared to 44.6% of Indians and only 15.7% of Black South Africans. In 2013 White South Africans still had the most contact with people of another race at 70.1%, followed by 61.1% of Indians, 40.8% of Coloureds and 26.4% of Black South Africans.

Perhaps the most significant finding from the graph is the fact that inter-racial contact by means of talking to people of a different race “often” or “always” has increased amongst Indians (by 16.5%), Black South Africans (by 10.7%) and White South Africans (by 7.0%).

There was, however, a significant decline of 19.6% in regular contact amongst Coloured South Africans with other race groups. It should also be noted that in 2013 only 1 in 4 Black South Africans had regular contact with people from a different race, compared to 7 out of 10 White South Africans. It is clear that there is substantial variation in inter-racial contact between the race groups and this could impact negatively on reconciliation in the long run.

*Inter-racial Socialising*

In order to gauge the extent to which people from different race groups socialise with each other, respondents were asked the following question: *When socialising in your own home or the homes of friends, how often you do you talk to [OTHER RACE GROUP] people?* The responses for each round are tabulated below (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8. Inter-racial Socialising, 2003-2013**

|                  | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Never</b>     | 47.2 | 57.7 | 54.9 | 56.4 | 48.3 | 42.2 | 46.3 | 40.7 | 42.7 | 37.8 | 33.3 |
| <b>Rarely</b>    | 22.9 | 19.7 | 18.5 | 16.5 | 19.5 | 17.4 | 19.2 | 19.8 | 17.3 | 21.2 | 22.1 |
| <b>Sometimes</b> | 19.3 | 13.5 | 15.2 | 13.8 | 15.0 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 18.4 | 20.9 | 22.5 | 20.5 |
| <b>Often</b>     | 5.8  | 6.2  | 7.0  | 7.7  | 10.5 | 15.2 | 11.2 | 13.3 | 12.8 | 11.2 | 15.8 |
| <b>Always</b>    | 4.9  | 2.8  | 4.5  | 5.6  | 6.8  | 8.4  | 6.5  | 7.7  | 6.3  | 7.3  | 8.4  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Notes: Due to rounding, the percentages in the total column do not always add up to 100. The following responses are excluded: “not applicable”; “don’t know”; “refused” and/or “missing”.

Source: Author’s own compilation from SARB data, 2003-2013.

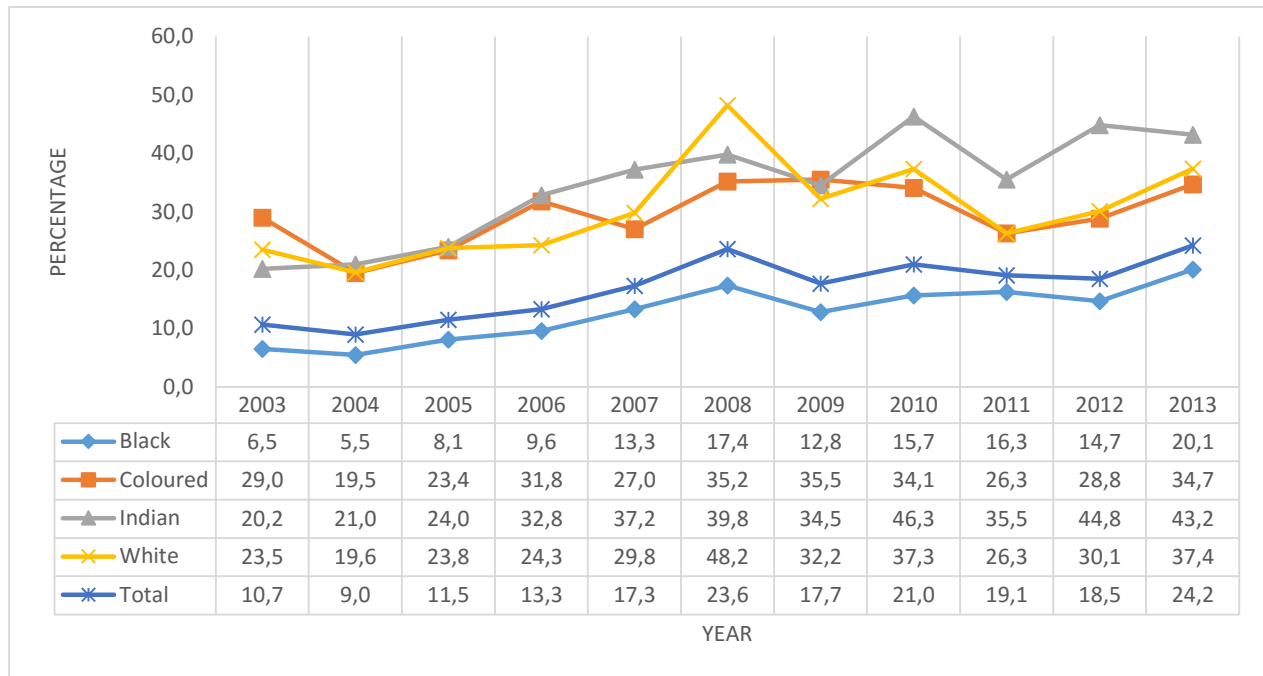
With regard to inter-racial socialising, consisting of closer interaction than mere contact, it would seem that there is an upward trend for inter-group socialising, albeit from a low percentage base. Respondents selecting “always” socialising with members from a different group almost doubled by 3.5% between 2003 and 2013 (from 4.9% to 8.4%). Respondents who reported “never” socialising decreased by 13.9%. However, despite the decreasing trend this category remained the most selected in 2013.

Combining the responses of “never” and “rarely” showed that there was a 14.7% decrease between 2003 and 2013 (from 70.1% to 55.4%). Respondents claiming to “often” socialise with people from a different race group increased by 10% between 2003 and 2013. Both trends signal are slightly positive indications for reconciliation. Nevertheless, given that the low percentage of South Africans who “always” socialise with people from a different race stood at 8.4% in 2013, this definitely does not bode well for narrowing the gap of social distance between South Africa’s race groups.



Figure 4.7 below presents an overview of those respondents by race who indicated that they regularly (“often” and “always”) socialise with people from a different group between 2003 and 2013.

**Figure 4.7. Inter-racial Socialising per Race Group, 2003-2013**



Note: Figure includes all respondents who indicated “often” and “always”.

Analysing the total percentages of socialising with people from a different race group shows there was a 13.5% increase between 2003 and 2013 (from 10.7% to 24.2%). Based on this graph, it is evident that all race groups reported an increase in socialising with members from a different race group. In particular for Black respondents, inter-racial socialising increased by 13.6%.

Similarly, all minority groups reported a higher percentage of socialising with people from a different race group. Inter-racial socialising increased by 5.7% (from 29.0% to 34.7%) for Coloured South Africans and for White South Africans it increased by 12.9% (from 23.5% to 34.7%). There was also a significant increase of 23% of inter-racial socialisation for Indian South Africans (from 20.2% to 43.2%) and this surpassed Coloured South Africans to record the highest level of inter-racial socialisation in 2013. Nonetheless, despite these positive trends for all race groups, the percentages recorded remain too low and hence are not a positive sign for enabling sustained reconciliation since so few South Africans socialise across the colour line.

## 4.4 Key Findings and Interpretation of the Data

Several key findings have emerged from the analysis of the two dimensions in the various SARB survey rounds. These trends will be discussed in the form of an overview of the relevant findings with reference to social cohesion and reconciliation. Finally, interpretations of the findings relevant to contemporary South Africa will also be provided.

### 4.4.1 Main Trends from the Data

The following significant trends and insights emerged from the data between 2003 and 2013.

#### 4.4.1.1 Social Cohesion

##### *Social Trust*

Social trust showed a 7% increase (from 28.5% to 35.5%) for South Africans who felt they could trust people from a different race, whereas those South Africans that strongly felt they could not trust people from a different race decreased by 6.1% (from 15.5% to 9.4%). In comparative terms, in 2013 more South Africans were trusting of other race groups in relation to those that did not. These concurrent trends definitely signify an improvement of social trust; however, in terms of the wider population, the percentage of inter-racial trust continues to be too low to positively affect social cohesion.

Black South Africans recorded improved inter-racial social trust, albeit with the lowest percentage for social trust compared to the other race groups. White South Africans also recorded improved levels of inter-racial trust. However, for both Coloured and Indian South Africans there was a decrease in inter-racial social trust. Nevertheless, in 2013 Indian South Africans still reported the highest percentage of social trust.

##### *Political Trust*

Political trust measured in terms of trust in Parliament has been marked by a noticeable decrease of trust by 12.7% (from 63.7% to 51%). South Africans who felt strongly that Parliament cannot be trusted increased by 4.2%. These parallel trends of increasing distrust and decreasing trust signals a stabilising trend given the high levels of trust recoded in 2003. However, in 2013 the majority of South Africans still trusted Parliament.

Political trust measured in terms of the country's national leaders have also been marked by a decrease in trust as marked by the 6.4% decrease in trust (from 55.9% to 49.5%). South Africans who felt they could not trust the country's national leaders were also marked by a 2.7% increase (from 18.8% to 21.5%). Given the continued collective high levels of trust for the country's national leaders in 2013, this decreasing trend could also signal a stabilising development in terms

of political trust. This suggests that both the decrease of trust in Parliament and in the country's national leadership, particularly when assessed in terms of the Black majority, does not yet affect social cohesion very negatively. However, if this decreasing trend were to continue unabated, particularly coupled with the low levels of social trust recorded, lower levels of political trust could potentially jeopardise social cohesion in the near future.

For Black South Africans there was a decrease of trust in Parliament and the country's national leaders. However, despite this decreasing trend, in 2013 Black South Africans recorded the highest percentage of political trust for both variables studied. White South Africans also showed improved levels of trust in Parliament and in the country's national leaders. Notwithstanding these improvements, in 2013 White South Africans reported the lowest percentage for both variables studied in terms of political trust.

Coloured South Africans recorded a decrease of trust in Parliament, but an improvement of trust in the country's national leaders. Indian South Africans showed a decrease of trust in both Parliament and the country's national leaders. Given that all three minority groups recorded a decrease of political trust, this does not bode well for inclusion and hence negatively affects social cohesion when exclusively assessed in terms of minority groups in South Africa.

#### 4.4.1.2 Reconciliation

##### *Inter-racial Prejudice*

When prejudice is measured in terms of acceptance of inter-racial marriages, the data showed that there was no difference in the data (at 48.6%) in comparing the total percentage of approval recorded in 2003 with 2013. Moreover, South Africans who strongly agree with inter-racial marriages increased by 3.1% (from 14.5% to 17.6%), whereas South Africans who disapprove of inter-racial marriages decreased by 7.4% (from 31.2% to 23.8%).

Prejudice measured in terms of inter-racial neighbours showed an increase of acceptance by 3.6% (from 53.7% to 57.3), while South Africans who did not approve of inter-racial neighbours decreased by 1.8% (from 22.8% to 21%). Therefore, it would seem that most South Africans are becoming more accepting of living next to someone from a different race, signalling a decrease in terms of inter-racial prejudice, which in turn favours reconciliation.

Black South Africans became less accepting of inter-racial marriages, but became more accepting of inter-racial neighbours. For White South Africans there was also improved acceptance of inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours. However, compared to other race groups, White South Africans still recorded the lowest percentage of acceptance of both inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours.

Coloured South Africans became less accepting of both inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours. Indian South African also became less accepting of inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours. However, despite this trend Indian South Africans in 2013 still recorded the highest percentage of acceptance of both inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours. Yet despite these changes in percentages within the different race groups, as a collective, South Africans' approval of inter-racial marriages remained the same over this period. The high levels of acceptance of both inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours by most South Africans serves as a positive sign of decreasing prejudice.

### *Inter-racial Distance*

Social distance measured in terms of inter-racial contact was marked by an 8.1% increase in contact between 2003 (25.9%) and 2013 (34.0%). The percentage of South Africans who “never” or “rarely” have contact declined by 9.0% (from 51.1% to 42.1%). Yet in 2013 more South Africans still did not make regular contact with people from other race groups (42.1%) than those who did (34.0%). Hence, despite the rise in contact, the percentages recorded between 2003 and 2013 are still too low to positively affect inter-racial distance or reconciliation.

There was a 14.7% decrease in respondents who either “never” and “rarely” socialise with other race groups (from 70.1% in 2003 to 55.4% in 2013). This decrease, albeit still limited, serves as a positive sign that reconciliation is possible if more South Africans socialise across the racial divide. However, alarmingly low levels of inter-racial socialisation persist, as measured in terms of “always” socialising with people from a different race, which stood at only 8.4% in 2013.

Black South Africans in particular showed improved inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation. However, compared to the other race groups, Black South Africans reported the lowest percentage of contact and socialising with people from other racial groups. Amongst White South Africans there was also an improvement in terms of inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation and they recorded the most contact with other race groups.

Coloured South Africans recorded a decrease in inter-racial contact (especially relative to this groups' high starting percentage in 2003), with improved inter-racial socialisation. Indian South Africans recorded improved inter-racial contact as well as improved inter-racial socialisation and in particular showed the highest level of inter-racial socialisation in relation to the other race groups. Nonetheless, despite the continued low percentages of both inter-racial contact and in particular inter-racial socialisation, there is definitely an upward trend in terms of respondents who “often” socialise with people from a different race group, and a corresponding decrease in those who report “never” socialising with people from another race. Thus, inter-racial distance for the

period measured in this study, albeit at low levels, is at least not regressing, but improving, even if only marginally.

#### 4.4.2 Interpretation of the Findings

South Africa's socio-economic and developmental needs include, amongst other: inequality, lack of education, crime and corruption (MISTRA 2014:80). While there have been definite improvements, especially relative to the exclusionary apartheid state, "opportunity is still generally defined by race, gender, and class" (Presidency 2014:79). The National Development Plan (NDP) (2013) with its *Vision 2030* has been touted as a move in the right direction to address these limitations; however, the lack of general consensus and absence of political impetus threatens to reinforce rather than address the structural hindrances facing South Africa (MISTRA 2014:93). Social groups on the periphery of South Africa's economy, such as the unskilled and unemployed, are increasingly becoming "commodified subjects" (Seedat 2015), and the effects of global competitiveness threaten to further aggravate this situation (Dalton 2005:139). In particular, youth unemployment at close to 50% continues to be the most pressing concern, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) (2013:43), while the official unemployment rate continues to hover around 25% (Hartley 2014:260).

##### *Increasing Inequality*

Harris and Hatang (2015) and Seedat (2015) note that the current structural economic hindrances are partly a result of the failure by the ANC to take effective steps against the "resilient apartheid-era socioeconomic patterns". Although some in-roads have been made towards addressing poverty, as the percentage of people in "extreme poverty fell slightly to 17 percent" from 1995 to 2006, these gains are subject to erosion by the high levels of inequality (Oxfam 2014:38). Former President Mbeki emphasised in a Parliamentary debate in 1998 that the outcome of reconciliation would be dependent on how the country addresses the inequalities "which have divided our country into two nations, the one black and the other white" (MISTRA 2014:62).

IJR (2014:10) reports that the issues pertaining to inequality and poverty are interlinked with the "misunderstanding [...] around racial issues". The danger of inequality, especially in terms of the conflict transformation agenda, lies in the fact that it inhibits people from different races from understanding and connecting with one another. Despite moderate and continued economic growth, along with the expansion of social assistance programmes, according to a UN Report (2013:29), inequality has increased since the end of apartheid, while poor Black South Africans bear the brunt of the effects of this continued inequality (MISTRA 2014:62; Hartley 2014:251; Presidency 2014:79). The unsustainably high levels of inequality are also lamented in the 2014

Oxfam Report (2014:38), which notes that in 2010 South Africa's Gini coefficient stood at 0.66, making it "one of the most unequal societies in the world", as "the two richest people in South Africa have the same wealth as the bottom half of the population".

After two decades of social and political reconstruction, contemporary South Africa is also marked by a new generation who do not have direct experience of apartheid (Fischer 2011:423). However, it would appear that these gains are limited by the fact that "liberation has reached too small a number of South Africans to be an enduring energy of unification" (Harris & Hatang 2015). Nevertheless, the profile of wealth has slowly but increasingly shifted towards Black South Africans and can in part be attributed to the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies pursued by the government (Newman & Lannoy 2014:227). Newman and Lannoy (2014:22) state that "approximately 5 million Blacks are now considered middle class".

However, it would seem that closing the gap between the past and the present has proved to be an almost insurmountable task and has produced varied outcomes (Alfred 2015). The contradictory success of the new dispensation is summarised by the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA):

The high degree of support for this dispensation is evident in the consistently high electoral participation shown by South Africans since 1994. Against this stands the gaping and searing economic, land and educational divisions which make for a torn and tattered social fabric. This suggests that the political settlement on which democratic South Africa was founded has not been able to overcome the history of social and economic divisions inherited from the past. (2014:46)

#### *National Leadership Challenges*

After different leadership approaches and policy changes, "the demands on government grow, while the capacity of the democratic government shows no sign of growth" (Meyiwa, Nkondo, Chitiga-Mabugu, Sithole & Nyamnjoh 2014:19). During the Mandela presidency the public debate centred on reconciliation and nation-building through the TRC and other symbolic attempts towards building an inclusive and healing ideology for the new South Africa (Fullard & Rousseau 2003:80). However, Mbeki's administration marked a clear departure from the overtones of reconciliation in favour of economic growth and transformation based on Africanism, which saw the "redrawing of the racial boundaries", unfettered affirmative action policies and cadre deployment (Hartley 2014:256).

Zuma subsequently came to power as a result of, amongst other things, "Mbeki's arrogance in defence of unpopular policies" and approach to the economy indicating the "narrowness of black

economic empowerment” coupled with limited government spending (Ceruti 2008:107,110). Moreover, Booysen (2009:23) argues that the relationship between the state and its citizens was one marked by a lack of “responsive relationships between representatives and communities”. Initially Zuma was regarded as the “champion of the poor and of a trade union movement” whose demands “were couched in the themes of broken promises, accountability and democracy” (Ceruti 2008:110). But ultimately “Zuma’s name became linked with the imagery of resistance to inequality” and “the natural choice for what was essentially a grassroots revolt against neo-liberalism” (2008:110).

The change in the leadership of the ANC can be explained by “the interaction of three key pressures: the economy, mass action and strategies of the labour and communist parties” (Ceruti 2008:110). Mbeki’s presidency was marked by more monocratic government and “generalised power vested in the president to decide policy across all issue areas in which he/she takes interest” (Meyiwa et al. 2014:65). Zuma’s presidency has been defined by a shift towards a more ministerial government compared to Mbeki’s administration whereby “individual ministers by virtue of their positions [...] are able to have a significant impact on policy areas that fall under their jurisdiction” (2014:65).

Southall (2009:331) emphasises that the ANC’s leadership change of 2007 had wider repercussions for the country as a whole through “the un-masking or re-making of the ANC as well as of South African democracy”. The internal leadership contestations also contributed to external effects such as the “politicised public sector strike in 2007 which pushed the number of strike days to its highest level since 1996” (Ceruti 2008:112). Moreover, “a prolonged period of power contests (succession battles within the ANC, party vs state battles, and dominance battles within the Tripartite Alliance) had preoccupied the presidency and caused paralysis and procrastination” (Meyiwa, et al. 2014:65).

As further noted by Southall (2009:331), Zuma’s “message is replete with socio-economic pragmatism and cultural conservatism; on the other hand, his rise can be represented as a triumph of the left”. Zuma, currently in his second term of office, avoids leaning to either of the extremes of the political spectrum with remarks of inclusivity coupled with public utterances in favour of ‘radical transformation.’ However, this is “overlaid with a new cronyism and a disdain for the institutions and accountability”, which further hinders any implementation of measures for redress and social and structural transformation (Hartley 2014:256).

### *Continued Racial Distinctions*

Historically South Africans were strictly segregated along racial lines (Gibson 2004b:143), which profoundly affected people’s identity and self-conception (Dwyer 1999:93) as “generations of



South Africans are profoundly damaged around race” (Harris & Hatang 2015). However, more than two decades after 1994, lack of inter-group contact and socialisation is still a major impediment to reconciliation as “considerable racial prejudice persists in the country” (Gibson 2015). Moreover, complex race relations seem to be symptomatic of the failure by the state to confront the outstanding historical issues of racism and inequalities, which have consequently undermined the reconciliation agenda (*Mail and Guardian* 2015).

February (2015) emphasises that increased social grievances, coupled with the increased imperative towards radical transformation, only exacerbate the “them and us” divisions. The persistence of exclusions based on race (at times for purposes of redress) along with the continued inequalities further hinders efforts towards achieving social unity (MISTRA 2014:15). Seedat (2015) notes that South Africa risks being repolarised; Harris and Hatang (2015) concur stating that “learning to simply get on together has become a lot harder now than it was in 1994”.

However, despite the imperative by the ANC to strive for non-racialism, race intractably continues to be one of the main reasons for division in South Africa (MISTRA 2014:69; Steyn-Kotze 2012:90). It would seem that state-sanctioned efforts have had some success, but unfortunately also maintained rigid racial distinctions for the purpose of advancing transformation, such as the policies of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) (Presidency 2014:79). Dobratz, Waldner and Buzzell (2011:176) note that “states in racially divided societies produce racially unequal effects, whether the state policy being enforced is explicitly racial or not”, while opting for “colour-blind policies ignores the effects of past discrimination”.

Most South Africans still reported language as their primary identity category, “with almost a quarter of South Africans selecting this identity as their primary group association in 2013” (IJR 2014:17). Given the criteria of when the “primary conflict era identities” ceases to be a call for political loyalty (Verdeja 2014), the fact that no political party has thus far actively or at least not explicitly sought to capitalise on racial fault lines, despite the fact that some evidence shows that people still predominantly tend to vote along racial preferences, signals an optimistic trend for racial tolerance and reconciliation (Guelke 2010:172). However, IJR (2014:7) has found that there is a marginal decline amongst South Africans who prefer a united identity and an upswing in the identification with race (up from 11.8% in 2003 to 13.4% in 2013).

South Africa’s nation building is formulated on the premise of “forming a common identity, while recognising and respecting diverse ethnic, racial and other groupings. It involves multiculturalism, which recognises the cultural rights of ethnic and other minorities” (Presidency 2014:77). Given that groups or group identity contributes towards individuals’ self-identities

(Earle & Cvetkovich 1995:116), multiculturalists fiercely advocate against superficially narrowing the discussion on race, ethnicity and culture to a simplistic understanding, for this only serves as an incentive for the unintended entrenchment of “self-defined apartheid” (MISTRA 2014:77).

Similarly, the notion of a ‘Rainbow Nation’, initially coined by Archbishop Tutu to celebrate South Africa’s diversity (Hartley 2014:19), also threatens to cement the concept of race and nation into a set “composition and hierarchy” (MISTRA 2014:76). It would seem that from this analysis, group identities are only benign when entrenched within a pluralistic setting and not as forced categorisations. However, as shown by the continued racial prejudice and lack of inter-racial contact, this ideal has proven more difficult to effect in the South African context.

### *Social Trust*

Given South Africa’s history of racial separation, low levels of inter-group trust between the four main racial groups persists (Steyn-Kotze 2012:90; Largadien 2015). In 2013 35.5% of respondents trusted people from other racial groups. Social trust levels for Black South Africans show only a 9.9% increase and also continue to remain low at 30.3% in 2013. Putnam, (2000:362) notes that places where “social capital is lowest today are places where slavery and racist policy were most entrenched historically”. Poorer people tend to be less trusting, whereas the more affluent with more personal resources, which makes it easier to trust, are mostly also “treated by others with more honesty and respect” (Putnam 2000:138). Putnam’s theory could explain why more White South Africans increasingly became more trusting of other racial groups (IJR 2014:7), given their historic privilege as a group for not experiencing state-sanctioned discrimination or dispossession based on their race (Seedat 2015).

The White population saw an increase in inter-racial trust of 6.4% from 2003 to 2013. According to Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:47), the level of education in a society is also one of the central determinants of social trust and could perhaps also be linked to the importance of information sharing as an alternative for contact to change peoples’ prejudice (Hewstone & Brown 1986:40). According to a UN (2013:70) report, “educational attainment and social and economic mobility are clearly interrelated”, and with particular reference to South Africa the report found that the “intergenerational educational mobility of Black Africans was lower than of Whites”. This could also explain why White South Africans (with greater access to education) showed an increase in social trust at 49.0% in 2013.

According to Hardin (1992:153), people will only become trusting of others once they “have adequate reason to believe it will be in that person’s interest to be trustworthy”. Given the limited contact between the different racial groups in South Africa, it could be argued that citizens do not have adequate interaction with one another to either learn more or establish mutual interests.

Furthermore, Hardin (1992:161) is of the opinion that even when educational opportunities are created for people that hail from disadvantaged backgrounds, they tend to be ingrained distrusters as they were socialised not to trust “outsiders or strangers but also not even closer associates”. Extending social trust is not easy in a context where group solidarity is formed by mutual experience of adversity (Portes 1998:81).

Mutual group experiences can also serve as added inhibiting factor for inter-group trust and could “level ambitions downwards, so that the oppressed group keeps its members in a state of continued subjection, and deviant individuals feel impelled to leave the group entirely” (Portes 1998:81). However, Earle and Cvetkovich (1995:105) explain that social trust requires a risk judgment away from a controlled environment “to one that is broader and less controlled”. This could potentially explain why it is difficult to break the trust barrier, as is the case for non-white South Africans towards particularly White South Africans. Moreover, the difficulty related to changing this trajectory of deep distrust is that it has the “capacity to be self-fulfilling” and hard to change through experience or contact alone, “for either it prevents people from engaging in the appropriate kind of social experiment or, worse, it leads to behaviour which bolsters the validity of distrust itself” (Putnam 1993:170).

According to Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:69), social trust is generally derived from the belief that things are improving, so when people do not feel that their lives are improving they will also be less likely to trust others. It would seem that “how well the country is doing collectively, rather than how well anyone is doing individually, leads to changes in generalized trust” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:51). This was clearly indicated by the upswing in economic performance, while “poverty between 2002 and 2006 also declined strongly” (Feinstein 2009:61), coupled with the rise in social trust for all race groups between 2004 and 2006.

However, despite some economic gains, most Black South Africans are still trapped in poverty with a lack of access to quality education or adequate economic opportunities. This would explain why Blacks as a group could feel as if things are not changing for the better for them as expressed in their low level of social trust at 30.3% in 2013. Tropp, Durrheim, Tredoux and Dixon (2010:78) note that societies with “ongoing histories of ethnic and racial inequality” at times enable a structure whereby disadvantaged group members are encouraged to “accept their disadvantage and acquiesce rather than challenge their group’s treatment”, while “harmonious relations do not necessarily translate into material justice”. Hamber and van der Merwe (1998) note that nation building through non-racialism “has resulted in a vision of unity that has, at times, denied the expression of internal conflict”.

During the period 2003 to 2013 both Coloured and Indian South Africans reported a decrease in inter-racial trust by 7.7% and 10.9% respectively. This trend could be indicative of the fact that as minority groups they were unable to capitalise on all the benefits of the new dispensation. The IJR (2014:37) notes that a “sense of marginalisation” is experienced by Coloured South Africans as a result of, amongst other things, social and economic hindrances. Minority groups like Coloured and Indian South Africans might feel increasingly excluded from the public realm and that their unique needs are not adequately addressed by the state.

There is a clear link between the decrease in trust and the increase in inequality (OECD 2001:56) as indicated by the contrast in inequality levels as noted by the fact that “as we move from the low level of inequality in Belgium to the very high level in South Africa, trust declines by 23 percent” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:48, 50). Seeing that people’s social connections mostly stem from those similar to themselves, “it seems highly likely that strong networks often help to promote racial inequality” (Field 2003:78). Social trust is favoured when people see themselves as part of the same community (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:154). The fact that the latest IJR report (2014:17) claims that “South Africans appear to be steadily moving away from an inclusive South African identity” does not seem to bode well for South Africa’s trajectory towards social cohesion. Given these assertions, it would explain why South Africans are generally not trusting of one another across the racial divide as inequality overwhelmingly correlates with race (Presidency 2014:79).

Social trust serves as people’s evaluation of “the moral fabric in their society” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:43, 46, 71), however, increased state involvement to effect social trust could also inhibit the spontaneous formation of social trust (Fukuyama 2001:18). Moreover, greater efforts are needed towards achieving equality in order to enable the creation of ‘shared fate’ between the rich and the poor so as to enhance social trust and limit particularised (or in-group) trust. The provision of welfare to address the widening inequality, with its concomitant effects, could signal a starting point to enable a shared future (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:154).

However, the manner in which this equality is established through welfare, universal or qualified, could also have an impact on social trust. Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:43, 60) advocate for universal welfare to avoid the adverse effects of social inequality and note that “means-tested government programs lead to social strains in two ways: the poor feel isolated and feel that others deem them unworthy”, which further contributes to social divides leading “to less generalized trust and more in-group trust”. In South Africa social security is provided on a means basis only (Bhaktawar 2012:531) and in 2013 the number of total beneficiaries stood at close to 16 million South Africans at a cost of R113 billion to the state (Du Preez 2013:47) Given South Africa’s high

level of unemployment, these social grants serve to avert social unrest from those on the margins. However, given the limited ability of the state to provide universal welfare to address economic inequality, these continued cleavages could also affect political trust.

### *Political Trust*

In South Africa the overarching economic policies created by the state have over the years had varied outcomes with mixed effects for the trajectory of political trust. Following the failure of the RDP to produce sufficient economic development, the subsequent centre-right economic policy, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), was championed by former President Mbeki as the necessary remedy. However, despite significant economic growth, this policy also elicited criticism for not having been consultative enough with all stakeholders. Subsequently, GEAR, amongst other factors, served to break the trust between the ruling ANC and its tripartite alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (Hartley 2014:91; Butler 2009:58). These fractured relations eventually led to the premature recall of President Mbeki in 2008 and provided the necessary impetus for the rise of President Zuma (Hartley 2014:66; 91).

Despite these economic policy changes and leadership contestations within the ruling alliance political trust measured specifically in terms of the country's leaders has remained relatively stable for Black South Africans as marked by this group's high percentage (54.8%) of trust in 2013. However, between 2011 and 2013 political trust in both the country's national leadership and Parliament decreased for all race groups, but more specifically for Blacks South Africans.

Hay (2011:155) notes that the trust citizens have in politics is also dependent on the view and assumptions that people project onto the system and is compounded by "their motivations and their capacity to influence events". When people are in the midst of an economic upswing, they might also congruently feel more empowered/confident to influence and/or might perceive the state in a more positive light. Consequently, the highest percentage reached for South Africans who trusted the country's national leaders and Parliament was during 2004 and 2006, which also coincided with a period of economic prosperity. The upswing in the economy, at the time "managed to break through the 4 percent growth threshold with low inflation, low interest rates and some evidence of small increases in formal employment" (Feinstein 2009:61).

There has not since been a return to the high level of trust in the country's national leaders as experienced from 2004 to 2006. It would seem that the high levels of corruption in the state and private sector further aggravate declining levels of trust in the state (Prince 2015). Gouws (2015b) also emphasises the link between declining trust in political leaders and political scandals as reported in the media. Citizens expect good behaviour of political leaders; therefore if and when

they fail to act in an exemplary way, citizens are less likely to trust those leaders in future. In general, higher levels of trust tends to be associated with lower levels of corruption and the “causation runs from the rule of law to interpersonal trust” (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:162). Although a direct link between an effective government and trust cannot be proven, a “dishonest government undermines trust at least indirectly”. Moreover, “corruption leads to greater inequality, which in turn produces lower levels of trust” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:53).

Given the legal contestations that preceded the first term of the Zuma presidency, Gould (2009) is of the opinion that “leaders of unquestionable integrity who can be believed and trusted by all citizens are desperately needed”. Gould further emphasises that the corruption charges against Zuma, along with his questionable private connections, create an environment whereby “there is a perception that if you are a friend of the President the laws simply don’t apply to you”. Du Preez (2013: 110; 129) notes that although Zuma “has an excess of 700 corruption charges hanging over him”, it would seem that the more recent scandals related to ‘Nkandla’ and ‘Guptagate’ did more harm to “Zuma’s standing in society and in the ANC than his alleged corrupt relationship with Shabir Shaik”. Du Preez (2013: 97; 109) also notes that Zuma would be remembered as “the president who fought to stay out of jail”, while institutions such as the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) have increasingly become a “pawn of the political establishment”.

Zuma also expanded his cabinet to 34 ministers, which can be attributed to “his indebtedness to those who had ensured his ascendancy to the presidency” (de Jager & Steenekamp 2015:15). This trend is particularly indicative of the ANC’s National Democratic Revolution (NDR) objective, which aims to create “a massive patronage network where cadre deployment means members of the ANC are given strategic positions within the public service, blurring the state-government party lines”. Such a system ensures that the focus remains on how to secure positions within the state to accumulate “power (personal interest) for political loyalty and is less about representation and delivery (public interest)”. More alarmingly, this dynamic only serves to further foster “a system conducive to corruption and the pursuit of personal interests” (2015:16).

However, corruption allegations in South Africa have not been limited only to the executive, but have also extended into other arms of government (Du Preez 2013:109). Given the widely publicised scandals such as the infamous arms deal (Feinstein 2009:139), there is a clear case to be made for the relationship between political scandals and public distrust of state institutions (Blind 2006:11). Moreover, “incidents of corruption fuel negative perceptions and serve to undermine public confidence and trust in public representatives, officials and institutions” (MISTRA 2014:109).



Gumede (2015) warns that corruption in South Africa has in recent years become endemic and threatens to turn the country into a “rent-seeking” state, where only those who are connected to the political elite, for example, get favourable treatment in the form of tenders. This trend also coincides with the ANC’s NDR “and its cadre system, which the ANC uses to justify its goal of acquiring power over all state and society institutions” and is a matter of concern in that “firstly it is unconstitutional, and secondly, it essentially, sets up a massive patronage system” (de Jager & Steenekamp 2015:15). However, what is most concerning about the increasing trend in corruption coupled with state power is the fact that in the long run “it will undermine the Constitution and those institutions that aim to ensure that government and the state act in the broader public interests” (de Jager & Steenekamp 2015).

These destructive trends are also corroborated by the World Economic Forum (WEF), which places South Africa in the following positions in its 2013/2014 report: “diversion of public funds (99th), the perceived wastefulness of government spending (79th), and a more general lack of public trust in politicians (98th)” (WEF 2013:43). As noted, particularly since 2011 there has been a decline of trust for all race groups not only in the country’s national leader but also in Parliament.

According to Rothstein (2005:205), impartial political institutions are the *sine qua non* for enabling the formation of social capital. The image of a more honest government “causes individuals in the society to believe that their pro-social behaviour will translate into beneficent outcomes for society” (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2015:159). This is also corroborated by Lefko-Everett (2010:166), who states that political trust is often “linked to perceptions of fairness, efficiency, effectiveness and institutional performance”, which are more capable of engendering more “trust and civic cooperation” (Keefer & Knack 2003:15). Seedat (2015) claims that in South Africa there is a “lack of sufficient institutional transformation, a prerequisite of conflict transformation”, indicating that trust in state institutions is also intrinsically tied to the imperative and trajectory of making institutions, and in particular Parliament, inclusive and representative.

Moreover, lack of political trust can also be attributed to the inability of the state to solve “a wide range of social problems from crime prevention to health provision” (Dexter, James & Chidester 2003:334). When there is a lack of service delivery as a result of, amongst other things, corruption, then citizens are less likely to trust the political system (Prince 2015). This in turn triggers a ripple effect within the broader political culture whereby citizens potentially would not participate in official politics and could potentially refrain from paying their taxes – or the case of South Africa – revert to increased protest action mostly around issues related to lack of service delivery (Gouws 2015b).



States lacking in social trust are also increasingly reliant on enforceable trust instead of working with and relying on the support of the community (Putnam 2000:145; 147; Woolcock 1998:161; Portes 1998:9). The increasing reliance by the South African government on public order policing, albeit mostly related to service delivery protests, definitely does not bode well for the growth of political trust. This has resulted in a situation whereby policing crowds has become “one of the most important functions” of the police that is at times also marked by increased violence (DefenceWeb 2011). This was most strikingly illustrated by the Marikana protests in 2012, which resulted in the death of 34 mineworkers by the police force (Meyersfeld, Dugard & Naylor 2012). Seedat (2015) states “the emotional and social disconnections that characterises South Africa are evident in the lethal police responses to poor and marginalised people’s acts of insurgent citizenship”.

When assessed in terms of the high levels of crime, South Africa continues to be a violent society (Villa-Vicencio & du Toit 2007:85; Department of Arts and Culture 2010:vi; Newman & Lannoy 2014:227). The high levels of crime can also be interpreted as being indicative of not adequately prioritising the restoration of the rule of law during the transition, a problem which has instead become compounded by socio-economic determinants, amongst others, poverty and inequality (Rigby 2012:240; Newman & Lannoy 2014:227; Presidency 2014:165; WEF 2013:43). Collier (2013:67) notes that “where the rule of law was weak, people were opportunistic and so untrusting”. Now the new dispensation has the difficult task of expanding the narrow radius of trust which, according to Fukuyama (2001:12), results in “a two-tier moral system, with good behaviour reserved for family and personal friends, and a decidedly lower standard of behaviour in the public sphere”.

Reiterating the importance of access to a safe environment, where trust “will arise spontaneously”, Fukuyama (2001:18) notes that “people cannot associate, volunteer, vote, or take care of one another if they fear for their lives when walking down the street”. Given that inequality is predominantly manifested in racialised distinctions, “its persistence cannot dispel prejudice and stereotyping fuelled by issues pertaining to safety and security” (Villa-Vicencio & du Toit 2007:83). Dexter, James and Chedester (2003:325) describe South African society as one marked by “social risk, rather than social trust”. The continued inequalities in terms of wealth and income, along with widespread unrelenting crime and grievances related to lack of efficiency and feelings of exclusion, it would seem more likely that the current declining trend in political trust will continue.

Guelke (2010:172) warns that when the trend of global complacency regarding gross inequality starts to shift towards growing dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, this could also have dire

consequences for South Africa. Based on past cross-national data, there has been a global trend of decline in political trust as also indicated by increased cynicism and apathy (OECD 2001:49; Stoker 2006:43; Misztal 2001:384; Fukuyama 2001:11). This has resulted in a situation whereby people have continued to place more confidence on their inner circle of care, with the result that “thin trust [...] that crucial emollient for large, complex societies [...] is becoming rarer” (Putnam 2000:14).

However, high levels of political trust are not necessarily benign in the absence of an educated public. Increased educational attainment enables greater “personal autonomy” and allows for “less subservience” towards the state and could also serve as a sign of a maturing democracy and competent public that is more critical of the public arena (OECD 2001:49; 61).<sup>37</sup> Helliwell, Layard and Sachs (2015:162) emphasise that education can also contribute towards the creation of social capital through “reducing social and economic inequalities, fostering a better understanding of public policy debates, raising individual skill levels, and creating an educated citizenry that can keep government in check”. However, Robins (2003:247) also draws attention to “the limited capacities of civil society to scale up social capital under conditions of extreme poverty, unemployment, everyday violence and AIDS”. Unless social development can adequately take root for South Africans from disadvantaged backgrounds, marginalised citizens will continue to be excluded from the process of social capital formation.

### *Inter-racial Prejudice*

The way in which South Africans perceive their own group or ‘in-group identity’ might also affect the way in which they regard other outside groups. Hewstone and Brown (1986:34) note that “positive comparisons (inter-group differences seen to favour the in-group) provide a satisfactory social identity, while negative comparisons (differences which favour the out-group) convey an unsatisfactory identity”. Ioannou (2015:25) finds that both the move towards assimilationist policies and attempts to create a “common in-group identity”, serving as an all-encompassing identity, could potentially cause a “distinctiveness threat” when people feel that their group identity or the distinctiveness of their group is being challenged. This dynamic would certainly also influence and affect people’s attitudinal outlook towards others.

Racial stereotypes have remained prevalent, despite being challenged by the TRC, and are under threat of being confirmed from the conflation of race with inequality and poverty (Steyn-Kotze 2012:91). Hewstone and Brown (1986:42) emphasise that the “pervasive inequalities between groups” are a key aspect to understanding the lack of inter-group contact. However, not only does

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<sup>37</sup> See also Hay 2011:154; Barber 1983:81.

relative deprivation lead to more prejudice, but in turn “relative gratification”, or the belief that one’s group is better off in comparison to others, as expressed in terms of economic identities and class stereotypes, have also proven to lead to more prejudice (Ioannou 2015:7). Villa-Vicencio and du Toit (2007:83) warn that the deficiency of meaningful close contact, as a result of continued structural and economically-based segregation, rules out the potential to challenge people’s prejudice and serves as a major impediment to the realisation of inter-racial reconciliation. However, in 2013 57.3% of South Africans approved of having someone from a different racial group as their neighbour, indicating that more than half of South Africans are harbouring less prejudicial sentiments after two decades of democracy. It is interesting to note that White respondents have become increasingly in favour of living next to someone of a different race, whereas in comparison Blacks were more approving from the start of the survey period.

The consistency among Blacks and change in attitude by Whites towards inter-racial neighbours might be attributed to the increasing Black middle class. Consequently, it is more likely given the historic economic position of White South Africans to have had exposure to Black people as their neighbours in recent years (Newman & Lannoy 2014:22). This also links with the theory espoused by Gibson and Claasen (2010:271) that White South Africans in particular “may be creating a virtuous spiral, where social integration leads to contact, which then decreases opposition to further integration”. This might be the case for White South Africans, and would confirm Portes’s (1998:6) view of the positive effects of enhancing a group’s social interaction as “sources of new knowledge and resources”.

People’s attitudes towards inter-racial marriages also provide valuable insights into the continued prevalence of inter-racial animosity and prejudice. Golebiowska (2007:281) argues that instead of the argument sometimes used for disapproval of inter-racial marriage as merely being a matter of personal preference, “this animosity to embrace inter-racial marriage involving close family member is a manifestation of lingering racial prejudice”. In 2013 less than half of South Africans (48.6 %) favoured or approved of inter-racial marriages, which does not bode well for addressing inter-racial prejudice.

#### *Inter-racial Contact*

Stein, Post and Rinden (2000:289) found that when “population diversity at the community or metropolitan level” is more prevalent, a diverse setting would most likely enable more inter-group contact. But this is challenged by Pettigrew and Tropp (2005:1146), who argue that “less intimate contact with outgroup members, such as co-workers or neighbours, yielded far smaller effects” in terms of altering inter-group prejudice. Christ (2014:4000) emphasises the importance of living in a mixed setting, “where positive inter-group interactions occur”, claiming that this would produce

more salient effects compared to “each individual’s own positive contact experiences”. The author goes on to warn that “this potential positive impact of diversity, via inter-group contact, is, however, constrained by segregation which precludes contact” (Christ 2014:4000). Alarming, the continued racial distinctions between South Africans seem to be perpetuated particularly as a result of structural inequalities. Interaction between members of different groups are still limited because of the legacy of apartheid era spatial planning and increasingly as a result of class distinctions that preclude interaction between people from different economic backgrounds (Presidency 2014:165).

With regard to socialising across the divide, almost a quarter of South Africans (24.2%) said in 2013 they always or often socialise with someone from a different race group. The IJR (2014:7) found that “South Africans in the higher living standards measure (LSM) groups are much more likely to socialise across race than the middle LSMs, and the lowest LSMs are the least likely to socialise across race”. The IJR further notes that “not only are the poorest South Africans excluded from inter-racial socialisation relative to the middle and wealthier South Africans, but the degree of this exclusion also seems to have increased between 2003 and 2013”. The continued prevalence of inequality, particularly in terms of structural discrepancies, stymies efforts for promoting inter-racial socialisation and specifically excludes those on the margins of society (IJR 2014:7).

Hewstone and Brown (1986:15) warn that there is a lack of generalisability beyond certain contact ‘sessions’ especially when this contact occurs admits the background of structural hindrances and insufficient institutional support. Both these factors, structural hindrances and insufficient institutional support are present in the South African context. This is not to deny the beneficial contact that has occurred between the different racial groups in the new dispensation, but rather to emphasise that “different kinds of social and institutional support for desegregation is available in different settings”, which might explain why there have been varying degrees of attitudinal change between the different race groups as expressed in the difference of prejudices per racial group (1986:15). Although it can be stated that inter-racial contact leads to less negative stereotypes (Ioannou 2015:18), the fact that there has only been a marginal decrease in prejudice for some indicates the difficulty related to changing this dynamic.

Given the imperative towards transformation by the South African government, Tropp, Durrheim, Tredoux and Dixon (2010:77) found that after Whites had positive contact with Blacks they tended to be more supportive of efforts by the government to effect change. However, the inverse trend is true for Black South Africans as their support for state driven assistance to address socio-economic needs and as well as their perception of racial inequality decreased after more contact

with Whites. Based on the findings of this study, it would seem that more contact and social interaction coincided with an increase in social trust for both White and Black South Africans.

Govier and Verwoerd (2002:191) found that group failure to reconcile does not necessarily equate to the fact that individual reconciliation did not transpire. Gibson, in his seminal publication *Overcoming Apartheid*, compiled a list of the most reconciled groups in South Africa using a mean score summarising various sub-dimensions (Gibson 2004a:138). Gibson found that in 2004 Coloured South Africans (59%) were the most reconciled, followed by Whites (56%) and Indians (48%), with Blacks at 33% being the least reconciled. At the time Gibson (2004a:139) noted that it was significant that after the first decade of democracy “nearly one-half of the South African population expresses some degree of reconciliation”. However, closer scrutiny of the data compiled from the second decade of democracy revealed a more mixed outcome, moreover when analysing the data from 2010 the benefits of shared experiences are strikingly evident.

In 2010<sup>38</sup>, the year which South Africa hosted the FIFA World Cup, all groups except for Coloured South Africans reported an increase in contact and socialisation; race groups reported more acceptance of inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbourhoods, and only some improvement in social trust for Indians – and there was an upswing in public support for the country’s national leaders and Parliament. According to the IJR (2014:37), this period of connection between people from different races and across class divides can be attributed to the “shared celebration and euphoria” prevalent at the time.

However, Villa-Vicencio and du Toit (2007:204) reiterate the point that the reconciliation agenda in South Africa cannot avoid the challenges of building relations across racial and class lines to alleviate inter-group prejudice, and it requires being facilitated more systematically through improved contact between the majority and minority groups. February (2015) cautions that the main inhibiting factor for reconciliation in South Africa is the lack of “solidarity across class and race [...] against a backdrop of unsustainable inequality”. Moreover, South Africa has increasingly become characterised by those who have been able to afford access to the instruments of democratisation irrespective of race, while “social cohesion remains elusive” (Harris & Hatang 2015). It would seem that these hindrances for reconciliation are further exacerbated by the prevalent and continued lack of social trust.

South Africa is still marked by both unity and fragmentation (Department of Arts and Culture 2010:xi). This is also noted by Tropp, Durrheim, Tredoux and Dixon (2010:79) as “amicable

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<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that this study focused on changes in the data between 2003-2013 and hence does not attempt to explain year on year fluctuations except where specific changes are of relevance for interpreting the data.

relations among racial and ethnic groups can exist alongside grossly unjust inequalities”. If South Africa were to continue on the same path which has already led to a decline of trust in public institutions, coupled with limited inter-racial contact, such developments only threaten to further inhibit the realisation of both reconciliation and social cohesion, with further adverse effects for conflict transformation (Alfred 2015; Steyn-Kotze 2012:106). However, despite these constraints, the fact must be acknowledged that South Africa is a work in progress (Newman & Lannoy 2014:237). This reality is also clearly illustrated in the mixed outcomes of the different variables related to both social cohesion and reconciliation.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter started by specifically referring to the transitional phase and the importance of the TRC. It was essential to explain the TRC’s legacy for the development of conflict transformation that contributed towards some initial form of reconciliation, but also left certain objectives unfulfilled. The continued role of race within South African society was also elucidated.

This was followed by an overview of significant trends in terms of the total population and specifically in terms of the independent variable race for social and political trust, and for inter-racial prejudice and inter-racial contact during the period 2003 to 2013. The subsequent interpretation of the data enabled a holistic picture of both social cohesion and reconciliation to emerge.

Finally, the last section contextualised the findings made from the SARB data and situated the prevalent trends within the South African context, while also providing tentative explanations for the trends discussed. This was achieved through a brief outline of contemporary South Africa, which continues to be marked by race, inequality, corruption and national leadership challenges. These are all separate aspects with the potential to derail the limited healing of social relations already achieved and could therefore also further inhibit social cohesion and reconciliation. Chapter Five concludes this study and consists of an overview of the major findings made and also explains their implications in terms of the research questions posed; it also offers some recommendations for further research beyond this study.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This final chapter includes some of the key observations made from the data analysis as they specifically relate to the main objective of this study, which was to describe the development and trajectory of conflict transformation in South Africa in terms of both social cohesion and reconciliation. Findings related to the survey data and certain aspects from the conceptual framework will also be re-emphasised, particularly as the findings relate to the limitations of, and need for, conflict transformation. The chapter will conclude with a reassertion of the importance of both reconciliation and social cohesion for conflict transformation as well as with recommendations for further research beyond this study.

Social cohesion understood in terms of social capital or trust entails “bonding similar people and bridging between diverse people, with norms of reciprocity” (Dekker & Uslaner 2001:3). In particular, social trust is considered as a necessary aspect, amongst others, for people to have contact and interact with one another so as to potentially alter their prejudices. In South Africa the ideal of social cohesion, when measured in terms of social trust, would be one that is marked by improved trust between all race groups. In turn, social cohesion, when interpreted as political trust was measured in terms of trust in Parliament and the country’s national leaders. Both aspects of political trust measured requires more nuanced levels of trust, sufficient enough to also enable amicable relations between the state and citizens for cooperation, but void of absolute deferral.

Reconciliation in this study is interpreted as a goal and a means (or sustained process) to restore the “web of relationships” (Lederach 1997:78). Reconciliation involves overcoming prejudice and having more accepting attitudes towards other race groups. This was specifically measured in terms of South Africans and their levels of prejudice in relation to inter-racial marriages and having inter-racial neighbours. Also, in order to establish whether there was a decrease of social distance between the different race groups, reconciliation was also measured through assessing the existence of increasing inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation.

### **5.2 Findings**

The following overarching findings were made on the basis of the SARB data consulted for the period observed in this study, as they relate to different variables of both social cohesion and reconciliation.



### *Social Cohesion*

Despite improvements in terms of social trust, inter-racial trust still remains too low to positively affect social cohesion. Black South Africans reported the lowest percentage of social trust; Indian South Africans, even though they were one of the country's previously marginalised minorities, recorded the highest percentage of social trust, with Coloured South Africans expressing the second highest level of social trust in other race groups.

Given the declining trend in terms of political trust in terms of trust in Parliament and the country's national leadership measured, there is a stabilising affect in terms of political trust in South Africa, with the gap between those that are trusting and distrusting decreasing. Black South Africans recorded the highest percentage of trust in both Parliament and the country's national leadership, whereas White South Africans, as the previous political and social benefactors, reported the lowest percentage for both aspects of political trust measured. Coloured South Africans recorded improved political trust in the country's leaders, but with a slight decrease of trust in Parliament.

### *Reconciliation*

When assessed as a collective percentage, prejudice for most South Africans either decreased or remained the same, which is a positive sign for inter-racial acceptance. However, within groups, prejudice levels changed and varied. White South Africans recorded the lowest percentage of acceptance of both inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours, while Indian South Africans recorded the highest percentage of acceptance for both inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours.

Although both inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation improved between different race groups, the levels of contact remained low, particularly for inter-racial socialisation. Black South Africans, the majority of the population, recorded the lowest percentage of inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation. Conversely, White South Africans recorded the most contact with other race groups (slightly more than Indian South Africans). Coloured South Africans, also a marginalised minority group under the apartheid regime, reported the steepest decrease for inter-racial contact in the period studied, especially relative to this group's high percentage recorded at the start of the survey. However, this group also recorded an increase in inter-racial socialising.

### *Conflict Transformation*

Generally there were some marginal improvements in terms of inter-racial contact and inter-racial socialisation, a stabilising and decreasing trend in terms of political trust for both aspects measured, coupled with continued acceptance by the majority of South Africans of inter-racial marriages and inter-racial neighbours. Nonetheless, both social trust as well as inter-racial contact

and inter-racial socialisation continue to remain too low to positively affect the development of social cohesion and reconciliation in South Africa.

Therefore, given the low levels of trust and continued inter-racial distance evidenced in this study, except for some improvements when measured in terms of specific indicators related to social cohesion and reconciliation, it can be deduced that conflict transformation in South Africa still remains elusive. Consequently, it is imperative that continued efforts be made to affect sustained conflict transformation in South Africa so as to ensure future stability and development.

### **5.3 Explanation of the Findings**

It would seem that the country's success and stability are intrinsically tied to the outcome of the conflict transformation trajectory, as noted by former President Thabo Mbeki, who stated that "the new South Africa cannot exist outside the realisation of the objective of national unity and reconciliation" quoted in du Toit & Doxtader (2010:7). However, given the continued salience of race, coupled with its increasingly link with inequality, racial relations not only affect social development, but also conflict transformation in South Africa. Race therefore continues to be a vital prism for analysing social cohesion and reconciliation (IJR 2014:12). Moreover, although "race relations have improved since the apartheid years, there is still much room for overcoming stereotypes and increasing understanding and trust" (Presidency 2014:79).

#### **5.3.1 Social Cohesion**

It would seem that context-specific research on social capital formation is needed especially given the various discrepancies between developed and developing countries. Moreover, within the South African context inter-racial contact was severely limited during apartheid and resulted in the existence of intra-group and limited or non-existent inter-group social capital formulation. Consequently, South Africa's democracy inherited a deficit of social trust between the different racial groups coupled with limited political trust from particularly White South Africans.

The salient effects of trust can only be realised in the "extent to which community members also [have] access to a range of non-community members" (Woolcock 1998:164). However, in "highly unequal societies, people are likely to stick with their own kind. Perceptions of injustice will reinforce negative stereotypes of other groups, making social trust and accommodation more difficult" (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:52). Therefore, while South Africa by and large continues to be marked by a negative cycle of trust, the future prospects of the country depend on its ability to engender a deeper sense of inclusion through confronting sources of dissatisfaction such as inequality, which persists unremittingly mostly along racial lines and then in turn serves to

aggravate distrust and fear (MISTRA 2014:214). While the utility of any form of trust cannot be underestimated, it is noteworthy that both social and political trust are essential for the development of enduring social cohesion.

Given the liberation history of South Africa, political trust should be marked by increased political trust for Whites so as to indicate increased confidence in the ‘new’ state. In turn, modest levels of political trust are required for Blacks, representing political trust that is “tempered by healthy scepticism” (IJR 2014:15) and finally moderate political trust is required from Coloured and Indian South Africa as a sign of inclusion of previously marginalised minorities.

As can be inferred from the SARB data (and the literature assessed), social trust for all race groups is still limited in South Africa. Despite the more recent trend of decreasing political trust for all race groups, political trust generally still remains marked by higher levels of trust by the Black majority, with minimal political trust recorded by Whites and moderate levels of political trust recorded by Indian and Coloured South Africans. In terms of the desired direction of political trust, these results indicate a reality that is as yet unsatisfactory for White and Black South Africans, compared to the ideal levels of political trust required. This situation can in part also be attributed to various structural factors such as, amongst others, inequality, continued widespread crime and lack of access to quality education. Given the dissatisfaction with service delivery coupled with the endemic sense of corruption, the levels of trust of public institutions and trust in the country’s national leadership also seem intrinsically tied to the adverse effects of mismanagement by state institutions (IJR 2014:18).

The low levels of political trust recorded by White South Africans are still too limiting to serve as an enduring indication of improved acceptance of the new dispensation and recorded social trust for Blacks has remained limited at best and are as of yet too low to be a force for enduring social cohesion. While conflict transformation is the ideal towards which South Africa strive, it is thus necessary to focus on mechanisms that would improve social cohesion and more specifically increase levels of trust (MISTRA 2014:32). It would seem that the prevalence of limited social trust in South Africa has served to further inhibit sustained conflict transformation, as people are still reluctant to interact or socialise across the colour line. This can be attributed to the fact that low levels of inter-group contact and limited inter-racial socialisation, coupled with the relatively high levels of prejudice, continue to exist in South Africa.

### 5.3.2 Reconciliation

Several factors have contributed toward inhibiting the realisation of reconciliation in South Africa while the TRC was only an initial, albeit important, stimulus and point of departure on the road

towards healing in a country marked by racial divisions (van der Merwe 2008:300). After the TRC process and the acknowledgment of mutual culpability, no South African could claim ignorance for absolution for past injustices (Hartley 2014:64; Fullard & Rousseau 2003:82). Despite some benefits derived from the TRC, such as the preliminary inter-racial dialogue at the time of the transition, it was however insufficient to promote sustained reconciliation (Gibson 2004a:148).

Furthermore, while the Constitution continues to serve as the necessary beacon for sustained peacebuilding efforts, this does not in itself prevent facing the uncertainties and contradictions inherent in the striving for conflict transformation (February 2015). Moreover, the ideals proclaimed in the Constitution do not necessarily translate into reality, as the country by and large continues to be racially segregated and increasingly also marked by class discrepancies. As noted by Archbishop Tutu (1999:221), “reconciliation has been placed in very considerable jeopardy by the enormous disparities between the rich, mainly whites, and the poor, mainly the blacks”. This is pertinent since two decades after the attainment of democracy many South Africans continue to live in conditions consistent with the definition of “poverty, inequality and exclusion” (Seedat 2015).

Based on the literature consulted, it would seem that conflict can only be effectively resolved through removing the inequalities which underscored the initial conflict (Sandole et al. 2009:267). Thus, if sustained reconciliation is to be realised in South Africa, structural reform is also needed to alter the configuration of, amongst other things, the economic structures which continue to produce apartheid-like inequalities (Guelke 2010:170).

The contextualisation of the data revealed that there is inherent tension between reconciliation and the need for adequate reparations, which is further compounded by the “the racial dimension” (Doxtader 2004:138). This has resulted in those eligible for redress, mainly Blacks, wondering why greater efforts have not been made to ensure reparations, whereas Whites are increasingly “defensive about whether they have a place in the new order” (Harris & Hatang 2015). Ineffective distributive justice seems to further exacerbate the growing inequality blocking South Africa’s attempts to deal effectively with the divisions inherited from the past.

Additionally, the difficulties experienced in contemporary South Africa become increasingly evident given “the rapidity with which disputes and transformation failures across various sectors [...] escalate into state and public violence [and] point to weakness in conflict management, resolution and transformation mechanisms, and to unevenness in dismantling of apartheid structures” (Seedat 2015). Thus, it would seem that only once societal inequalities and other forms of structural oppression are eliminated can it be said that conflict transformation has adequately taken root (Hansen 2008:413, 417). Reconciliatory efforts cannot only be based on hopes for a

favourable economic climate, but concurrently also requires moves towards achieving social justice (Bloomfield & Barnes 2003:17).

Notwithstanding the fact that reconciliation is also tied to social cohesion and especially structural limitations, it would seem that reconciliation in the long run “is something to be earned by South Africans” (James & Van de Vijver 2000:152). Given these expectations of conflict transformation, sustained efforts are needed in South Africa to address the structural and other limitations currently constraining its formulation.

In terms of the focus and specific scope of this study, reconciliation in South Africa involves overcoming prejudice and having more accepting attitudes towards other race groups. Based on the literature assessed, this is best achieved through improved contact between the different race groups so as to enable the formulation of “shared social values and attitudes” (Almond & Verba 1963:299). However, as indicated by the data derived from SARB, Black citizens still have only limited contact with other race groups, whereas Whites still record high levels of prejudice. Both of these findings do not bode well for a society in need of mending fractured relations.

As emphasised in the conceptual framework, altering destructive attitudes and changing people’s behaviour is a difficult and slow process that entails risk and the ability to re-create social relations “to connect with people across what are often historical and entrenched barriers of suspicion, prejudice and inequality” (du Toit & Doxtader 2010:165). Given the low scores of reconciliation recorded, the importance of sustained efforts for reconciliation cannot be more pronounced, for “when people do not see themselves as part of the same moral community with a shared fate, they will not have the solidarity that is essential for building up social trust” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:61). But on a more positive note, the IJR (2014:21) noted that “overall reported instances of inter-racial talk and socialisation have improved over the last ten years. Following the contact hypothesis, this increase in inter-racial contact may also account for the increasing levels of inter-racial trust”.

However, despite some improvements, there is currently still only limited contact and trust between the different race groups in South Africa, which is further compounded by structural factors sustaining various forms of inequality. This inequality is a weakness which inhibits inter-group information sharing and hence limits the realisation of cooperation between the different race groups. Instead, sustained reconciliation requires South Africans to engage with one another on the issues inherited from the past, while simultaneously shaping a united inclusive identity, both of which require social capital or trust (IJR 2014:10). Although this study cannot prove causality, it is expected that if inter-racial contact continues to remain low and inter-racial prejudice remains unchallenged, it will continue to inhibit the realisation of reconciliation. Seeing

that reconciliation is a process between people and in South Africa specifically between race groups, “to the extent that South Africans view those of other races with suspicion, it is unlikely that such cooperation will emerge” (Gibson 2004:316).

### 5.3.3 The Need for Sustained Conflict Transformation

South Africa is no exception when it comes to the limitations faced by post-conflict states, namely “high (or increasing) inequality, low trust, corrupt government, and demands for more radical redistribution” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:67). However, efforts to address these inhibiting structures would also be aided when cooperation and trust between citizens are improved (James & Van de Vijver 2000:71; Boraine 2006:22). The low levels recorded for both social cohesion and reconciliation may be attributed to the lack of success in addressing obstructive structural issues. However, it should also be emphasised that these structural issues can only be resolved if good governance and effective leadership become enshrined in the ethos of the state. Moreover, unless these structural issues are addressed, it is less likely that either social cohesion or reconciliation would improve. This negative cycle could lead to renewed conflict based not only on historical racial fault lines, but increasingly also as a result of economic discrepancies not solely attributable to race.

Ansell (2004:4) notes that addressing the legacy of the past “necessitates on the part of all South Africans an ongoing engagement with the legacies and continued purchase of race”. However, given the low levels of trust or social cohesion, and the precarious and low levels of reconciliation recorded in this study (as assessed in terms of contact and prejudice), such engagement underscores the importance of improvements in both dimensions in order to positively affect conflict transformation in South Africa. As noted by former President De Klerk, “the achievement of reconciliation and peace nearly always requires a leap of faith and a willingness to trust” quoted in du Toit & Doxtader (2010:31, 165).

As noted in Chapter Three, the SCORE index works with the hypothesis that social cohesion affects and predicts reconciliation, stating that improved social cohesion will lead to a greater degree of reconciliation (UNDP 2014). Similarly, in this study it was found the both dimensions are of equal pertinence as both are needed in order to provide a holistic overview of conflict transformation.

In conclusion, so long as trust remains absent, reconciliation will at best be limited and at worst stunted, as it is less likely that contact would occur between people hailing from different racial groups, while prejudice between groups remains unchanged. There is therefore a definite need for inter-group contact and a willingness to accept each other as fellow citizens. The real dividends

derived from trust will come “when we put our faith in people who are different from ourselves” (Dekker & Uslaner 2001:7). Therefore, to avoid sustained conflict transformation being an unattainable dream, co-existence in South Africa should evolve towards a state of trust between all citizens so as to ultimately also ensure reconciliation. Moreover, seeing that economic and social equality is regarded as the “key factor underlying trust” (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005:47), in a state such as South Africa it would seem that “the benefits of trust are in its future”, while “the costs are now” (Earle & Cvetkovich 1995:10).

#### **5.4 Reflections and Recommendations for Future Research**

Upon reflection of the research process and in light of the initial considered research question posed, determining the relationship between reconciliation and trust proved to be more problematic especially given the lack of a clear dependent and independent variable. This dilemma was however not unique to this study. Gouws and Schulz-Herzenberg in their forthcoming article *Does Political Trust Lead to Reconciliation*, also note such a predicament. In this article the authors also attempted to measure the relationship between trust and reconciliation using the SARB dataset. Consequently, in order to avoid the difficulties of having to prove causality in this research, a descriptive study of both social cohesion and reconciliation was instead conducted so as to gain an indication of the state of conflict transformation in South Africa.

Context matters when it comes to studying issues related to social relations (Woolcock 1998:188), and given the availability of valuable survey data such as the SARB used in this study, there is sufficient reason and means for continuous research on the development and trajectory of conflict transformation in South Africa. Also, as acknowledged by Putnam (1993:185), “two decades are time enough to detect the impact of institutional reform on political behaviour, but not to trace its effects on deeper patterns of culture and social structure”. Provided this advice, and given that South Africa’s conflict transformation is still a work in progress, the literature consulted also emphasises the importance of sustained research in order to track the ‘deeper’ changes in political cultural and social structures.

Although not the specific focus of this study, the indicators used revealed some fluctuations on a year to year basis. Subsequently, it could be of value for future research to investigate these changes especially in cases where the reasons behind these discrepancies in the data are less self-evident. Moreover, it would also be of empirical value for future studies to track the long-term effects of the specific variables related to both dimensions studied here, and to possibly study mechanisms for creating an advantageous or symbiotic relationship between social cohesion and reconciliation for conflict transformation. Given the importance of trust (social cohesion) and



inter-racial contact (reconciliation) for enabling cooperation, it can only be hoped that more research in the future would be conducted focusing on both dimensions and particularly exploring their causality.

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