



Social Trust in a Divided Country: An Investigation into the Determinants of Social Trust in South Africa


by
Georgia Dorrington

*Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Political Science in the Faculty of Political Science at
Stellenbosch University*

Supervisor: Dr Collette Schulz-Herzenberg

December 2023

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.



Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

December 2023

Copyright © 2023 Stellenbosch University

All rights reserved

Abstract

Over the past three decades, a significant body of research has emerged on the importance of social trust for societies. Social trust refers to interpersonal trust between citizens and describes the degree to which people feel they can trust citizens they do not know. Research has found greater levels of social trust to be associated with a wide range of desirable societal features, such as stimulating economic growth, improving government performance and increasing citizens' general living standards.

For decades, South Africa has suffered from a social trust deficit. The 2019 South African Reconciliation Barometer data found that 60% of the population do not actively trust other citizens. Given South Africa's critical need for greater economic growth, improved governance and greater social cohesion, this study investigates the causes of social trust in South Africa to gain greater insight into the country's social trust deficit. To this effect, this study investigates the relationship between South Africans' levels of social trust and five societal characteristics identified in the global academic literature as key determinants of social trust, including the influences of racial diversity, perceptions of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of government corruption, confidence in institutions, and perceptions of societal fairness on South Africans' levels of social trust. The study employs a quantitative research design to analyse cross-sectional data from the 2019 South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) nationally representative survey to test the relationship between social trust and these explanatory variables.

The results of the analysis indicate that South Africans' confidence in institutions has the strongest influence on social trust levels, followed by the influence of perceptions of income distribution (inequality). By contrast, racial diversity and perceptions of government corruption are found to have little influence on South Africans' social trust levels. The finding that racial diversity has little effect on South Africans' social trust is particularly significant, given the country's history of racism and racial segregation, and because it stands in contrast to the large and well-established body of literature that finds racial diversity erodes social trust.

The findings thus suggest that efforts to address South Africa's social trust deficit should focus on increasing citizens' confidence in institutions and addressing the high levels of income inequality in South Africa. However, given the dire and deteriorating state of South Africans'

institutional confidence and the country's high levels of income inequality, it remains unlikely that these conditions will improve social trust. Further research on potential measures and reforms that could address these issues will be vital for improving social trust.

Opsomming

Uitgebreide navorsing oor die afgelope drie dekades fokus op die belang van sosiale vertroue in samelewings. Sosiale vertroue verwys na interpersoonlike vertroue tussen mense en beskryf die mate waartoe mense voel hulle kan ander wat hulle nie ken nie, vertrou. Navorsing het bevind dat hoër vlakke van sosiale vertroue geassosieer kan word met 'n wye verskeidenheid van wenslike sosiale kenmerke; soos stimulering van ekonomiese groei, verbetering van regeringsprestasie, en die verhoging van algemene lewenstandaarde.

Vir dekades lank ly Suid-Afrika aan 'n sosiale vertrouensstekort. Data bevat in die Suid-Afrikaans Versoeningsbarometer (SARB) van 2019 bevind dat 60% van die bevolking nie mede-burgers vertrou nie. Gegewe Suid-Afrika se kritieke behoefte aan groter ekonomiese groei, meer volhoubare bestuur en beter sosiale kohesie, ondersoek hierdie studie die oorsake van sosiale vertroue in Suid-Afrika om beter insig te verwerf in die land se sosiale vertrouensstekort. Hierdie studie ondersoek dus die verhouding tussen Suid-Afrikaners se vlakke van sosiale vertroue en vyf samelewingseienskappe wat in internasionale akademiese literatuur as sleutelbepalers van sosiale vertroue geïdentifiseer word. Die studie sluit die invloede van rasse-verskeidenheid, persepsies oor inkomste-verspreiding (ongelykheid), persepsies oor regeringskorrupsie, vertroue in instansies, en persepsies van samelewing regverdigheid op Suid-Afrikaners se vlakke van sosiale vertroue. Die studie gebruik 'n kwantitatiewe navorsingsontwerp vir die ontleding van deursnit data in die nasionale verteenwoordigende meningsopname van die 2019 Suid-Afrikaanse Versoeningsbarometer, om die verhouding tussen sosiale vertroue en hierdie verklarende veranderlikes te toets.

Die resultate van die ontleding dui daarop dat Suid-Afrikaners se vertroue in instansies die sterkste invloed het op samelewing vertrouensvlakke; gevolg deur die invloed van persepsies van inkomste-verspreiding (ongelykheid). Daarenteen is gevind dat rasse diversiteit en persepsies van regeringskorrupsie 'n beperkte effek het op Suid-Afrikaners se samelewing vertrouensvlakke. Die bevinding dat rasse diversiteit 'n minimale effek het op Suid-Afrikaners se samelewing vertrouensvlakke is besonders betekenisvol, gegewe die land se geskiedenis van rassisme en rassese segregasie, en omdat dit in kontras staan met 'n groot hoeveelheid gevestigde literatuur wat bevind dat rasse diversiteit sosiale vertroue erodeer.

Die bevindinge van die studie suggereer dus dat pogings om Suid Afrika se sosiale vertrouensagterstand aan te spreek behoort te fokus op die verhoging van landsburgers se vertroue in instansies, asook die hoë vlak van inkomste ongelykheid in Suid-Afrika. Gegewe dus die erge en degenerende toestand van Suid-Afrikaners se vertroue in instansies en die land se hoë vlak van inkomste ongelykheid, blyk dit dus onwaarskynlik dat hierdie toestande sosiale vertroue sal verbeter. Verdere navorsing oor moontlike maatreëls en hervormings wat hierdie kwessies kan aanspreek, sal noodsaaklik wees vir die verbetering van sosiale vertroue.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has supported me while writing my thesis.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Collette Schulz-Herzenberg, for the guidance and expert insight she provided during the course of my thesis, as well as for her witty sense of humour that always boosted my spirits in meetings. It has been an absolute privilege to work under the guidance of someone I deeply respect and whose work I so admire.

Next, I would like to thank my family and friends for all their support and encouragement throughout my thesis writing process. I would also like to thank Ms Marleen Hendricksz and Ms Annie Odhav for their kindness, guidance and assistance with the technical details of my thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank and acknowledge the generous support from the National Research Foundation, who helped finance this research.

Table of contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	1
1.1 Background and rationale	1
1.2 Problem statement	3
1.3 Theoretical points of departure	6
1.3.1 The effects of diversity on social trust	8
1.3.2 The effects of income inequality on social trust	9
1.3.3 The effects of corruption on social trust	10
1.3.4 The effects of institutions and democracy on social trust	10
1.3.5 The effects of societal fairness on social trust	11
1.4 Research questions and hypotheses	12
1.5 Significance of study	14
1.6 Research design and methodology	17
1.6.1 Variables and operationalisations	18
1.7 Conclusion	23
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 Background	24
2.2.1 Social capital	25
2.2.2 Social trust	26
2.2.3 Particularised and generalised social trust	26
2.2.4 Social trust and political trust	27
2.2.5 Importance of social trust	28
2.3 Literature on the causes of social trust	29
2.3.1 The effects of diversity on social trust	32

2.3.2 The effects of income distribution (inequality) on social trust	42
2.3.3 The effects of corruption on social trust	45
2.3.4 The effects of institutions on social trust	47
2.3.5 The impact of societal fairness on social trust	50
2.4 Explaining interstudy variance	53
2.5 Challenges and limitations in social trust research	53
2.5.1 Proving direction of causality and disentangling effects of related variables	53
2.5.2 Limited research on social trust in the developing world	54
2.6 Conclusion	55
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	56
3.1 Introduction	56
3.2 Research design	56
3.3 Secondary data analysis	60
3.4 The dataset: The South African Reconciliation Barometer	61
3.5 Validity and reliability	62
3.6 Operationalisation of variables	63
3.6.1 Dependent variable: Social trust	63
3.6.2 Independent variables	67
3.6.3 Demographic variables	80
3.7 Methods of analysis: Statistical techniques	82
3.7.1 Bivariate relationships between social trust and demographic variables	85
3.7.2 Bivariate relationships between social trust and independent variables	85
3.8 Ethical considerations	88
3.9 Limitations	89
3.10 Conclusion	89

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS	91
4.1 Introduction	91
4.2.1 Descriptive analysis: Demographics	91
4.2.2 Bivariate analyses: Demographics	92
4.3 Bivariate analysis: Social trust and independent variables	94
4.3.1 Interracial interactions and social trust	95
4.3.2 Income distribution (inequality) and social trust	97
4.3.3 Perceived government corruption and social trust	100
4.3.4 Confidence in institutions and social trust	102
4.3.5 Perceptions of societal fairness and social trust	112
4.4 Discussion of findings	116
4.5 Conclusion	119
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	120
5.1 Introduction	120
5.2 Summary of findings	120
5.3 Implications of results	121
5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research	124
5.5 Conclusion	126
REFERENCES	128
APPENDIX: QUESTION ITEMS AND CODING OF VARIABLES	146

List of figures and tables

Figures

Figure 4.1: Levels of Social Trust in South Africa, 2019, Percentages

Figure 4.2: Frequency of Interracial Interaction in an Average Day, 2019, Percentages

Figure 4.3: Perception of Relative Income, 2019, Percentages

Figure 4.4: Perceptions of Government Corruption, 2019, Percentages

Figure 4.5: SPSS Generated Scree Plot

Figure 4.6: Confidence in Non-Political Institutions, 2019, Percentages

Figure 4.7: Confidence in Political/Government Institutions, 2019, Percentages

Figure 4.8: SPSS Generated Scree Plot

Tables

Table 3.1: Operationalisation of the Dependent Variable- Level of Social Trust

Table 3.2: Operationalisation of Frequency of Interracial Interaction

Table 3.3: Operationalisation of Income Distribution (Inequality)

Table 3.4: Operationalisation of Perceptions of Government Corruption

Table 3.5: Operationalisation of Confidence in Institutions

Table 3.6: Guide to Interpreting Correlation Coefficients

Table 4.1: Frequency of Social Trust in South Africa, 2019, Percentages

Table 4.2: Correlations for Social Trust by Demographic Group, 2019

Table 4.3: Levels of Social Trust by Frequency of Interracial Interaction, 2019, Percentages

Table 4.4: Levels of Social Trust by Subjective Income Distribution (Inequality), 2019, Percentages

Table 4.5: Levels of Social Trust by Perceptions of Government Corruption, 2019, Percentages

Table 4.6: Rotated Component Matrix

Table 4.7: Levels of Social Trust by Confidence in Non-Political Institutions, 2019, Percentages

Table 4.8: Levels of Social Trust by Confidence in Political/Government Institutions, 2019, Percentages

Table 4.9: Correlation Matrix

Table 4.10: Rotated component matrix

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

1.1 Background and rationale

The past three decades have seen a rapid growth of research on the subject of social trust, as scholars around the world and from varying fields of study have come to recognise the importance of social trust for modern democracies (Newton, 2007:342). Social trust can be summarised as the horizontal, interpersonal trust that exists between citizens, and refers to the extent to which people feel they can trust the average citizen in their society (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1540; Mattes and Moreno, 2018:357). Research has shown that higher levels of social trust are associated with extensive societal benefits, including greater economic success, better functioning governments, and more effective public institutions (Arrow, 1972, 1974; Fukuyama, 1995; Helliwell and Putnam, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1997; La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer and Vishny, 1997; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:212; Uslaner, 2002, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Newton, Stolle, and Zmerli, 2018). High social trust societies are also associated with having significantly greater levels of social cohesion¹ and political stability², as well as having a more politically active and engaged citizenry (Helliwell and Putnam, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Uslaner, 2002, 2006; Putnam, 2007; You, 2012; Newton *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, higher levels of social trust are also associated with improvements in citizens' living standards and several indicators of general well-being,

¹ There is no single and universal definition of social cohesion in the international academic literature, however, it can be understood as “the quality of social cooperation and togetherness of a collective, defined in geopolitical terms, that is expressed in the attitudes and behaviours of its members” (Dragolov, Ignácz, Lorenz, Delhey, Boehnke and Unzicker, 2016:6).

² The definition of political stability has been greatly contested in the international academic literature. Based on a review of the most prominent and influential arguments, Margolis (2010:336) conceptualises political stability as “the health of authority, resilience, legitimacy, and replacement in a political object... When an authority enforces its rule and adapts to change, and a body confers legitimacy upon it and retains the ability to replace it, an object will be stable. That is, it will have a lower potential for disruption”. Others have more simply conceptualised it as the ability of the state, government or a political object to prevent “contingencies from forcing its non-survival” (Dowding, 1983:238-239).

such as citizens' life expectancies, the quality of health systems and the standard of education (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Uslaner, 2002; Bjørnskov, 2007; Putnam, 2007; Newton, *et al.*, 2018).

The recognition of the importance of social trust has led scholars to question the origins and determinants of countries' varying levels of social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:212). While a large and well-established body of research attests to the importance and benefits of social trust for societies, research into the causes of social trust has fallen behind. A wide range of theories and explanations have emerged regarding the possible determinants of social trust. However, certain theories have received substantially greater support from scholars and the empirical literature and have therefore come to dominate the discussions. These theories identify the societal characteristics of ethnic/racial diversity, economic inequality, corruption, and confidence in institutions as being the greatest influences on levels of social trust. Meanwhile, other scholars have presented broader approaches to the matter and argue that latent concepts, such as levels of societal fairness (defined later in Chapter 1), determine levels of social trust (You, 2012). Therefore, there is limited consensus in the existing research regarding which variables matter for social trust. Additionally, not only do studies differ in their theoretical explanations of the causes of social trust, but the empirical findings differ dramatically too. While the differing empirical findings are in part due to the different countries under investigation, a large portion of this variance can also be attributed to the extensive methodological and theoretical inconsistencies between the different studies.³

South Africa has suffered from a social trust deficit for decades, with studies showing that levels of social trust have only deteriorated since the end of apartheid and the introduction of the democratic government in 1994 (Mmotlane, Struwig and Roberts, 2010:4; Khaile, Roman, October, Van Staden and Balogun, 2022:1). Most of the research on social trust has investigated the causes of social trust in developed Western countries, with few studies investigating the causes of social trust elsewhere in the world (Putnam, 2007), let alone in South Africa. The limited research that does investigate social trust in developing countries has produced findings that differ from, if not contradict, the research and theories on the causes of

³ See Chapter 2 Section 2.4 for discussion on the methodological and theoretical inconsistencies found in the international academic literature.

social trust in developed countries.⁴ Thus, if one is to better understand the determinants of social trust in developing nations, the theories based on research in developed countries cannot be assumed to apply and predict the causes of social trust in developing nations. Instead, greater research into the determinants of social trust in developing countries is needed. It is well established that South Africa has a critical need for greater economic growth, improved governance, more reliable and effective political institutions, and greater social cohesion, all of which are thought to improve with higher levels of social trust. To that end, this study aims to investigate the causes of social trust in South Africa and contribute to the limited research on social trust in developing countries.

1.2 Problem statement

South Africa is classified as a low-trust country (Mmotlane *et al.*, 2010:4; Khaile *et al.*, 2022:1). According to the World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 6 data from 2013, which is the most recent wave to include data on South Africa, three quarters (76.2%) of South Africans responded that you “need to be very careful” when asked whether they felt that most people can be trusted (World Values Survey, n.d.). As such, South Africans exhibited lower levels of social trust than the citizens of countries such as Iraq (30%), Belarus (32.6%) and Kazakhstan (38.3%), and exhibited substantially lower levels of trust than the medium to high trusting countries, such as Australia (51.4%), Sweden (60.1%), China (60.3%) and the Netherlands (66.1%) (World Values Survey, n.d.).

South African society experiences high levels of mistrust and animosity between the different factions of the population (Hofmeyr, Moosa, Patel and Murithi, 2022:5). Hofmeyr *et al.* (2021:3) argue that, given how recently South Africa transitioned to democracy and rid itself of legally enforced racial segregation policies, it is reasonable to assume that trust between citizens, especially those of different backgrounds, would be low. Instead, it is more appropriate to investigate how much progress has been made in fostering trust between South Africans since the end of apartheid (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2021:3). Mmotlane *et al.*, (2010:4) investigates the changes in South Africans’ trust levels between 1990 and 2007 using World Values Survey data, and finds that while, in 1990, only 28% of South Africans felt that most

⁴ See Chapter 2 Section 2.5.2 for discussion on how the results of the research on social trust in developing countries differ from and contradict the results of social trust research from developed countries.

people could be trusted, by 2007 this percentage had dropped to 19%. More recently, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation's (IJR's) Policy Briefs for February 2021 (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2021:3) and February 2022 (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2022:6) argue that South Africans still display low levels of trust in those of different backgrounds to themselves, with higher levels of trust extending only to those in their close circles, such as family and neighbours.

Since 1994, the South African government has emphasised the importance of reconciliation, social cohesion and national unity for South Africa, with the current administration outlining this goal in the National Development Plan (NDP), with the intention of achieving this by 2030 (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2022:6). Achieving greater social cohesion in South Africa is presumed to lead to a more stable and united society, foster greater economic growth, and lead to a variety of improvements in citizens' lives; from better safety and education standards to improvement in the general well-being of citizens (Mmotlane *et al.*, 2010:4). However, South Africa's social trust deficit remains as a significant obstacle to achieving this goal (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2022:6). As such, gaining a greater understanding of the factors contributing towards the country's social trust deficit will be vital for establishing how progress towards this goal can be made.

The most prominent and empirically supported theories on the determinants of social trust have identified racial diversity, income inequality, corruption, low institutional confidence, and low perceptions of fairness as key causes of societies' low social trust. This is highly significant for South Africa, as these societal characteristics are ubiquitous in the country. South Africa is a diverse and fragmented society, with deep social cleavages dividing citizens along race, class, income and linguistic lines (Khaile *et al.*, 2022:1). South Africa's long history of institutional and legally enforced racial segregation and discrimination during colonialism and apartheid has left South African society with lasting inequalities, divisions, antagonisms and injustices (Bornman, 2016:1). When South Africa became a democracy in 1994, the country rid itself of legal barriers to interracial integration and struck down discriminatory laws. Equality of opportunity for all South Africans was emphasised, while a new Constitution emphasising human rights and principles of non-racialism was introduced in 1996 (Bornman, 2016:1). However, the country continues to suffer from the legacy of its divided and unjust history. South African communities remain informally segregated along racial lines. The majority of residential areas still remain predominantly racially homogenous, with only a few areas having achieved greater racial integration since 1994. The majority of interracial contact in South

Africa happens in formal contexts, such as in the workplace, rather than in personal spaces, such as homes (Bornman, 2016:1).

South Africa also suffers from extremely high levels of inequality. In 2022, based on their data of 164 countries, the World Bank identified South Africa as “the most unequal country in the world”, with 10% of South Africa’s population being said to hold 80.6% of the country’s wealth (World Bank, 2022:1-3). “The legacy of colonialism and apartheid, rooted in racial and spatial segregation, continues to reinforce inequality”, as it has had a lasting impact on education, jobs, resources and access to land (World Bank, 2022:3). As such, race continues to be the main marker of inequality in South Africa today. Furthermore, South Africa’s wealth division largely coincides with the country’s racial divides, with extreme poverty and high unemployment rates being largely experienced by black South Africans (Bornman, 2016:1).

In the fourth quarter of 2021, South Africa had an official unemployment rate of 35.3%, with a total of 14.5 million unemployed persons (Statistics South Africa, 2022:1). South Africa’s unemployment rate continues to be shaped by the legacies of apartheid, with the unemployment rate among black South Africans being four to five times higher than the unemployment rate among white South Africans, according to labour market statistics from 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2019:146). Black South Africans were also shown to earn the lowest wages when employed, while white South Africans earned significantly higher average monthly wages than any other race group (Statistics South Africa, 2019:146). In addition to the racial and wealth divides in South Africa, the IJR also states that class and nationality are increasingly becoming sources of division and conflict (Bornman, 2016:1; Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2022:6).

South Africans also have low levels of confidence in the country’s public institutions and political leaders, with research showing that levels of institutional confidence have steadily declined since 1995 (Schulz-Herzenberg and Gouws, 2016:223; Steenekamp, 2017:68; De Jager and Steenekamp, 2019:161-162; Potgieter, 2019:31). This lack of confidence is said to result from citizens’ consistently poor government performance reviews rooted in the country’s growing unemployment rate, poor economic growth, poor service delivery and the government’s frequent involvement in corruption scandals (De Jager and Steenekamp, 2019:161-162; Hofmeyr, Patel and Moosa, 2021:2; Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2022:5-6). The IJR’s Policy Brief for February 2021 states that the Covid-19 pandemic will likely have a further negative

effect on South Africans' already low levels of social and political trust (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2021:3-4). This additional deterioration stems from the corruption and mismanagement displayed by the government during the crisis. Furthermore, the nationwide lockdown severely limited access to public spaces and opportunities that South Africans typically had for interracial interaction, thus increasing the sense of distance and unfamiliarity between groups of South Africans (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2021:3-4).

Issues and debates regarding perspectives on societal fairness are also highly salient and prevalent in South Africa. Not only do these issues relate to the country's extreme inequality, low institutional confidence, and concerns over the government's involvement in corruption scandals, but they also stem from prevalent debates surrounding what people consider to be fair and appropriate policies and measures for effectively addressing South Africa's history of discrimination and injustice. This includes the debates regarding the country's transformation policies, land redistribution policies, and tertiary education fees and language policies.

The objective of this study is to investigate which societal factors among the potential multiple possible causes most influence South Africans' low levels of social trust. This study tests some of the most prominent and influential theories on the causes of social trust presented in global academic literature to identify which factors have a significant influence on South Africans' social trust. Given the importance of social trust for society, and South Africa's need for greater economic growth, improved living standards and greater social cohesion, it is imperative to understand which factors influence South Africans' levels of social trust and contribute to the country's social trust deficit, and consequently, what the implications are for how social trust levels might be improved. Additionally, this study contributes to the limited research on the causes of social trust in developing nations and provides further insight into how these findings compare to the findings and hypotheses presented in the research on developed Western nations.

1.3 Theoretical points of departure

Social trust refers to a person's trust in other citizens or in "an unknown other", and captures the extent to which people feel they can trust others whom they do not know (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; You, 2012:701; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:3). While a substantial body of research exists on the benefits of social trust, there is far less research available and academic

consensus regarding the determinants of societies' social trust. Within the literature, two overarching approaches to explaining the causes of social trust can be identified: bottom-up and top-down explanations. Bottom-up explanations perceive social trust as a personality trait with a genetic basis or an attitude shaped by early childhood experiences. Thus, these attitudes are thought to remain relatively stable throughout people's lives, regardless of their adult experiences (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:350; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3; Newton *et al.*, 2018:38). As such, a society's level of social trust is presumed to be determined by the sum of the attitudes held by individual members of the population, and is not shaped or changed by contemporary events or their external environment.

Top-down explanations perceive social trust levels as being determined by societal characteristics rather than the sum of the intrinsic personality traits of individuals in society (Newton *et al.*, 2018:39). This explanation focuses on the influence of numerous societal characteristics on social trust, such as income distribution, crime levels, quality of government institutions and the extent of corruption, amongst others (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:209; Newton *et al.*, 2018:39). In contrast to the bottom-up explanations of social trust, top-down explanations perceive social trust levels as being determined by the external characteristics of society and thus emphasise the dynamic, malleable nature of social trust, as trust levels can change and adjust according to changes in the environment (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3). These two explanations of social trust are not mutually exclusive, and social trust levels are likely determined by a combination of both (You, 2012:208).

This study is concerned with investigating top-down explanations of social trust, which identify the societal characteristics affecting social trust. Unlike bottom-up explanations of social trust, which focus on static determinants of trust, the societal features determining social trust are amenable to change. Identifying which societal characteristics contribute to South Africa's low social trust provides greater insight into the features of South African society that need to be addressed for social trust to be able to grow. Top-down explanations of social trust have also received greater support from scholars and empirical literature than bottom-up explanations, thus making top-down explanations more relevant for this research (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:352; Newton *et al.*, 2018:51). Thus, this study focuses on the various top-down explanations of social trust. The remainder of this section provides an overview of

five of the most prominent arguments on the causes of social trust in the global academic literature.

1.3.1 The effects of diversity on social trust

The question that has received the most attention in the social trust literature in recent years has been the potential effects of racial or ethnic diversity on social trust (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:2).⁵ This question has garnered attention as many developed Western countries have begun to diversify as a result of increased immigration (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:2). It has been predicted that just about all modern societies will become increasingly diverse over the next few decades, motivating scholars to investigate the effects inevitable diversification will have on social trust (Putnam, 2007). The literature presents two overarching opposing schools of thought regarding the effects of diversity on social trust (Putnam, 2007:141; Robinson, 2016:1).

The first school of thought is that greater diversity and interracial interactions can lead to improved race relations, social solidarity and social trust (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Hewstone, 2003; Marschall and Stolle, 2004). The most well-known articulation of this argument is the contact hypothesis, first formulated in the 1950s by Gordon Allport (1954). The core of this argument is that the more contact people have with those who they deem different from themselves, the more they learn about others and overcome any initial hesitations and prejudices they may have held about one another (Putnam, 2007:141; Wessel, 2009:7; Robinson, 2016:1). Greater diversity and interracial interactions are thus thought to erode ingroup and outgroup distinctions, creating a greater sense of social solidarity and enhancing social trust (Putnam, 2007:142-144; Wessel, 2009:7). However, the contact

⁵ Neither concepts of race nor ethnicity exist as biological concepts and do not have any genetic basis, but rather exist as social constructs with social and historical implications (Santos *et al.*, 2010:122). This study's use of the terms "race", "ethnicity" and various related terms, such as references made to different racial categories, are in no way an endorsement of the continued use of colonial or apartheid ideas, terminology or systems of categorisation. An in-depth discussion on the history and development of the concepts of race and ethnicity as social constructs is beyond the scope of this study.

hypothesis has faced many critiques - including being too idealistic, being better suited for explaining experiences of contact between children, and failing to explain why informal segregation frequently occurs in diverse neighbourhoods and settings, amongst others (Forbes, 1997; Clack, Dixon and Tredoux, 2005; Durrheim and Dixon, 2005; Uslaner, 2006:15; Wessel, 2009:11).

Instead, there is substantially greater support among scholars for the second school of thought, which argues that ethnic diversity has a negative effect on social trust (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Giles and Evans, 1986; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Brewer and Brown, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Barr, 1999; Bobo, 1999; Zak and Knack, 2001; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Leigh, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013, 2018; Robinson, 2016). The underlying logic on which these various arguments are based is that ethnic diversity serves as a source of deep social cleavages which undermine social solidarity and suppress social trust (Uslaner, 2002:239; Delhey and Newton, 2005:5; Newton, 2007:355; Putnam, 2007:142). While a large body of research and empirical studies support the notion that diversity negatively affects levels of social trust, there is less consensus regarding the mechanisms causing this negative relationship. For instance, the conflict theory emphasises that exposure to outgroup members incites a sense of competition over limited resources, and serves as a source of conflict, subsequently exacerbating ingroup and outgroup distinctions (Blumer, 1958; Quillian, 1995; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). The “familiarity breeds trust” explanation emphasises the idea that people are more trusting of those they are familiar with and deem as being similar to themselves. As such, homogenous societies should have higher levels of social trust while diverse societies have lower social trust (Coleman, 1990; Barr, 1999; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3). Other scholars argue that it is not diversity itself that erodes trust, but rather that trust is eroded when diversity is accompanied by racial segregation (Uslaner, 2006, 2012a; Stolle, Soroka and Johnston, 2008; Wessel, 2009; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013; Robinson, 2016).

1.3.2 The effects of income inequality on social trust

Income inequality is widely considered to be a key cause of low social trust, with many empirical studies providing support for this argument (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Zak and Knack, 2001; Knack and Zak, 2002; Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and

Uslaner, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007:5; Putnam, 2007; You, 2012; Mattes and Moreno, 2018). Various theoretical explanations have been offered as to how and why income inequality decreases levels of social trust. While some argue that income inequality creates a social cleavage that divides a population, researchers are increasingly arguing that the negative effect of income inequality stems from the sense of injustice and unfairness associated with inequality (Uslaner, 2002:189; Delhey and Newton, 2005:7; Newton, 2007:17; You, 2012:713). As such, this latter explanation emphasises the importance of the subjective experience of income inequality on trust between citizens (Uslaner, 2002:183; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005:46; You, 2012).

1.3.3 The effects of corruption on social trust

The effect of corruption is another variable that frequently appears in the literature on the causes of social trust (Zack and Knack, 2001; Seligson, 2002; Eek and Rothstein, 2005; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Uslaner, 2005; Richey, 2009; You, 2012; Sapsford, Tsourapas, Abbott and Teti, 2019:17). Corruption serves as a breach of trust as those with power in a society misuse and abuse the power granted to them to exploit those who lack the same means (Tanzi, 1998:8; Zimring and Johnson, 2005:15; Liu, 2016:172). Corruption is considered to shape what citizens come to expect of their government, institutions and others' behaviour, and as such, it is thought to not only undermine trust in the institutions and elite, but also trust in other citizens (You, 2012; Sapsford *et al.*, 2019:17). Additionally, it is thought to have a divisive effect on populations as it splits citizens into those who benefit from corrupt practices and those who fall victim to them (Sapsford *et al.*, 2019:17). Empirical studies have yielded mixed results on the effects of corruption on social trust. While some studies find support for this negative relationship (Zack and Knack, 2001; Seligson, 2002; Eek and Rothstein, 2005; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Richey, 2009; You, 2012; Sapsford *et al.*, 2019), others fail to find a significant relationship between these variables (Uslaner, 2002, 2004; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2005). You (2012:704) argues that the lack of relationship detected in these studies on the effects of corruption can be attributed to the use of too small sample sizes, and thus argues that more research into this relationship is needed.

1.3.4 The effects of institutions and democracy on social trust

Confidence in institutions is recognised as another key source of social trust (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Levi, 1998; Offe, 1999; Newton and Norris, 2000; Putnam, Pharr and Dalton,

2000; Helliwell, 2003; Van der Meer, 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton, 2007; Neller, 2008; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1539; Newton *et al.*, 2018). Institutional confidence refers to the level of trust or confidence citizens have in the institutions, systems and procedures that operate in their society, such as the president, police, legal system and judiciary (Easton, 1965, 1975; Easterly, 2000:372; Newton, 2007:344; Zmerli and Newton, 2008:709; You, 2012:708). Scholars identify and emphasise the importance of various different mechanisms and features of institutions that are thought to be responsible for the positive relationship between institutions and social trust. Scholars emphasise, for instance, the importance of having democratic institutions that limit public officials' power; or having a reliable legal system and law enforcement that ensures the public's safety; as being essential features for enabling and promoting a trusting citizenry. However, empirical studies yield mixed results on the relationship between institutional confidence and social trust. While some studies find evidence for the positive relationship (Helliwell, 2003; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton, 2007), others fail to detect a relationship between social trust and institutional confidence (Inglehart, 1997; Uslaner, 2002; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2005; Anderson and Paskeviciute, 2006; Bjørnskov, 2007; You, 2012).

1.3.5 The effects of societal fairness on social trust

While research and theories on the effects of societal fairness on social trust are still in the early stages, this argument maintains that the latent concept of societal fairness has a significant influence on levels of social trust (You, 2012). The logic of the fairness explanation is that when societies operate in a manner that is deemed to be fair, with institutions and systems designed to reward honesty and trustworthy behaviour, and penalise dishonesty and untrustworthy behaviour, people are not only expected to behave in a more trustworthy manner, but they are also expected to be more trusting of others (Lerner, 1980; Begue, 2002; You, 2012).

One of the most concise theoretical formulations of this argument is posed by You (2012), who makes the fairness theory falsifiable⁶ and conducts an empirical study to test the effect of societal fairness on social trust in 80 countries worldwide. You's (2012) empirical study finds evidence that levels of fairness have a notable relationship with levels of social trust, and finds

⁶ A theory or proposition is falsifiable if it is capable of being tested and can be proven to be false or incorrect.

the effects of societal fairness on countries' levels of social trust to be greater than the effects of ethnic diversity on levels of social trust in these countries.

You (2012) is not alone in theorising the impact of fairness on social trust, with various other scholars highlighting the importance of economic equality and having fair political institutions for enhancing societies' levels of social trust (Levi, 1998; Rothstein and Stolle, 2003; Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). However, as stated, theories on the effects of societal fairness on social trust are still in the early stages of development, and thus more research is needed.

1.4 Research questions and hypotheses

This study's key objective is to investigate the factors that influence South Africa's levels of social trust. The overarching primary research question for this study is as follows:

Which factors strengthen or hinder social trust in South Africa's low-trust society?

This primary research question can be further broken down into five secondary questions. The hypotheses are guided by the key theoretical arguments presented in the literature review.

Sub-Research Questions:

Research Question 1: *Do experiences of racial diversity, measured through the frequency of interracial interaction, increase or decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*⁷

Hypothesis 1a: In line with the contact hypothesis, racial diversity and more frequent interracial interactions should increase social trust among South Africans.

⁷ When investigating the impact of diversity on social trust in South Africa, this study focuses specifically on the effects of racial diversity, as opposed to ethnic or linguistic diversity. This is because the South African population has historically been classified according to racial categories rather than ethnic categories. As a result, the concept of race has remained prominent, with racial categories being more commonly used to describe different groups of South Africans than ethnic or other types of divisions, with 49.6% of South Africans reporting race to be one of the biggest sources of division in South Africa (Potgieter, 2019).

Hypothesis 1b: In line with the conflict theory, racial diversity and more frequent interracial interactions should decrease social trust among South Africans.

Hypothesis 1c (null): There is no measurable association between racial diversity and interracial interaction and levels of social trust among South Africans.

Research Question 2: *Do subjective perceptions of relative income distribution (inequality) decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Hypothesis 2a: Citizens who perceive their monthly household income as being “worse” than the rest of South Africans should display lower levels of social trust in others, while those who perceive their monthly household incomes as being “better” than the rest of South Africans should display higher levels of social trust in others.

Hypothesis 2b (null): Citizens’ perceptions of their monthly household income relative to what they perceive other South Africans’ monthly household incomes to be have no effect on levels of social trust.

Research Question 3: *Do perceptions of government corruption decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Hypothesis 3a: Citizens who agree with the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it” should display lower levels of social trust towards other South Africans, while those who do not agree with this statement should display higher levels of social trust.

Hypothesis 3b (null): Citizens’ opinions on the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it” have no association with their levels of social trust in others.

Research Question 4: *Do citizens with lower levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions have lower levels of social trust, while citizens with higher levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions have higher levels of social trust?*

Hypothesis 4a: Citizens who hold lower levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions should display lower levels of social trust towards other South Africans, while those who hold higher levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions should display higher levels of social trust.

Hypothesis 4b (null): Citizens’ levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions have no association with their levels of social trust.

Research Question 5a: *Is there a latent variable that measures “perceptions of societal fairness” based on the combined effects of (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You’s (2012) argument?*

Hypothesis 5a.1: “Perceptions of societal fairness” can be identified as an underlying mechanism driving the relationship between social trust and (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You (2012).

Hypothesis 5a.2 (null): “Perceptions of societal fairness” cannot be identified as an underlying mechanism driving the relationship between social trust and (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You (2012).

As a further research question:

Research Question 5b: *Do greater “perceptions of societal fairness”, measured by the composite scale variable constructed from the operationalisation provided by You (2012), increase levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Hypothesis 5b.1: Greater “perceptions of societal fairness” are associated with greater levels of social trust among South Africans.

Hypothesis 5b.2 (null): There is no association between “perceptions of societal fairness” and social trust among South Africans.

1.5 Significance of study

Given the importance of social trust and the consequences of a trust deficit, it is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the factors influencing South Africans’ low levels of social trust. As described in the theoretical points of departure, a range of societal characteristics have been theorised to have a potential effect on social trust. Many of the most prominent and empirically supported theories on the determinants of social trust that are presented in the academic literature identify societal characteristics that are highly relevant features of South African society. Therefore, establishing whether and to what extent these characteristics influence South Africans’ social trust levels will provide greater insight into the factors contributing to South Africa’s social trust deficit. This will shed light on critical features of

society that would need to change for the country's social trust levels to improve. It will also help to identify which features of society will need to be targeted in any efforts made towards increasing social trust in South Africa, and indicate areas in need of further research regarding the types of policy choices and measures that will best address these obstacles.

South Africa is home to an extremely diverse population. As such, establishing whether racial diversity is influencing citizens' levels of social trust has significant implications for South Africa. Hypothesis 1a is in line with the contact hypothesis and states that increased interracial interactions should lead to increased social trust. If this hypothesis finds support, this will indicate that South Africans' interracial interactions enhance social trust. This finding would be in contrast with the large body of literature that has developed on social trust in developed Western countries, which predicts that diversity erodes social trust. This finding would highlight how trends and dynamics in social trust in South Africa, or developing nations more generally, differ from those commonly found in modern developed countries of the global north. Additionally, race relations on the African continent have been predominantly interpreted and theorised in terms of the conflict theory, while the contact hypothesis has mainly been applied and researched in modernised Western countries (Robinson, 2016:2). Finding support for the contact hypothesis in South Africa could thus indicate that it may be worth further investigating the applicability of the contact hypothesis in other African countries. In contrast, if hypothesis 1b finds support, which states that racial diversity has a negative effect on social trust, this would rather lend support to the arguments stating that diversity erodes social trust. This finding would indicate the need for measures aimed at improving interracial relations in South Africa and further research into the appropriate policy choices and measures that best assist in achieving these goals.

Hypothesis 2a predicts that citizens who perceive their monthly household income as being "worse" than the rest of South Africans should display lower levels of social trust, while those who perceive their monthly household incomes as being "better" than the rest of South Africans should display higher levels of social trust. If this hypothesis finds support, it will suggest that South Africa's extreme income inequality contributes to the country's social trust deficit. Thus, in addition to the critical need to address the country's income inequality in its own right, decreases in inequality levels should also lead to improvements in levels of social trust. However, given the long-time existence of South Africa's deeply entrenched and self-

reinforcing income inequality, it is unlikely that the country will see any improvements in levels of income inequality in the foreseeable future, and thus the social trust deficit is likely to remain unresolved.

Hypothesis 3a predicts that citizens who believe that “corrupt government officials often get away with it” should display lower levels of social trust, while those who disagree with this statement should have higher levels of social trust. If this hypothesis finds support, this will indicate the role that government corruption plays in contributing to the social trust deficit and thus highlight the importance of implementing measures to combat government corruption in efforts to increase social trust.

Similarly, if hypothesis 4a, which predicts that citizens with low levels of institutional confidence should have lower levels of social trust, finds support, this will indicate the influence that the performance and behaviour of South Africa’s government and institutional bodies have on social trust. This finding would suggest that if the appropriate conditions occurred or suitable measures were implemented that enabled citizens to place greater confidence in the country’s institutions, then levels of social trust should improve as a result. However, given South Africans’ low and declining levels of institutional confidence, it is unlikely that institutional confidence, and relatedly social trust, will improve in the foreseeable future (Schulz-Herzenberg and Gouws, 2016:223; Steenekamp, 2017:68; Potgieter, 2019:31; De Jager and Steenekamp, 2019:161-162).

If hypothesis 5a.1 holds true and a composite variable can be computed to measure perceptions of societal fairness when using You’s (2012) operationalisation of the concept, then this study can proceed to address research question 5b and test the relationship between the newly computed variable and social trust. However, if hypothesis 5a.2 holds true and a composite variable cannot be computed, then research question 5b cannot be investigated. This finding would indicate that You’s (2012) operationalisation or measure of perceptions of societal fairness is not well suited for measuring this latent variable in the South African context. Instead, further research should be undertaken to construct a new operationalisation that is suitable for measuring perceptions of societal fairness among South Africans.

Hypothesis 5b.1 predicts that citizens who perceive South Africa as having greater levels of societal fairness should display higher levels of social trust, while those who perceive the country as having lower levels of societal fairness should display lower levels of social trust. If this hypothesis finds support, this will indicate that there is a larger underlying variable of perceptions of societal fairness that is influencing levels of social trust among citizens and that this latent variable contributes to the relationship between social trust and perceptions of income inequality, government corruption and institutional confidence. This finding would indicate the need to adopt a broader or multifaceted approach to addressing the country's social trust deficit that can promote societal fairness through a range of policies and institutions. Future research could also develop on You's (2012) operationalisation of perceptions of societal fairness by adapting it to be better suited for measuring perceptions of fairness in the South African context.

Additionally, very little research has been conducted on the determinants of social trust in developing countries, including South Africa. As such, this study contributes towards the limited research on the determinants of social trust in developing countries. The results of this research can additionally be compared to the findings of research on the determinants of social trust in developed Western societies, thereby providing greater insight into the differences and similarities in social trust dynamics.

1.6 Research design and methodology

This study utilises a quantitative research design using cross-sectional survey data from the 2019 South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) to investigate the relationships between South Africans' levels of social trust and five key predictor variables identified by global academic literature. Quantitative survey research is one of the most effective methods for gathering research on the opinions, attitudes and beliefs of a large population and identifying trends and relationships between variables (Pierce, 2008:85; Burnham, Lutz, Grant and Layton-Henry, 2008:96; Babbie, 2016:248). It enables social scientists to quantify observations and information, allowing them to summarise, aggregate and compare data with ease, and to perform complex statistical analyses on social data (Babbie, 2016:26). Quantitative survey research allows for the use of large, nationally representative samples, which enable researchers to make generalisations about the broader population, which is of particular importance for political behaviour research (Dalton, 2002; Pierce, 2008:84; Creswell, 2009;

Babbie, 2016:279). The SARB's use of a large, carefully selected, nationally representative sample thus allows the findings of this study to be generalised to describe trends that would be found in the broader South African population. Quantitative survey research is not without its drawbacks, however. Some critics argue that quantitative research cannot capture the depth and complexities of social phenomena (Pierce, 2008:86). Additionally, survey research presents the risk of respondents misinterpreting questions or giving what they consider to be the socially desirable response to sensitive questions (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:124; Babbie, 2016:150). However, advocates of the quantitative research methodologies maintain that the advantages outweigh any limitations of this approach (Pierce, 2008:86-88; Babbie, 2016:26).

This study utilises secondary data from the SARB 2019 survey dataset to respond to this study's research questions. The SARB is "a nationally representative public opinion survey that has been" carried out by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) on an annual or bi-annual basis, and was created for the purpose of investigating South Africans' attitudes towards social cohesion, transformation, reconciliation, and government (Potgieter, 2019:20). As such, the SARB datasets and survey questionnaires are highly suitable for the purpose of this study and contain questions that speak directly to the study's research questions.

This study uses the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to run and analyse the SARB dataset. Prior to measuring the relationships between the variables in this study, SPSS is used to collapse and recode variable response categories to make them more suitable for analysis. Additionally, factor analyses are performed to reduce the number of variables and compute new variables where necessary. Cross-tabulations are used as the appropriate form of bivariate analysis, as all the variables involved in the analyses are categorical variables, while *Gamma* or *Cramer's V* are used as the appropriate correlation coefficients (De Vaus, 2002:258). Tests of statistical significance are used to determine the likelihood that the relationships detected are the result of chance or a sampling error, or whether they are able to accurately represent the broader population (De Vaus, 2002:263).

1.6.1 Variables and operationalisations

Dependent variable

Social trust is the dependent variable for this study. Most of the global academic literature on social trust measures the concept using what is now known as "the standard trust question"

because of its consistent use in countless studies over the past several decades, such as in the World Values Survey (1981-2020), American National Election Study (1964-2020), and the General Social Survey (1972-2021). The standard trust question asks: “In general, do you think that most people can be trusted, or can’t you be too careful in dealing with people?” (Almond and Verba, 1963; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:213; Bjørnskov, 2007; Newton, 2007:345; You, 2012:707; Newton *et al.*, 2018:39; Vallier, 2021:55). The SARB 2019 survey questions used to measure social trust closely resembles the standard trust question. As such, this study benefits from employing measures of social trust that are internationally recognised and accepted in the academic literature. To measure South Africans’ levels of social trust, the following SARB 2019 survey question is used:

Generally speaking, would you say that you are trusting or distrusting of people?
(1) Very distrusting (2) Distrusting (3) Neither trusting nor distrusting (4) Trusting (5)
Very trusting (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, n.d.).

Independent variables

IV 1: Racial diversity

The most conventional approach to measuring any type of diversity is to use a fractionalisation index (Uslaner, 2006:10). However, these indexes are only able to serve as weak proxies for measuring actual interethnic exposure, which is considered to be the key mechanism behind the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust (Uslaner, 2006:15; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:24). As such, measures of actual interethnic exposure and contact are better suited for measuring the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust.

The SARB surveys were specifically designed to investigate the nature of race relations in South Africa, and as such, the questionnaires include items that are purposefully designed to measure the frequency of interracial interactions. Thus, this study uses the following highly suitable SARB 2019 question to directly measure the frequency with which respondents have interracial interactions to measure the influence of diversity on social trust for this study:

Thinking about a typical day in the past month, how often did you interact or talk to someone who is a different race to you? [INSERT LOCATION]
(1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Always (IJR, n.d.).

This question closely resembles the survey questions used to measure the frequency of interracial interactions in the global academic literature, such as those used by Hurtado, Carter and Sharp (1995), the European Social Survey (2014) and those used in previous waves of the SARB. Thus, this study uses questions that are recognised and accepted in international literature. To simplify this for the purpose of analysis, the battery of questions asking respondents about interactions in different locations is computed into a single scale variable that provides each respondent with one total score for the frequency of interracial interactions in an average day, irrespective of the location in which it takes place.⁸

IV 2: Perceptions of income distribution (inequality)

This study is concerned with the impact of subjective perceptions of income distribution and inequality, or, how citizens perceive their own incomes relative to what they believe other South Africans to be earning, and the effect this has on social trust. To measure respondents' subjective perceptions of relative income, the following SARB 2019 survey question is used:

In relation to the rest of South Africa, your financial situation is ...

(1) Much worse (2) Worse (3) The same (4) Better (5) Much better (IJR, n.d.).

This survey question closely resembles the questions used in the international academic literature on subjective perceptions of relative income, such as the questions included in the World Values Survey (1981-2020) (World Values Survey, n.d.) and the General Social Survey (1982-2021) (GSS Data Explorer, n.d.). As such, the question used in this study is in line with measures of relative income that are widely used and accepted in international literature.

IV 3: Perceptions of government corruption

This study investigates the relationship between perceptions of government corruption and levels of social trust. The SARB 2019 question item used to measure perceptions of corruption for this study closely resembles the survey questions measuring this variable in the global academic literature, such as those used in waves of the World Values Survey (1995-2022) (World Values Survey, n.d.), the European Values Study (2004-2016) (GESIS, n.d.), and the

⁸ See Chapter 3 for details on how this variable is recoded.

Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (2006-2022) (Donner, Hartmann, Schwarz and Steinkamp, 2022). This study thus uses measures that are widely used and accepted in the international literature. The SARB 2019 question reads as follows:

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Corrupt government officials often get away with it.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree (IJR, n.d.).

IV 4: Confidence in institutions

Confidence in institutions is conventionally measured by asking respondents how much confidence they have in a list of various political institutions (Newton, 2007; Zmerli and Newton, 2008). Following suit, this study measures confidence in institutions with the following SARB 2019 survey question:

Please indicate how much confidence you have in each of the following institutions⁹, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

(1) Not at all (2) Not very much (3) Somewhat (4) Quite a lot (5) A great deal (IJR, n.d.).

This question closely resembles the survey question found in the global academic literature that measures institutional confidence, such as that found in the World Values Survey (1990-2020) (World Values Survey, n.d.) and the European Social Survey (2002-2020) (GESIS, n.d.). To analyse the effect of confidence in institutions on social trust, this study will compute new scale variables from the SARB's battery of 19 questions to reduce the number of cases and aid the analysis.¹⁰

⁹ See Appendix for complete list of institutions.

¹⁰ See Chapter 3 for details on how this variable is recoded.

IV 5: Perceptions of societal fairness

Research and theories on the effects of societal fairness on social trust are still in the early stages of development, and thus few studies measure the effects of societal fairness directly and provide operationalisations for the latent concept. You (2012) contributes to the research on the influence of fairness on social trust by making the societal fairness theory falsifiable. You (2012) argues that the influence of societal fairness on social trust can be ascertained through measuring the effects of a society's income distribution (inequality), corruption levels, and citizens' institutional confidence on social trust. While You (2012) measures the impact of societal fairness at both the individual and national levels, this study solely focuses on the impact of societal fairness at the individual level and therefore investigates the influence of citizens' perceptions of societal fairness. This study, therefore, utilises You's (2012) operationalisation of societal fairness at the individual level to create this study's "perceptions of societal fairness" variable. This is achieved by computing the previous three variables, namely, income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, and confidence in institutions, into a single scale variable which measures perceptions of societal fairness.

Demographic variables

The relationships between social trust and six key demographic variables are investigated in this study. The demographic variables are: age, gender, race/ethnic group, urban/rural location, highest level of education received, and total monthly household income. Where appropriate, SPSS will be used to collapse various response categories and recode the variables to make them more suitable for analysis.¹¹ The selection of demographic variables included in this study has been guided by the social trust literature, and are the demographic variables that are considered to be most relevant to the investigation of social trust in the South African context. Previous studies show that factors such as higher levels of education (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:208; Helliwell and Putnam, 1999; Putnam, 2007; Tolsma, Van der Meer and Gesthuizen, 2009) and personal wealth (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:208) are expected to contribute to higher levels of social trust, while belonging to a historically discriminated ethnic or race group leads to lower levels of trust. Some studies indicate that women are slightly less trusting than men (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:208), and others have suggested that younger citizens are

¹¹ See Chapter 3 for details on how these variables are recoded.

slightly less trusting than older citizens, although this difference is marginal (Putnam, 2007:155).

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the research problem by describing the background and rationale behind the investigation and providing an overview of how the research is conducted. The rest of this study is structured as follows: Chapter 2 provides an overview of the global academic literature on social trust. This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of the theories that will be applied and tested in this study, while also highlighting the limitations and research gaps found in the literature. Chapter 3 details the quantitative research design and methodology used for this study, and describes the dataset and statistical procedures used to investigate the relationships between the variables to respond to the research questions. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth discussion of the data analyses performed and the main findings. This chapter then discusses how these findings respond to the various research questions and how the findings relate to the global academic literature. Chapter 5 concludes this study and highlights the key findings and implications of these results. This chapter also discusses the limitations of this study and makes suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, over the past three decades, an expansive body of research has developed around the importance of social trust and its influence on various aspects of society. While substantial literature attests to the benefits of social trust, there has been far less research produced, and consensus reached, regarding the causes of societies' vastly differing social trust levels. This chapter discusses some of the most prominent and influential theories and empirical studies found in the global literature on the causes of social trust. This chapter starts with a brief discussion of the development of the field of social trust research, followed by an overview of the different types of social trust and the important role of social trust in societies. This chapter then outlines the two main approaches to explaining the causes of social trust, namely, bottom-up and top-down explanations. Thereafter, the chapter discusses some of the most prominent and influential theories on the causes of social trust, as well as the main findings in the empirical research. Concluding this discussion, this chapter will briefly account for the lack of consensus and consistency in this literature, and discuss a few key challenges and limitations encountered in social trust research.

2.2 Background

It has long been established that trust plays an essential role in ensuring a society's success in economic, political and social matters. Examples of this recognition date back to the time of Confucius, demonstrated by his statement that "trust, weapons, and food are the essentials of government" (Newton, 2007:342). In more contemporary times, numerous influential thinkers have continued to advocate for and recognise the importance of trust for the functioning of societies. Hobbes, Locke and Adam Smith all argued that trust in government is essential for enabling governments to run effectively (Newton, Stolle and Zmerli, 2018:37), with Smith arguing that trust is an essential prerequisite for making efficient economic transactions possible (Newton, 2007:342). Comte, Saint-Simon, Durkheim, Simmel, and Tönnies, who are commonly regarded as the fathers of sociology, argued that trust binds people within a community and enables self-interested people to co-operate (Newton *et al.*, 2018:37-38).

In addition to advocating for the importance of social trust, these thinkers were also concerned with determining the mechanisms necessary for the formation of trust. Hobbes argued that the government is solely responsible for creating the necessary sense of trust between strangers in society. In contrast, John Stuart Mill (1848) argued that it is instead the importance of public opinion and the fear of having one's reputation tarnished that drives people to behave in a trustworthy manner, therefore making government institutions and laws unnecessary for enforcing trustworthy behaviour (Zak and Knack, 2001:299). Tocqueville, who advocated that trust is critical for achieving stable democracies, argued that trust is created through involvement in voluntary associations (Newton *et al.*, 2018:37-38). This line of argument has persisted into the 20th century and influenced many leading scholars, such as Emile Durkheim and Max Weber (Newton, 2007:342).

The importance of political trust and social trust were notions that initially developed separately. It was only with the emergence of the behavioural approach to politics that the two approaches to studying trust came together as an integrated study. This enabled the important relationships between social and political participation, social cohesion and inclusion, as well as democratic stability, all to be investigated as a unit, with the influential works of Almond and Verba (1963), and Verba and Nie (1972) leading the way. These developments ultimately led to the establishment of Putnam's (1993) highly influential social capital theory, which finds the workings of, and connection between, social and political trust to be the cornerstone of democracies (Newton *et al.*, 2018:38).

2.2.1 Social capital

The growth of research into social trust over the past three decades stemmed from social scientists' interest in the concept of social capital in the 1990s. Putnam (1993:167) defines social capital as “features of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions”. Studies show that social capital plays an integral role in influencing societies' economic success, supporting democratic stability, improving education rates, and improving living standards (Newton, 2007:342). This newfound focus on social capital led to an explosion of interest in the concept of social trust, which is identified as being both the central pillar of social capital as well as the best indicator of it in empirical research (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:211; Bjørnskov, 2007:1; Newton, 2007:342; You, 2012:701). As such, a substantial and well-established body of literature has

developed around social trust and the extensive benefits it brings to societies (Bjørnskov, 2007:1).

2.2.2 Social trust

There is no single or universally accepted definition of social trust. Instead, the literature contains substantial debate regarding the precise characteristics of social trust, how it is defined and what distinguishes it from other similar and related concepts (Newton, 2007:343). As Levi (1998:79) describes, “Trust is not one thing and it does not have one source; it has a variety of forms and causes”. Newton (2007:343) argues that attempting to create a single definition of social trust is unnecessary, if not pointless, as the concept lacks defining characteristics. Instead, he argues that these theoretical issues are insignificant as citizens nevertheless have a common sense understanding of what trust is and can respond to survey questions about it appropriately and accurately. Nevertheless, based on his appraisal of the literature, Newton (2007:344) offers a working definition of social trust as “the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm, if they can avoid it, and will look after our interests, if this is possible”. Social trust is the horizontal, interpersonal trust found between citizens and is thought to stem from the idea that one can reasonably expect fellow citizens to behave in a co-operative fashion and conduct themselves in accordance with shared norms and interests (Mattes and Moreno, 2018:357).

2.2.3 Particularised and generalised social trust

While the broad notion of social trust is used to capture the trust one has in other citizens, a distinction can be drawn between two subtypes of social trust commonly identified in the literature. These are particularised social trust (also known as thick trust or specific trust), and generalised social trust (also known as thin trust or abstract trust) (Delhey and Newton, 2005:2; Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Newton, 2007:345; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1540; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:357; Newton *et al.*, 2018:40). Particularised trust refers to the trust that exists between members of a specific group, such as a family, neighbourhood, or identity group (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Mattes and Moreno, 2018:357; Newton *et al.*, 2018:40). It is the trust that people have in those they consider similar to themselves, such as those of the same ethnicity, religion, or community (Newton *et al.*, 2018:40). Particularised trust is the trust that a person has based on their personal interactions with someone, their knowledge of the person’s reputation in the community, or first-hand knowledge of what can be expected of people in

their community (Bjørnskov, 2007:2). It is most commonly found in small, tight-knit communities in which members frequently interact with one another, and where the culture and people are relatively homogenous.

The second type of social trust is generalised social trust, which describes the trust one has in strangers or other citizens whom you have no direct information about (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1540; Mattes and Moreno, 2018:357). Generalised social trust is especially important for large, heterogeneous urban societies wherein masses of people frequently interact with strangers from different backgrounds to themselves on a daily basis. As societies continue to grow, modernise, and become more impersonal, generalised social trust becomes increasingly essential for enabling citizens to share spaces and co-operate with people they do not know (Delhey and Newton, 2005:2; Newton, 2007:345; Newton *et al.*, 2018:40). In large, modern societies where social ties between citizens are weaker but more extensive, generalised social trust serves as a “synthetic force” that is essential for the functioning of these societies (Delhey and Newton, 2005:2).

Unlike particularised trust, where the formation of trusting or distrusting attitudes is based on personal experience and first-hand knowledge of the others involved, the origin of generalised social trust has been more challenging for researchers to understand and identify (Delhey and Newton, 2005:2; Newton, 2007:349). It is specifically this phenomenon of generalised social trust that has been the object of great interest among researchers and has been recognised for the significant influence it has on various facets of society (Delhey and Newton, 2005:2; Newton, 2007:349). As a result, most of the literature on social trust either explicitly or implicitly focuses on generalised social trust, using the term “social trust” synonymously with generalised social trust (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Newton, 2007:348). Following suit with this trend, this study will use the term “social trust” to refer to generalised social trust, as opposed to particularised trust.

2.2.4 Social trust and political trust

The concept of social trust is distinct from the concept of political or institutional trust. While social trust is the horizontal, interpersonal trust between people, political trust is a vertical form of trust wherein people place their trust in the political institutions and systems that govern society (Easton, 1965, 1975). It has become conventional to refer to the trust people have in

institutions as institutional confidence (Newton, 2007:344). Institutional confidence is closely associated with the concept of legitimacy as it is thought to serve as a form of tacit consent that enables the government and state institutions to lead on behalf of the population without relying on coercion to gain control (Easton, 1965, 1975; Mattes and Moreno, 2018:357; De Jager and Steenekamp, 2019:148). The literature on institutional confidence distinguishes between confidence in institutions that are typically considered to be relatively neutral and impartial, such as the police, judiciary and legal system (henceforth referred to as non-political institutions); and confidence in institutions and actors that are linked to the government, such as the president and political parties (henceforth referred to as political/government institutions) (Newton *et al.*, 2018:40-41). Confidence in non-political institutions is typically greater than confidence in political institutions and organisations (Newton *et al.*, 2018:40-41).

2.2.5 Importance of social trust

A substantial body of research attests to the many benefits of social trust for societies. Studies have found social trust to be linked to economic success, with associations being found between countries with greater levels of social trust and greater economic growth, faster economic development, attracting and retaining greater foreign investment, and facilitating transactions by reducing transaction costs in imperfect economies (Arrow, 1972, 1974; Fukuyama, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1997; La Porta *et al.*, 1997; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:212; Uslaner, 2002). Social trust has also been found to influence countries' political and social environments. Societies with greater levels of social trust are associated with better government performance and public policies, more effective bureaucracies, lower levels of corruption, and a more politically active and engaged citizenry (Helliwell and Putnam, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Uslaner, 2002, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Newton *et al.*, 2018). High social trust societies are associated with having greater levels of social cohesion and social stability, having more tolerant attitudes towards minority groups, being more open to implementing redistributive programs, and having greater levels of economic equality (Uslaner, 2002, 2006; Putnam, 2007; You, 2012; Newton *et al.*, 2018). High social trust societies are also found to have populations that are better educated, safer, healthier, have greater life expectancies, and report having higher levels of life satisfaction (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Uslaner, 2002; Bjørnskov, 2007; Putnam, 2007; Newton *et al.*, 2018).

Levels of social trust vary significantly between countries around the world. According to the most recent World Values Survey Wave 7 data, which reports on levels of social trust in 59 countries around the world between 2017 and 2022, only nine countries had more than half of their populations report that they feel that “most people can be trusted”, with Denmark having the highest levels of social trust (73.9%), followed by Norway (72.1%), Finland (68.4%), China (63.5%), Sweden (62.8%) Iceland (62.3%), Switzerland (57.1%), the Netherlands (57.0%) and New Zealand (56.6%). Countries such as Canada (46.7%), Germany (41.6%), the United Kingdom (40.2%) and the United States (37.0%) all fall into the medium trust range. At the other end of the spectrum, 18 countries have less than 10% of the population responding that most people can be trusted, with Indonesia (4.6%), Columbia (4.5%), Peru (4.2%), Nicaragua (4.2%), Albania (2.8%) and Zimbabwe (2.1%) reporting the lowest levels of trust (World Values Survey Database, 2022).

The World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017-2022) only includes eight African countries, all of which had less than 17% of their populations responding that “most people can be trusted”. According to research by Mattes and Moreno (2018:358), sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America have the lowest levels of social trust in the world, with the sub-Saharan African regions being identified as having the lowest levels, with only 13% of Africans across 13 countries responding that “most people can be trusted”. These regions are characterised as exhibiting very high levels of particularised trust in a tight circle of trustees, typically encompassing the extended family and neighbours, after which trust levels begin to decline, with social trust levels being at their lowest for generalised social trust or trust in “most people” (Mattes and Moreno, 2018:358).

2.3 Literature on the causes of social trust

Given the importance of social trust for modern societies and the recognition that social trust levels have been declining in recent decades, it is critical to understand what causes and influences levels of social trust across societies (Putnam, 2007). However, research into the causes of social trust has been superseded by research on its benefits, and research into why some countries are more trusting than others remains limited (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:208; Bjørnskov, 2007:1; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1538; You, 2012:701).

A variety of theories on the causes of social trust have nonetheless been proffered, varying in their approaches and level of analysis (Newton, 2007:348). Two main approaches to explaining social trust can be identified in the literature, and they are the bottom-up explanations and the top-down explanations. These two explanations are not mutually exclusive and it is probable that both individual characteristics and community characteristics will work to influence a society's level of social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:208). The remainder of this chapter outlines the various approaches and theories on the causes of social trust. Since this study is particularly concerned with investigating the societal-level determinants of social trust in South Africa, top-down theories are of greater relevance and are discussed in greater depth than the bottom-up theories. Top-down explanations also receive substantially greater support in the global literature, on both empirical and theoretical grounds, than the bottom-up explanations, thus making these theories worthy of closer inspection (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:352; Newton *et al.*, 2018:51).

Bottom-up explanations of social trust

Bottom-up explanations of social trust view social trust levels as stemming from an individual's personal characteristics, and often fall into either the psychological or sociological explanation of social trust. The psychological explanation views trust as an intrinsic personality trait of individuals that exists independently of a person's circumstances and thus remains relatively stable throughout their lives (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:350; Newton *et al.*, 2018:38). This argument maintains that a person's propensity to trust is developed during their early childhood years through interactions with adults, and that once their disposition to trust has developed, this propensity will remain relatively unchanged unless it is influenced by experiences of trauma (Uslaner 2002:89; Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:35; Newton *et al.*, 2018:38). Similarly, other scholars pose a "nature-nurture" variation of this theory, arguing that in addition to trust being shaped by one's early childhood years, people are also born with a genetic predisposition to trust (Newton, 2007:38).

A sociological explanation of trust also views trust as being an individual characteristic, but instead argues that trusting attitudes are the result of individuals' life circumstances and experiences in the later years of their lives, rather than resulting from genetics or early childhood (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:350; Newton *et al.*, 2018:38). The sociological approach argues that trust is correlated with a combination of objective and

subjective individual characteristics, “most notably education, income, social class, happiness, work satisfaction, ethnic and religious background, majority and minority group membership, and life experiences such as divorce, unemployment, and serious illness” (Newton *et al.*, 2018:38).

Similarly to the socio-psychological explanations already described, the “winners-losers hypothesis” also views trust as being an individual characteristic, arguing that trusting dispositions are determined by whether an individual views themselves as being a “winner” or “loser” in society. The term “winners” is used to describe those who are wealthier, better educated, of high social and economic status and who report greater life satisfaction (Newton *et al.*, 2018:47). The logic behind this argument is that those who are “winners” and have been successful in their lives have less reason to distrust the society that has served them well and allowed them to succeed. The “losers” of society, in contrast, have not benefitted from the systems that run their society, and therefore have greater reason to experience a sense of distrust (Newton, 1999; Patterson, 1999; Whiteley, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Stolle, 2001; Delhey and Newton, 2003).

Most bottom-up explanations of social trust have received far less support from scholars and empirical studies than the top-down explanations (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:352; Newton *et al.*, 2018:51). In addition to finding issue with the theoretical explanations behind the various bottom-up explanations, empirical studies have also failed to produce sufficient evidence of the influence of individual characteristics on the creation of social trust as they have been unable to yield robust results thus far (Delhey and Newton, 2005:3; Newton, 2007:352-356; Newton *et al.*, 2018:51).

Top-down explanations of social trust

Top-down explanations of social trust focus on how the various qualities and characteristics of societies, such as the social and political context, national institutions, and systems of government, shape societies’ levels of social trust (Newton *et al.*, 2018:39). This approach views trust as being determined by a population’s experience of their society, which is shaped by the formal and informal systems and institutions that govern their society, and their perspectives of and relationships with other citizens. As such, top-down explanations of social trust highlight the important role that government policies and state institutions play in creating

an environment that either nurtures and promotes social trust, or hinders it (Newton *et al.*, 2018:39). Top-down approaches argue that trusting attitudes are determined by how trustworthy people perceive the world and those around them to be, rather than how trusting they intrinsically are, as emphasised by bottom-up approaches to trust (Newton, 2007:350). An important feature of many top-down explanations of social trust is that they point to the dynamic and malleable nature of social trust (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3). If social trust is largely determined by the characteristics of a society, this suggests that by changing certain societal characteristics, levels of social trust can be changed too.

Studies have presented various arguments for the different political, economic and social features of societies that are thought to have a notable effect on social trust. The following sections discuss some of the most prominent and influential arguments that have dominated the top-down literature on the causes of social trust. These theories include those regarding the effects of ethnic/racial diversity, income distribution (inequality), corruption, institutional confidence, and societal fairness on social trust. An in-depth discussion of these theories ensues.

2.3.1 The effects of diversity on social trust

One of the most contentious and prevalent topics in recent social trust literature is the potential effect of ethnic diversity on social trust and cohesion (Robinson, 2016:1; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:2). There are two overarching, and opposing, arguments regarding the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust in the literature (Putnam, 2007:141; Robinson, 2016:1). While some scholars argue that ethnic diversity can lead to greater social solidarity and trust (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Hewstone, 2003; Marschall and Stolle, 2004), others argue that ethnic diversity rather erodes social trust (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Giles and Evans, 1986; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Brewer and Brown, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Barr, 1999; Bobo, 1999; Zak and Knack, 2001; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Leigh, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013, 2018; Robinson, 2016). The rapid growth of interest in this matter was sparked by concerns regarding the rising levels of ethnic diversity that most modern countries have been experiencing in recent years as a result of spikes in immigration (Putnam, 2007:13; Robinson, 2016:1; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:1). Rising levels of ethnic diversity are

predicted to continue in the near future, with Putnam (2007:138) suggesting that ethnic diversity will continue to rise in most modern societies over the next decades.

Before discussing the various arguments on the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust, it is important to clarify what is meant by the terms “race”, “ethnicity”, and “ethnic/racial diversity”. While the concepts of race and ethnicity are closely associated and frequently used interchangeably, they are conceptually distinct (Santos, Palomares, Normando and Quintão, 2010:123). The concept of race has many definitions. It is most commonly used to describe a group of people who appear to share phenotypic and morphological characteristics and are thus grouped together according to a set of shared physical characteristics, such as skin colour (Santos *et al.*, 2010:121-124). The concept of ethnicity, on the other hand, is more commonly used to describe a person’s identity based on a variety of both physical and cultural factors, including physical features, kinship, “nationality, tribal affiliation, religion, language and traditions of a particular group” (Santos *et al.*, 2010:121). “The concept of race was central to historical subjugation of enslaved and colonised populations” (Ansell, 2013:126), and thus the use of the term “race” is often considered controversial due to its history and associations with racism (Barlett, 2001:39). While both scholars and people in daily life frequently use the terms “race” and “ethnicity” interchangeably (Barlett, 2001:42), some prefer to use the term “ethnicity” as a euphemism when referring to race because it is perceived to be more polite (Spencer, 2006:32). Different countries also tend to use different terms to refer to the same concept. For instance, in the United States and Malaysia the tendency is to use the term “race”, while Europeans tend to use “ethnicity” (Spencer, 2006:33). As such, it can be assumed that scholars use the terms “race” and “ethnicity” to refer to more or less the same concept in the literature, with their choices of terminology being guided by what they deem to be the most suitable term to use with respect to the countries in the study.

For this study, the term “ethnic/racial diversity” is used to refer to ethnic/racial heterogeneity (Abascal, Xu and Baldassarri, 2021:1).¹² As such, “ethnic/racial diversity” refers to the number and sizes of groups of people belonging to different ethnic/racial categories in a given location

¹² The terms “racial diversity” and “racial heterogeneity” will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

(Abascal *et al.*, 2021:1). The greater the number of groups in a location and the more evenly distributed the people of the various groups are, the greater is the diversity of the location (Abascal *et al.*, 2021:1).

Arguments for diversity enhancing social trust

Contact hypothesis

One school of thought within the diversity and trust literature argues that ethnic diversity can lead to enhanced social trust and solidarity between members of a society. The most well-known articulation of this argument is the contact hypothesis. The contact hypothesis developed from post-Second World War research conducted in the United States, as the country was faced with finding the best way to navigate the changes in communities that would result from the new desegregation policies (Wessel, 2009:7). Field research yielded inconsistent results on the effects of increasing diversity on social relations, so researchers turned to using formal experiments conducted in laboratories to test the relationship (Wessel, 2009:7). Based on the findings of these experiments, the contact hypothesis was developed by Allport (Allport, 1954; Wessel, 2009:7). According to this hypothesis, the more contact people have with others who they deem to be unlike themselves, such as those of a different race or ethnic group, the more they will come to trust these people (Putnam, 2007:141; Wessel, 2009:7; Robinson, 2016:1). The logic is that the more contact people have with those they deem to be different from themselves, the more they can learn about others and overcome any initial hesitations and stereotypes they may have held (Wessel, 2009:10). The contact theory argues that diversity enhances social trust as it erodes the ingroup and outgroup distinction and creates a sense of solidarity (Putnam, 2007:142-144). Allport (1954) also stipulates four key conditions that are necessary for interethnic contact to lead to greater social trust: members of the different groups must be of equal status; they must engage in the pursuit of common goals; the interaction must entail intergroup co-operation; and the interaction or contact must receive institutional support (such as by law or custom) or the support of authorities (Wessel, 2009:7). Allport (1954) also emphasises the importance of the opportunity for friendship between the members of the different group, which in later years, Pettigrew (1998) posed as a fifth condition for the contact hypothesis (Wessel, 2009:7).

Various adaptations have since been made to Allport's (1954) original theory and list of conditions. Some scholars argue Allport's four original conditions merely facilitate contact

rather than ensure its positive effects (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Wessel, 2009:10). Other scholars emphasise the importance of the setting in which the contact takes place, arguing that this has a significant effect on the degree to which contact improves trust (Wessel, 2009:8). Recent contact literature has also come to identify different underlying mechanisms that are thought to explain why contact enhances trust. While the original contact hypothesis assumed that contact increases trust by enabling people to learn more about others, and thus identified processes at the cognitive level, recent studies argue that contact increases trust by affecting people's emotional behaviour instead (Hewstone, 2003; Wessel, 2009:10).

However, the contact hypothesis has faced many critiques. A key critique is that while the contact hypothesis may be able to describe contact in an ideal world, or with an abstract notion of contact, it fails to account for many of the characteristics of contact in real world scenarios (Durrheim and Dixon, 2005). For instance, a critique frequently raised against the contact hypothesis is that studies have shown that diverse communities tend to informally resegregate into homogenous groups, both in large-scale settings such as urban residential areas, as well as in more micro settings such as university cafeterias, and that this resegregation limits further opportunities for contact (Clack *et al.*, 2005; Wessel, 2009:11). This resegregation weakens the argument posed by the contact hypothesis as it demonstrates that interethnic contact is not leading to greater solidarity or the erosion of in- and outgroup boundaries, but rather that diversity is causing people to resegregate with those who they consider similar to themselves and are part of the same ingroup. Durrheim and Dixon (2005) argue that the contact hypothesis fails to distinguish between good and bad contact due to the theory's highly theoretical conceptualisation of contact rather than being based on real-life scenarios. Wessel (2009:13) also argues that contact theory suffers from a blind spot fallacy as it fails to account for instances of "failed contact", which can further exacerbate tensions and prejudices.

Another critique has stemmed from empirical studies which find that having a friend from another race group has little to no effect on increasing trust in that race group overall (Uslaner, 2006:15). This finding appears to contradict the arguments expressed by Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998) regarding the importance of the opportunity for friendship as a key condition for interethnic contact to enhance social trust. Forbes (1997) argues that the contact theory would be better suited to explaining the development of trust between children, rather than adults. Forbes reasons that this is because "[c]hildren have minds that are almost blank slates,

lacking historical lore or knowledge. Their thinking, unlike that of adults, is not tangled up with complicated ethnic mythologies.... children do not meet as superiors or inferiors, in relations of authority and subordination..." (Forbes, cited in Uslaner, 2006:17). Uslaner (2006:17) supports Forbes's view, finding that having a friend from a different race group has a far greater effect on the development of interethnic trust in children than in adults.

Arguments for diversity eroding social trust

The majority of scholars and studies argue that ethnic diversity has a negative effect on social trust (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Giles and Evans, 1986; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Brewer and Brown, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Barr, 1999; Bobo, 1999; Zak and Knack, 2001; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Leigh, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013, 2018; Robinson, 2016). This hypothesis receives a great deal of empirical support from the literature which has produced evidence of an inverse relationship between diversity and social trust in a range of different settings and levels of analysis (Putnam, 2007:142-143). However, there is less agreement among scholars regarding the mechanisms and reasons behind this negative relationship. The underlying assumption upon which these theories are based, either implicitly or explicitly, is that diverse societies are more likely to be fragmented and develop deep social cleavages, such as cleavages along racial, ethnic, income, class, educational, religious, cultural, language or geographic lines (Zak and Knack, 2001:312). As such, the various arguments for ethnic diversity's erosive effects on social trust are based on the logic that ethnic diversity serves as the source of deep social cleavages and that these cleavages undermine social solidarity and suppress social trust (Uslaner, 2002:239; Delhey and Newton, 2005:5; Putnam, 2007:142; Newton, 2007:355).

Conflict and racial threat theories

The argument most frequently posed in opposition to the contact hypothesis is the well-known conflict theory. In its simplest form, conflict theory states that exposure to diverse groups of people or outgroups causes intergroup tensions and a heightened sense of competition over limited resources, resulting in greater ingroup solidarity while increasing prejudice and sense of hostility towards outgroup members (Blumer, 1958; Quillian, 1995; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). When applied to the diversity-trust literature, the conflict theory posits that trust is less likely to develop in heterogeneous societies as exposure to people of a different ethnic group will result in tighter bonds with those of the same ethnic group, and less trust towards those

considered different (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Giles and Evans, 1986; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Brewer and Brown, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Bobo, 1999; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Putnam, 2007:142-144; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3-4). According to Robinson (2016:2), much of the literature on ethnic diversity in the developing world has been framed under the conflict hypothesis. She states that this is particularly relevant to studies on interethnic relations in African countries, wherein the trust deficit between different ethnic groups is frequently described as being the result of conflict and competition between ethnic groups over limited resources and as a response to group inequalities (Robinson, 2016:2). In contrast, the contact theory has received far less attention and application in studies on social relations in developing countries compared to the influence it has had on research in the global north (Robinson, 2016:2).

While the original conflict theory emphasises conflict over limited resources, the racial threat theory emphasises the importance of the relative sizes of the groups involved. This theory posits that the greater the size of the minority group in a society, the more the majority group perceive the minority group to be a threat to their economic, political and social position, and will try to implement greater state control (Key, 1949; Blalock, 1967; Tolbert and Grummel, 2003:184; Stolzenberg, D'Alessio and Eitle, 2004:674; Uslander, 2006:9; Dollar, 2014:2). Thus, while societies with a small minority population can be relatively tolerant, as the size of the minority group increases, so does the perceived level of threat (Blalock, 1967; Horowitz, 1985). Similarly, the level of perceived threat is far lower in societies where there are many small minority groups, as no single group has enough power to pose a formidable threat (Zak and Knack, 2001:314).

Familiarity breeds trust

The idea that “familiarity breeds trust” underlies many of the more contemporary theories propounding the negative effects of diversity on social trust (Coleman, 1990; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3). The argument posits that the more similar people are in terms of their identities, values and interests, the more trusting they are of each other. These similarities are thought to contribute to greater ease of communication, sense of empathy, and a sense of shared norms (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:3). As a result, ethnically homogenous societies are expected to have higher levels of social trust, while ethnically diverse societies are expected to have lower levels of social trust (Delhey and

Newton, 2005). Alesina and La Ferrara's (2002) "aversion to heterogeneity" theory is a highly influential theory in the field of social trust and diversity. Alesina and La Ferrara (2002) argue that it is easier for people to trust those who are similar to themselves than those who are dissimilar to them, and as a result, heterogeneous societies will have lower levels of social trust than homogenous societies. The results of their study provide empirical evidence of the inverse relationship between diversity and social trust in the United States, and show that racial diversity in particular has the greatest negative effect on levels of social trust, followed by the effects of income inequality (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:222). The notion that familiarity breeds trust can also be seen in the arguments posed in evolutionary game theory (Hamilton, 1964:21; Trivers, 1971; Masters, 1989:169; Uslaner, 2005, 2006:5), as well as the arguments of social identity theorists, who argue that people are predisposed to be more trusting of those who are similar to themselves than those who are different (Brewer, 1979; Messick and Brewer, 1983; Uslaner, 2006:2).

Putnam's constrict theory

Robert Putnam, a leading scholar on social capital, critiques the contact and conflict theories, arguing that both are based on the assumption that outgroup trust and ingroup trust are inversely related (Putnam, 2007:143). Instead, Putnam (2007:144) argues that diversity can lower both outgroup *and* ingroup trust, and thus decrease trust not only between people of different ethnicities, but between members of the same ethnic group as well. Putnam (2007:151) calls this the "constrict theory" and argues that people in diverse communities tend to withdraw from society and distrust others in their community irrespective of their ethnicity. As such, diversity causes social isolation rather than bad race relations as the other theories suggest. In addition, Putnam (2007:157) argues that the effects of ethnic diversity on trust are greater than the effects of other forms of diversity, including that of income inequality. Putnam's (2007) constrict theory and supporting empirical findings have sparked concerns among scholars regarding the implications of these findings on the world's increasingly diversifying societies. Yet, while Putnam's (2007) paper was presented as an empirical finding, Putnam has been criticised for failing to provide a theoretical explanation as to why ethnic diversity would drive down ingroup trust, as his hypothesis and findings contradict the theories and findings of many other studies (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:4).

The impact of ethnic/racial segregation on social trust

Numerous scholars argue that it is not ethnic diversity that has a negative effect on social trust, but rather when ethnic diversity is accompanied by segregation that the negative effect occurs (Uslaner, 2006, 2012a; Stolle *et al.*, 2008; Wessel, 2009; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013; Robinson, 2016). Uslaner (2006:4) argues that the segregation or isolation of a certain group poses the biggest threat to social trust, as geographic segregation limits opportunities for interethnic contact to take place, encourages higher levels of ingroup trust while lowering generalised trust, encourages politicians to play up ethnic tensions and divides, and leads to greater levels of corruption. Uslaner (2006:19) provides empirical support for this argument, finding that while indicators of ethnic diversity have no negative effect on social trust, ethnic segregation has a significant negative effect on social trust levels. Similarly, in her study of 16 African countries, Robinson (2016:1) finds that the negative effect of ethnic diversity on interethnic trust is strongest in countries with greater levels of ethnic segregation. Robinson (2016:1) concludes that it is not ethnic diversity that erodes interethnic trust, but rather when ethnic diversity is accompanied by segregation that trust is eroded.

Empirical findings and influencing factors

While the majority of scholars argue that diversity has a negative effect on social trust, the findings from empirical studies have been more mixed. A large body of empirical research provides evidence that ethnic diversity has a negative effect on social trust, with this relationship being found at various levels of analyses, ranging from cross-national studies down to studies within armies and workgroups (Barr, 1999; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Marschall and Stolle, 2004; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007; Putnam, 2007:142; Stolle *et al.*, 2008; Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle and Trappers, 2009; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2012, 2015, 2018; Robinson, 2016). For instance, Delhey and Newton (2005:1) find in their cross-national study of the determinants of social trust in 60 countries that ethnic heterogeneity has both a direct and indirect negative effect on countries' levels of generalised social trust and argue it to be one of the most significant determinants of social trust. Dinesen and Sønderskov's (2018) meta-study of the literature on ethnic diversity and social trust in the United States also provides evidence for the negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust, even despite the broad variations in terms of the settings, units of analysis and the variables considered in these studies (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:1). Similarly, Dinesen and

Sønderskov's (2012, 2015) studies produce similar findings indicating the negative effect of diversity on social trust in Denmark.

While there is considerably more support among scholars for the hypothesis that diversity has a negative effect on social trust, other scholars have found ethnic diversity to have no significant or measurable effect on social trust. For instance, Uslaner (2006:11-12) finds that no measures of diversity, be it ethnic, religious, or linguistic, have a strong association with levels of social trust in various countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, Mattes and Moreno (2018:364-365) find that ethnically homogenous countries have lower levels of social trust than their more ethnically diverse neighbouring countries. Hooghe *et al.* (2009) find ethnic diversity has little to no effect on social trust in 20 European countries, and Dinesen and Sønderskov (2018:7) state that studies in the Netherlands have failed to find evidence of a negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust. Studies in Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom have also yielded mixed results regarding the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:7).

Thus it is evident that the results of the empirical studies vary between the countries studied. Despite the variations discussed here, the majority of empirical studies still find ethnic diversity to have a negative relationship with social trust on developed countries in the global north (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Marschall and Stolle, 2004; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007; Putnam, 2007:142; Stolle *et al.*, 2008, 2008; Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle and Trappers, 2009; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2012, 2015, 2018; Robinson, 2016:3).

Another factor that can have a significant effect on the results is the size of the social context or the level of analysis in which the relationships between ethnic diversity and social trust are tested. The size and types of social contexts studied in the social trust literature vary tremendously and contribute to the lack of consistency in the designs and results found in the research (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:11). The size of the social contexts investigated range from countries, regions and cities to more local and intimate contexts such as residential neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:11). The first studies on the impact of ethnic diversity on social trust were conducted at the national level, but since then researchers have increasingly moved towards using more local contexts, specifically

residential contexts, as their social context of choice in which to test the relationship (Wessel, 2009:10; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:2).

The shift in focus to smaller units of social context has been motivated by the growing awareness that the social context chosen for a study should reflect the researchers' theoretical explanation for the relationship they are investigating. Dinesen and Sønderskov (2018:11-12) argue that the fundamental underlying assumption in studies on social trust is that exposure to interethnic others is the mechanism that links ethnic diversity to social trust. Dinesen and Sønderskov (2013:24) emphasise the importance of studying the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust in the micro context, as it is only in these contexts that one can presume that interethnic exposure is inevitable. As soon as the context is expanded and one looks at the relationship in more aggregated contexts, the effects of diversity on trust are diluted and exposure can no longer be presumed to be inevitable (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:24).

Putnam (2007) and Dinesen and Sønderskov (2013) demonstrate the effect that the size of social context has when testing the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust by comparing the results of studies conducted on the attitudes of the same individuals at various levels of aggregation in the United States and Denmark, respectively. Both studies show that the negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust is stronger when tested in more local contexts than in aggregated contexts. Similarly, various other meta-analyses on the effects of diversity on social trust emphasise the importance of the size of context on the results, and find the negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust to be stronger in smaller contexts compared to larger ones (Schaeffer, 2014; Van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014; Kaufmann and Goodwin, 2016). Meanwhile, Robinson (2016) also tests the effects of ethnic diversity on interethnic trust, and, relatedly, general social trust, at both the national and local level in 16 African countries. She finds, in contrast, that while ethnic diversity appears to have a negative relationship with interethnic trust at the country level, this relationship is reversed in more local contexts, with ethnic diversity being shown to have a positive effect on interethnic trust in residential contexts. She calls this the “macro-conflict/micro-contact” hypothesis (Robinson, 2016:18).

Robinson's (2016) study highlights the important effect that a study's chosen level of analysis has on the results and the type of relationship it picks up on. While African countries have high

levels of ethnic diversity at the national level, at the local level, communities are often characterised by segregation and homogeneity, therefore making it increasingly important to investigate the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust at various levels of analysis in these countries (Robinson, 2016:20). This has implications for policymakers, as these findings mean that policies relating to interethnic relations will yield different results at local and national levels (Robinson, 2016:2). Robinson (2016:2) argues that while the importance of the level of analysis is recognised and is commonly incorporated into studies of social trust in the United States, it is far less common in research on African countries.

A substantial cause of the varied results found in the diversity-trust literature is attributable to the significant differences in the different studies' research designs. Most studies vary in their choice of measurement instruments, unit of analysis, study setting, the size of their samples, and their moderating influences, amongst others (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:1). Thus, it is evident that more research is needed into these relationships.

2.3.2 The effects of income distribution (inequality) on social trust

Income inequality is widely recognised in the global literature as a key cause of low social trust. Along with racial diversity, these variables are frequently reported as the two strongest determinants of social trust in cross-country analyses (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Zak and Knack, 2001; Knack and Zak, 2002; Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Putnam, 2007; Bjørnskov, 2007:5; You, 2012). Several studies have also argued that the negative effects of income inequality on social trust are greater than those of ethnic diversity (Delhey and Newton, 2005:16; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007:17).

Numerous empirical studies provide evidence of the negative relationship between income inequality and social trust (Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007; Putnam, 2007; You, 2012; Mattes and Moreno, 2018). Delhey and Newton (2005), and Bjørnskov (2007) test the impact of numerous variables on social trust and find income inequality to have the greatest impact, followed by the effects of ethnic diversity. Similarly, Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:45) find income inequality to be the strongest determinant of social trust over time in the United States. Putnam (2007:156) also finds income inequality to produce lower levels of social trust, arguing that people living in societies with income inequality tend to withdraw more from society, similar to the effect of ethnic diversity.

Mattes and Moreno (2018:367-371) find that income inequality has the greatest negative effect on social trust in both sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, exceeding the effects of ethnic diversity. Both Uslaner (2002:236), and Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:45) provide statistical evidence for the argument that income inequality erodes social trust, disproving the possibility that the direction of causality could be reversed and that low levels of social trust could cause greater inequality.

Various theoretical explanations have been posed as to why income inequality could negatively affect social trust. One argument is that income inequality creates social cleavages that put social distance between people of different economic classes and income categories, and these societal divisions erode social trust (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). Thus, the more similar people are in a society, the greater the level of social trust will be, and inversely, the more social divides and cleavages there are, the less generalised trust there will be (Delhey and Newton, 2005:5; Bjørnskov, 2007:5). As with ethnic diversity, income inequality is found to be another prominent source of social cleavages and strife in societies, driving down social trust.

Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:52) argue that inequality is associated with lower levels of trust because citizens of these societies do not view themselves as being part of a larger social whole and lack the same sense of shared fate that is thought to be experienced by citizens in more equal societies. Instead, citizens in unequal societies are thought to develop high particularised or ingroup trust, prioritising their own groups' interests and perceiving themselves as competing with others over limited resources (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005:46-52). Additionally, the lives of citizens in societies with higher levels of income inequality intersect less frequently (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005:46). Wealthy and poor populations tend, for example, to live in separate residential areas, attend different schools, use different modes of transportation and use different healthcare facilities, and this social distance is thought to erode social trust (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005:46).

It has been argued that trusting attitudes are linked to having optimistic views of the future, as it is thought that the more optimistic a person feels about the future, the more inclined they are to trust strangers (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005:51). Poorer citizens in societies with higher levels of income inequality are less likely to be optimistic about the future (Uslaner, 2002:186).

Uslaner (2002:186) highlights how income inequality affects social trust as it shapes our attitudes, levels of optimism and expectations. Uslaner (2002:183) also argues that when inequality is growing, people have more reason to fear that their children will not have the same quality of life that they currently have, which subsequently leads to lower levels of social trust.

Significantly, Uslaner (2002:182) argues that it is not necessarily people's actual or absolute incomes that influence their feelings of optimism and social trust, but rather their subjective perception of their income relative to what they believe others to be earning that influences their perceptions regarding equality, and thus their levels of social trust. You (2012) develops this theory further, proposing two schools of thought on how income inequality reduces social trust. The first is the homogeneity explanation, which emphasises the argument that people are less trusting of those dissimilar from themselves and therefore will be less trusting as income inequality increases the economic heterogeneity of the population (You, 2012:705). The second school of thought is the fairness explanation, which emphasises the lack of fairness associated with income inequality and argues that a sense of societal unfairness erodes social trust, rather than the dissimilarity caused by income heterogeneity. This argument instead focuses on people's subjective perceptions of income inequality and where they perceive their income to fall relative to the rest of the population, rather than being based on their absolute income. You (2012:705) argues that while much of the literature demonstrates a negative relationship between income inequality and social trust, most studies fail to show whether the negative effects of income inequality are the result of income heterogeneity or the sense of unfairness associated with inequality.

Subsequently, these two theories generate competing hypotheses which can be used to test whether the homogeneity or fairness explanations of income inequality better account for the negative effect of income inequality on social trust (You, 2012:707). While the homogeneity explanation predicts the middle-income group to be the most trusting, the fairness explanation predicts the rich to be more trusting (the income effect). The two theories also generate different hypotheses regarding the effects of the skewed income distribution on social trust (called the skewness effect). The homogeneity theory predicts a strongly skewed distribution to have a positive effect on social trust, as the more skewed the distribution, the larger the poor majority will be and the smaller the rich minority will be, thus the more similarity there will be

in the population. In contrast, the fairness explanation predicts that the more skewed the income distribution is and the bigger the income gap, the more citizens (especially the poor), will perceive the system to be unfair, and thus will have a negative effect on social trust. The fairness explanation maintains the view that the wealthy are more likely to believe that they live in a fair society in which they have been rewarded for their hard work, whilst the poor are less likely to believe they live in a fair society (You, 2012:714). As such, the larger the population size of the poor, the lower the society's level of social trust will be. In his study of social trust across 80 countries, You (2012:702) tests whether the negative effects of income inequality on social trust can be explained by the homogeneity or fairness explanation through tests of the income effect and skewness effect. His findings show that the negative effect of income inequality stems from the sense of unfairness caused by income inequality rather than a sense of dissimilarity (You, 2012). You (2012:713) thus highlights the important role of relative, rather than absolute, income for social trust.

It is important to note that theories on the effect of income inequality on social trust are different from theories on the effects of individual wealth or national wealth on social trust. Income inequality theories emphasise that it is how equitable the income dispersion is, rather than an individual's or country's level of wealth, that matters for social trust (Uslaner, 2002:181). Various authors (Uslaner, 2002:189; Delhey and Newton, 2005:7; Newton, 2007:17; You, 2012:713) highlight the importance of focusing on income inequality rather than national wealth for understanding social trust.

2.3.3 The effects of corruption on social trust

Corruption is another key variable that is frequently identified in the academic literature as having a significant influence on levels of social trust. There is no single definition of corruption, not only because different fields of research focus on different elements of the phenomenon, but also within each field there continues to be a lack of consensus between academics as to its precise definition. Despite the lack of a concise definition in the academic realm, Tanzi (1998:8) argues that there is far greater consensus in the real world as to what constitutes corruption and that this theoretical ambiguity does not hinder people's ability to recognise corrupt behaviour. It is neither within the scope of this study nor necessary to provide a comprehensive overview of the debate regarding the definition of corruption, as a broad working definition and understanding of the concept will suffice.

In its simplest form, corruption can be understood as the abuse and misuse of power for personal gain or private benefit (Tanzi, 1998:8; Zimring and Johnson, 2005:15; Liu, 2016:172). Private benefit does not mean that it will exclusively or directly benefit the individual involved, but rather could benefit their political party, family or strategic allies, amongst others (Tanzi, 1998:8). Corruption entails those with power in society exploiting the masses and typically involves the transferral of resources from the masses to the elites, and generally from the poor to the wealthy (Uslaner, 2005:2-5). Corruption can take place in both the public and private sector and can entail a range of practices such as bribery, fraud, extortion, nepotism, nonfeasance, the disposal of public resources, and other similar practices (Tanzi, 1998:9; Uslaner, 2005:52-53; Liu, 2016:172; Sapsford *et al.*, 2019:6-14).

Corruption serves as a breach of trust, as those with power in a society misuse and abuse the power granted to them to exploit those who lack the same means. Corruption is argued to not only undermine citizens' trust in the institutions and elites involved, but also erodes trust in the rule of law and social trust between citizens (Sapsford *et al.*, 2019:17). Sapsford *et al.* (2019) argues that the prevalence of corruption in a society influences what citizens come to expect of their government, institutions and each other. You (2012:703) argues that when corruption is already widespread in a country, it encourages further corruption as the costs of corruption decrease as this behaviour becomes normalised. As such, corruption makes citizens more suspicious of one another and subsequently erodes social trust.

Sapsford *et al.* (2019) argue that corruption erodes social trust by compromising a community's sense of social inclusion and cohesion by dividing people into those who benefit from corruption and those who fall victim to it. Corruption can undermine trust as the business sector and manufacturers become less reliable as corruption increases production costs and introduces further risk and uncertainty to production lines and business arrangements (Uslaner, 2005:5; Sapsford *et al.*, 2019:11). Additionally, corruption increases the living expenses of citizens and brings uncertainty into their daily lives as people cannot always afford the extra costs for basic services that corruption brings. Sapsford *et al.* (2019:7) states that "the burden of bribery is falling more heavily on the poor than the more affluent".

Empirical studies have yielded mixed results on the effects of corruption on social trust (You, 2012:704). Studies by Zack and Knack (2001), Seligson (2002), Delhey and Newton (2005), Richey (2009), You (2012) and Sapsford *et al.* (2019) all find that exposure to corruption leads to lower levels of trust not only in the actors and institutions involved, but in fellow citizens as well. Similarly, an experimental study by Eek and Rothstein (2005) demonstrated that when study participants were asked for bribes from a public official from an unknown country, the participants reported experiencing lower levels of social trust in the ordinary citizens of that unknown country based on their experiences with the public officials. These empirical studies thus all support the hypothesis that exposure to corruption erodes trust in both the actors and institutions involved as well as trust in citizens. Other authors, however, such as Uslaner (2002, 2004), and Freitag and Bühlmann (2005), find the relationship between corruption and social trust to be insignificant. Uslaner (2004) argues that high levels of social trust lead to lower levels of corruption and thus reasons that the causation runs in the opposite direction. You (2012:704) argues that the majority of studies on the effects of corruption on social trust used small sample sizes and a variety of different forms of analyses to test their hypotheses, which would explain their inconsistent results, and argues that there is a need for more empirical testing.

2.3.4 The effects of institutions on social trust

Confidence in institutions is recognised as another key source of social trust (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Levi, 1998; Offe, 1999; Newton and Norris, 2000; Putnam *et al.*, 2000; Helliwell, 2003; Van der Meer, 2003; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Newton, 2007; Neller, 2008; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1539; Newton *et al.*, 2018). Institutional confidence refers to the level of trust citizens have in the institutions, systems and procedures that operate in their society, such as police, the legal system, parliament and judiciary (Easterly, 2000:372; Newton, 2007:344; Zmerli and Newton, 2008:709; You, 2012:708). It is argued that effective institutions lead to greater levels of social trust in a population. Various scholars (Levi, 1998; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Offe, 1999; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:210; Uslaner, 2002:222; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007; Newton, 2007:351; Neller, 2008; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1545) argue the importance of different institutional qualities and characteristics as conditions and explanations for the positive effect of institutions on trust.

It is commonly argued that institutions must be perceived as transparent, incorruptible, nonpartisan and fair for social trust to be enhanced (Levi, 1998; Offe, 1999; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Neller, 2008). Institutions that are universally orientated, in the sense that they are inclusive of minority groups and provide all citizens equal rights and opportunities, are thought to contribute to the formation of social trust (Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1545). Additionally, strong legal systems and the rule of law are commonly considered essential for the development of social trust as these systems monitor, restrict and punish criminal and untrustworthy behaviour, thus minimising the risks associated with trusting others (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:210; Bjørnskov, 2007). Rules and systems of conflict resolution are additionally thought to encourage and allow for the development of greater trust between strangers (Levi, 1998; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1543). These assumptions stem from rational choice theory, which argues that regulations allow people to take the risks necessary to co-operate and trust strangers (Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1543). As such, perceptions of the institutions that govern society are thought to influence levels of social trust (Newton *et al.*, 2018:48).

Institutions at various levels in society can enhance social trust by restraining certain behaviours and enforcing certain standards. Democratic institutions grant all citizens equal rights and liberties, and require officials to treat all citizens in a uniform fashion, thus helping create a system in which all citizens are treated equally and enhancing trust (Delhey and Newton, 2005:8). Democratic institutions and systems of government serve to limit and restrain the power of leaders and officials whilst enabling citizens to judge their leaders' performance and hold them accountable through elections (Uslaner, 2002:222; Delhey and Newton, 2005:8). As such, democratic institutions allow citizens to trust those in power, not because of the personal qualities and trustworthiness of those elected, but because of their faith in the institutions that monitor and restrict untrustworthy behaviour, and serve as checks and balances (Knack and Keefer, 1997:1284; Delhey and Newton, 2005:7). Thus, democratic institutions are thought to increase the trustworthiness of the government and consequently lead to a more trusting citizenry (You, 2012:704). Freitag and Bühlmann (2009:1539) emphasise the view that attitudes towards political institutions and attitudes towards other citizens are closely related. When citizens perceive their government and institutions as being fair and trustworthy, they apply these sentiments to the rest of society as they assume other members of society share these values. Similarly, public bureaucracies, such as the police and courts, can increase social

trust as they contribute to ensuring the trustworthy behaviour of organisations and companies (Newton, 2007:351).

The public sector also plays a role in influencing levels of social trust. Monitoring and regulating matters such as the quality of services and the codes of practice of organisations and companies ensures that services and businesses can be relied on to have, for example, adequate training and equipment. This encourages trustworthy behaviour in these organisations and enables citizens to have greater trust in other people and businesses without having to know them personally (Delhey and Newton, 2005:8). Additionally, when government institutions and the public sector conduct themselves in a trustworthy manner, this behaviour is also thought to improve the behaviour of citizens. Citizens are thought to be encouraged to pay their taxes, become active and involved members of society, respect and support the institutions and the rule of law, and steer clear of participating in untrustworthy behaviour (Offe, 1999; Rothstein and Stolle, 2003; Newton, 2007:354).

Thus, well-functioning institutions are thought to improve trust in others by regulating people's activities, imposing sanctions on misbehaviour, and promoting norms and values that increase social trust (Newton, 2007:354; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1543, 1556). It is argued that a virtuous circle is created in these populations as quality political institutions increase social trust among the population, and increased social trust enables governments to perform their roles more effectively (Newton *et al.*, 2018:49). Furthermore, Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:46-53) argue that political institutions have an indirect effect on social trust, arguing that government policy choices, such as implementing universal welfare programmes, can have a direct effect on economic equality which subsequently increases levels of social trust.

However, empirical studies yield inconsistent results regarding the relationship between democracy, political institutions and social trust (You, 2012:704). Newton (2007:354) argues that most cross-national studies find significant correlations between social trust and confidence in, and satisfaction with, various political institutions, such as the police, courts, parliament and government. Similarly, Delhey and Newton (2005:17) find that both political institutions and government policies and services positively affect social trust, and Helliwell (2003) finds that political institutions affect social trust by mediating social tensions.

Uslaner (2002), in contrast, argues that neither political trust nor the presence of effective political institutions increase social trust. Instead, Uslaner (2002) argues that the association found between democratic countries and higher levels of social trust rather stems from repressive authoritarian regimes having comparatively lower levels of social trust. Uslaner (2002:226) supports this argument by showing that the data on social trust levels recorded in the World Values Survey in 22 countries between 1981 and the 1990s have almost no correlation with the variation in Freedom House scores in those countries. Uslaner (2002:227) concludes that only after a country has been a continuous democracy for over 46 years will democratic institutions positively affect social trust. Similarly, You (2012:704) argues that partial democratisation may not positively affect social trust as newly established democracies still face many obstacles, and it can therefore take decades before democratisation increases social trust. Bjørnskov (2007:16) finds that neither democracy nor rule of law are associated with social trust, and You (2012) finds democracy to have little to no effect on social trust in his study of social trust in 80 countries. Other scholars additionally find that any effects of political institutions on social trust are lost once other variables, such as economic equality, are accounted for (Inglehart, 1997; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2005; Anderson and Paskeviciute, 2006).

2.3.5 The impact of societal fairness on social trust

Research and theories on the effects of societal fairness on social trust are still in the early stages of development; however, these theories present a different approach to the investigation of the determinants of social trust by identifying societal fairness as an important latent variable that could potentially influence and underlie numerous other variables. While the idea that societal fairness could influence social trust is not new, scholars have only recently begun to research the influence of fairness itself more directly. One of the most concise theoretical formulations of this argument is posed by You (2012), who makes the fairness theory falsifiable and conducts an empirical study on the effects of societal fairness on social trust in 80 countries worldwide.

You's (2012) paper challenges the "aversion to heterogeneity" theory posed by Alesina and La Ferrara (2002), which claims that ethnic diversity has a significant negative effect on social trust. Instead, You (2012) argues that societal fairness has the greatest determining effect on social trust, and that the perceived effects of ethnic diversity disappear once the effects of

fairness have been accounted for. You's (2012) study presents societal fairness as a latent variable whose influence on social trust can be measured by the effects of income inequality, institutional confidence and corruption on social trust. You (2012) is not alone in his theorising of the impact of fairness on social trust, with various other scholars having highlighted the importance of the fairness of political institutions and a society's income distribution for social trust (Levi, 1998; Rothstein and Stolle, 2003; Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005).

The logic of the fairness explanation is that when societies operate in a manner that is deemed to be fair, with institutions and systems designed to reward honesty and trustworthy behaviour, and to penalise dishonesty and untrustworthy behaviour, people are not only expected to behave in a more trustworthy manner, but are also expected to be more trusting of others. Studies by Lerner (1980) and Begue (2002) show that belief "in a just world" is strongly associated with greater levels of social trust (You, 2012: 703).

You (2012:703) uses Rawls' (1971) conceptualisation of "justice as fairness" to characterise what constitutes a fair society. Using this conceptualisation, You (2012:703) characterises a fair society as one with distributive justice, formal justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to a country's level of income inequality. While acknowledging that what constitutes a "fair" distribution is contested, You (2012:704) argues that income equality can serve as a suitable proxy for measuring distributive justice for this context. In his paper, You (2012) argues that it is not people's distrust of those dissimilar to themselves that causes income inequality to lower social trust, as argued by the "aversion to heterogeneity" theorists, but rather the perceived lack of fairness and sense of injustice associated with income inequality that causes inequality to lower social trust. You (2012) substantiates this argument by testing various hypotheses that follow from these two theoretical explanations and is able to provide empirical evidence in support of his argument. Formal justice refers to the "impartial and consistent administration of laws and institutions" (Rawls, 1971:51). You (2012:703) argues that the existence of corruption in society serves as a breach of formal justice as it reveals that trusted actors and institutions operating in society fail to conduct themselves fairly and impartially. As such, You (2012:703) uses freedom from corruption as his measure of formal justice. Lastly, You (2012:704) characterises procedural justice as being based on equality of opportunity and equal liberties. You (2012:704) argues that democracies grant all citizens equal

rights and opportunities, and thus uses the presence of democratic institutions as a measure of procedural justice in a country.

You (2012) set out to test his theory of fairness against the “aversion to heterogeneity” and diversity theory to see which one has greater explanatory power in explaining cross-country variations in social trust. You’s (2012) conceptualisation of fairness makes the fairness theory falsifiable, with fairness being measured through subjective income inequality, freedom from corruption, and the presence of democratic institutions; and the impact of the “aversion to heterogeneity” and diversity theory being measured by the influence of ethnic diversity on social trust. You (2012) makes use of the largest sample used in a social trust study, using data from the World Values Survey and the European Values Studies on 80 countries and 170 000 individuals.

Using a variety of statistical analyses, You’s (2012) results show that the societal fairness indicators have a greater effect on social trust than ethnic diversity. You (2012:702) finds that income inequality and corruption significantly affect social trust even once the effects of ethnic diversity are accounted for, and that, in contrast, the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust lose significance once corruption and income inequality are accounted for. You (2012:713) attributes his finding that corruption has a significant effect on social trust (when other studies on the effects of corruption have yielded mixed results) to his study using a significantly larger sample than previous corruption studies. The findings thus show that corruption and income inequality have a statistically significant effect on social trust, while ethnic diversity does not. These findings thus support You’s (2012) hypothesis that societal fairness is more important for explaining levels of social trust than ethnic diversity.

This discussion demonstrates how You’s (2012) societal fairness variable is a latent variable measured by combining the effects of income inequality, freedom from corruption and the presence of democratic institutions into a measure of societal fairness. As such, You’s (2012) latent variable of societal fairness is comprised of the three preceding variables discussed in this chapter (income inequality, corruption, and institutions and democracy – see sections 2.3.2, 2.3.3 and 2.3.4). Using this operationalisation of societal fairness, You (2012) makes the fairness theory falsifiable and is able to test the influence of societal fairness on social trust.

2.4 Explaining interstudy variance

This discussion of some of the literature on social trust demonstrates that there are various arguments regarding the key determinants of social trust in societies. Not only do studies vary in their choices of which variables they deem worth investigating, but empirical studies on the same variables also yield mixed, if not contradictory, results. Dinesen and Sønderskov (2018:11) argue that much of the variation found in the results of studies on social trust stems from the assortment of variables that scholars have chosen to focus on and the lack of sufficient theorising behind these choices.

Studies on social trust vary significantly, not only in terms of the variables and mediating factors that are investigated, but also in terms of the geographic locations in which the studies are conducted, the size of the social contexts investigated, the sample sizes used, and the statistical methods that are applied, to name a few. Newton (2007:356) succinctly summarises why trust is a complicated concept to investigate. He argues that not only is the concept of social trust challenging to define at the outset, but that “trust can be simultaneously cast as: (1) both an individual and collective property; (2) a private and a collective good; (3) something that individuals and society people can produce and consume; (4) both a possible cause and consequence of a wide range of important social and political attitudes and behaviours; and (5) both a foundation and product of democratic institutions and politics” (Newton, 2007:356). Given the difficulty of investigating trust as a concept, added to the numerous variations between studies on social trust, it can be seen why the literature and findings on the causes of social trust are mixed and inconclusive.

2.5 Challenges and limitations in social trust research

2.5.1 Proving direction of causality and disentangling effects of related variables

An issue that is frequently raised in the social trust literature is the difficulty of proving the direction of causality and disentangling the effects of different yet closely related variables on social trust (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton, 2007; Newton *et al.*, 2018). Newton *et al.* (2018:41) identify the issue of “isolating clear causes and effects” as being the most prominent issue in the social trust literature. Social trust researchers argue that while the empirical research can show the existence of the relationship between variables and social trust, it is

difficult to prove the direction of causality. For instance, numerous scholars find that higher levels of social trust are associated with greater economic equality. However, what is less clear is whether economic equality caused higher levels of social trust or whether the higher levels of social trust led to greater economic equality (Delhey and Newton, 2005:10; Newton, 2007:356). This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that the relationship between these variables and social trust is frequently circular, leaving researchers with a “chicken-and-egg” problem (Newton *et al.*, 2018:41).

Similarly, another challenge is isolating and disentangling the effects of one particular variable from others, as the variables tend to be closely related to one another, such as national wealth, good government, income equality, ethnic homogeneity and having a Protestant majority (Newton, 2007:355). Many of the societal characteristics are also mutually interdependent, thus making it challenging to isolate the effects of one particular variable (Newton *et al.*, 2018:41). However, most scholars dismiss these issues, either stating that it is impossible to definitively prove cause and effect or arguing that the direction of causality is inconsequential due to the frequently circular nature of the relationship between social trust and the variables of interest (Delhey and Newton, 2005:28).

2.5.2 Limited research on social trust in the developing world

Most of the existing theories on the causes of social trust are based on research conducted in developed and predominantly Western countries, such as the literature discussed from the United States, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands (Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018:7). The few studies conducted on developing countries that are discussed in this study have produced results that do not conform to the predictions and hypotheses presented in the research on developed countries. For instance, while Dinesen and Sønderskov (2018) find ethnic diversity and social trust to have a stronger negative relationship in residential and micro contexts than at aggregated country levels of analysis in the United States, Robinson (2016) finds the opposite to be true in her study of social trust in 16 African countries. Instead Robinson (2016) finds ethnic diversity rather has a positive effect on interethnic trust, and subsequently general social trust, when measured in residential and micro contexts, while this relationship was reversed and negatively related when measured at aggregated country levels in these countries. A second instance can be seen in the findings on the effect of education on social trust, as in contrast to Western literature’s finding that greater levels of education lead

to higher levels of social trust, Mattes and Moreno (2018:363) find higher levels of education to be associated with lower levels of social trust in sub-Saharan African and Latin American countries. A third instance can be found in the potential influence of religious beliefs on levels of social trust, as it is commonly argued in the literature stemming from Western countries that Christians, especially Protestant Christians, supposedly have higher levels of trust than Muslims and hierarchical religions. In contrast, Mattes and Moreno (2018:364) find that in sub-Saharan Africa, Christians have significantly lower levels of social trust than Muslims, atheists and traditionalists. This demonstrates the need for greater research into the causes of and trends in social trust in the developing world.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the key theories and empirical studies in the global research literature on social trust. It offers a brief overview of the development of the field of social trust research, followed by an explanation of the different types of social trust and the importance of social trust for societies. Subsequently, this chapter outlines the two main approaches to explaining the causes of social trust found in the literature, namely, the bottom-up and top-down explanations of social trust. This section highlights that while bottom-up explanations of social trust have their merits, there is less support for these explanations among scholars, and little empirical research has been able to support these theories. As a result, most theorists support the top-down, or societal level, explanations of social trust instead. This chapter then discusses some of the most prominent and influential theories on the causes of social trust in the global literature and the main findings in the empirical research. This discussion includes the main theories regarding the effects of racial diversity, economic inequality, corruption and political institutions on societies' social trust levels. This chapter also discusses a newer theory in the literature that advocates for the important effect of societal fairness on social trust, providing a discussion of the theory and empirical research presented by You (2012), in which, importantly, he shows the fairness theory to be falsifiable. This chapter then briefly presents a few explanations for the lack of consensus and consistency found in the social trust literature, and finally, the chapter concludes with a short discussion on some of the key challenges and limitations in social trust research.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the overarching research question of this study is: *Which factors strengthen or hinder social trust in South Africa's low-trust society?* To investigate this question, five sub-research questions have been designed based on the global literature's findings on the causes of social trust and are used to guide this investigation. This chapter describes the research process that is undertaken to answer this study's sub- and overarching research questions. First, this chapter provides an outline of the research design employed in this study and provides a brief explanation of quantitative and survey research methodologies. Next, this chapter discusses its use of secondary data analysis and provides a description of the South African Reconciliation Barometer 2019 dataset that this study uses to test the relationship between social trust and the independent variables of interest. This chapter then proceeds to discuss how the dependent and independent variables used in this study are operationalised. This section demonstrates how the measures used in this study replicate those used in the global social trust literature, and thus are well-established, reliable and commonly used measures in the comparative literature. Thereafter, this chapter outlines the various statistical analyses that are conducted to test the hypotheses associated with the sub-research questions. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the important ethical considerations of this study as well as the study's limitations.

3.2 Research design

Adopting a carefully devised research design that is best suited to the research topic is essential ensuring the validity and accuracy of the research while minimising the risk of possible errors (Mouton, 1996:108-109; Burns and Grove, 2001:223; Vogt, 2007:8; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012:159). This study utilises a single case study design as it investigates the relationship between social trust and various independent variables in the South African context. This study adopts a cross-sectional design as it investigates the relationship between social trust and various societal characteristics at one point in time (Neuman, 2014:44; Babbie, 2016:106). A cross-sectional design is well suited for the purpose of this investigation as it enables researchers to gather a substantial amount of detailed information on a large number of people and is thus ideal for measuring relationships between different variables at a specific

point in time (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:59; Babbie, 2016). This study investigates the relationship between South Africans' levels of social trust and various societal factors in July and August 2019, which is when the 2019 SARB data on South African's perceptions and attitudes was collected. This study has chosen to investigate the data from 2019 as this data was recorded before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has most likely had a significant impact on South Africans' levels of trust and other related variables. This would make it challenging to investigate the relationship between trust and other societal characteristics under more ordinary circumstances.

This study functions as explanatory research as it investigates the potential causes of South Africa's known social trust deficit by applying and testing existing theories from the global academic literature (Babbie, 2016:92). More specifically, this study aims to produce a nomothetic explanation of social trust in South Africa as it aims to identify a few independent variables or causes that best explain the country's low levels of social trust (Babbie, 2016:99). Trusting attitudes are attributes of the individual; therefore, South African individuals as the appropriate unit of analysis for this study. Explanatory research with the individual as the unit of analysis lends itself particularly well to studying the social dynamics that operate within a certain population, as this study aims to do (Babbie, 2016:99).

This study adopts a quantitative research methodology using survey research to test the various hypotheses on the relationship between the explanatory variables and social trust. The quantitative research approach is well suited for this study as it is ideal for testing theories and hypotheses by working deductively and using observations to infer trends and identify causes and effects (Pierce, 2008:85; Saunders *et al.*, 2012:145). Quantitative survey research allows social science researchers to quantify observations and information, making it easier to not only summarise, aggregate and compare data, but also to perform complex statistical analyses on social data (Babbie, 2016:26).

A key advantage of quantitative survey research is that it allows for the use of large, carefully selected, nationally representative samples (Pierce, 2008:42; Creswell, 2009; Babbie, 2016:248). As such, quantitative survey research enables researchers to make generalisations and claims about the broader population without needing to observe the entire population directly (Dalton, 2002; Pierce, 2008:84; Babbie, 2016:279). The SARB's use of a large

nationally representative sample enables this study to generalise its findings about the influences of various factors on levels of social trust and to describe patterns in the South African population as a whole.

Survey research is considered one of the best and most appropriate methods for investigating the opinions and attitudes of a population and for identifying trends and patterns in how these are distributed (Pierce, 2008:85). It is one of the most commonly used tools for gathering data in the social sciences and is particularly popular in political science for researching the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of a population and the various relationships that exist between these variables (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:96; Babbie, 2016:248). Survey research typically entails the use of standardised questionnaires consisting of a list of closed questions accompanied by various alternative predetermined answers for the respondent to choose from (Babbie, 2016:248).¹³ These surveys are dispensed to the chosen sample of the population to gather data on the topic of interest, with individuals forming the unit of analysis (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:97; Pierce, 2008:274; Babbie, 2016:248). Questionnaires are specifically designed to measure and capture data needed by the researcher for the analysis of their specific research topic (Pierce, 2008:183-184).

The standardisation of questionnaires and response categories means that survey research provides a highly reliable source of data as all respondents receive identical questions and explanations of the survey questions (Pierce, 2008:84; Babbie, 2016:280). The reliability of survey data can be enhanced through the use of carefully designed and worded questions which minimise the risk of misinterpretation by the respondents (Babbie, 2016:280). An additional benefit of survey research derives from the large quantity of questions included in questionnaires as this provides researchers with additional flexibility as the questionnaires yield vast amounts of information with which the researcher can work (Babbie, 2016:280).

¹³ While questionnaires are the most commonly used tool for gathering data in survey research, survey research does not exclusively refer to the use of questionnaires, as survey data can also be gathered from alternative means such as interviews. Rather, survey research refers to the “form of the data and the method of analysis” which entails storing and structuring the collected data in the form of a table or grid for analysis (De Vaus, 2002:3).

Quantitative research methodology follows a structured, systematic and linear design when investigating a certain phenomenon (Pierce, 2008:83). Due to this method's use of numerical data and statistical analyses, quantitative research is commonly considered to be a more objective, rational and systematic approach to studying social phenomena, with the results often being deemed to be more credible than the results arrived at using other methodologies (Pierce, 2008:83; Babbie, 2016:248). The structured, systematic research process of quantitative research designs also enables other researchers to replicate or reanalyse these studies' findings and data, thus enhancing the reliability of this research. Survey data collected for the investigation of a particular topic can be stored in data banks and re-examined by other scholars who can either reanalyse the data, thus contributing to the data's reliability, or use the same data to research a different topic (Pierce, 2008:84-86).

However, quantitative and survey research are not without their drawbacks. Quantitative research is criticised for being too "detached, remote and clinical" to study complex social phenomena, with people arguing that positivist approaches to research are unsuitable for studying social phenomena (Pierce, 2008:86). Quantitative research methodologies operate by taking complex social phenomena and reducing them into measurable indicators that are suitable for quantitative analyses. As such, a great deal of depth and detail is lost when assessing measurable indicators, subsequently making them less able to capture the complexities of the social phenomena under investigation (Babbie, 2016:26). Reducing social phenomena to measurable indicators has raised concerns about the weaker levels of validity of quantitative measures, as these measures are less able to accurately capture the full nature of the concept under investigation (Babbie, 2016:26). Another critique of survey research is the use of vague response categories with options such as "strongly" and "very strongly", offering respondents no method for gauging where they fall on the scale of strength of belief (Pierce, 2008:87).

Additionally, survey research only measures respondents' self-reported attitudes, values and behaviours, which might not accurately reflect their true traits and behaviours (Babbie, 2016:280). There is always the risk that respondents will rather give what they consider to be the socially desirable response to survey questions rather than an accurate answer (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:124; Babbie, 2016:150). This is especially the case when the surveys are conducted face-to-face. This can lead to an issue known as the interviewer effect, which refers to how

respondents can change their responses according to who is conducting a survey interview and what they believe the interviewer will consider acceptable (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:124). Low response rates can present another obstacle to survey research in that there is a risk that citizens who decline to participate in the survey might share a common characteristic that causes them to be less likely to partake in a public survey, and as such their exclusion from the data might interfere with the representativity of the sample (Pierce, 2008:183).

However, advocates of the quantitative research methodology frequently rebut these critiques, arguing that the majority of these limitations and issues regarding validity can be avoided by using carefully constructed questions that eliminate potential causes of errors. These scholars maintain that despite concerns, the advantages offered by quantitative research methodologies, enabling the social sciences to undertake objective and scientific studies into social phenomena, outweigh any limitations of this approach (Pierce, 2008:87-88).

3.3 Secondary data analysis

This study performs secondary data analysis using the publicly available SARB 2019 survey dataset to investigate various influences on social trust in South Africa. Secondary data analysis is the process in which a researcher uses data originally collected and analysed by a different researcher or team for their own research purpose, and analyses this data for a different research purpose from that for which it was originally collected (Babbie, 2016:281). Survey data is particularly well-suited for secondary analysis as survey research typically gathers a substantial amount of data on a variety of topics which is then stored in public data archives where this data can be accessed by other researchers for secondary analysis.

There are several noteworthy benefits of secondary analysis for this study and research in general. Firstly, it saves researchers time and money by enabling them to study their research topic without needing to design, conduct and collect their own survey research (Babbie, 2016:282). This is especially useful when researchers need to use a national sample. As such, this study benefits tremendously from conducting secondary data analysis on the SARB 2019 data collected on a nationally representative sample of the South African population. Additionally, secondary data analysis allows this study to benefit from the work and expertise of researchers from professional organisations. In this case, the Institute for Justice and

Reconciliation (IJR) designed the survey questionnaires and collected the data for analysis, thus contributing to the quality of the data (Babbie, 2016:282).

A potential drawback of using secondary analysis is that the survey questions used may not always be the questions the researcher would prefer as a measure for their own research purposes and thus could undermine the validity of these measures (Neuman, 2008:333). However, this limitation is not a concern for this study as the SARB 2019 questionnaire items used here were designed for precisely the same purpose as this study, namely, to investigate South Africans' perceptions and attitudes towards a range of matters, including their levels of social trust. Additionally, the SARB 2019 questions used closely resemble the questions found in the global literature on social trust, thus confirming their suitability for this study.

3.4 The dataset: The South African Reconciliation Barometer

The SARB is "a cross-sectional, iterative public-opinion survey conducted by the IJR in South Africa" (Potgieter, 2019:19). Since its inception in 2003, 17 rounds of the survey have taken place. The SARB was initially conducted annually until 2013, after which it has taken place biannually, with the most recent wave taking place in 2021. The SARB surveys are designed for the purpose of investigating South Africans' opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards a range of matters relating to race relations, reconciliation, social cohesion, transformation and democracy (Potgieter, 2019:88). As such, the SARB datasets and survey questionnaires are highly suitable for the purpose of this study and contain questions that speak directly to the research questions. The SARB is carried out in the form of face-to-face interviews and conducted in the respondents' language of choice when possible (Potgieter, 2019:20).

The SARB uses a "nationally representative sample of the South African adult population", involving 2400 respondents, and employs a "stratified, multistage random sample design" (Potgieter, 2019:20). Multistage sampling designs are frequently used to sample large populations and entail dividing the population into subgroups, or areas, from which samples will be drawn (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:104). A stratified random sample design is a method of sampling used to ensure the sample is representative of the population. Stratified sampling entails dividing the population into mutually exclusive and exhaustive subpopulations called strata, after which a random sample is drawn from each subpopulation (De Vaus, 2002:74; Neuman, 2014:260). The sizes of the samples drawn from the subpopulations are controlled to

ensure the relative sizes of each subpopulation are reflected in the sample (De Vaus, 2002:74; Neuman, 2014:260). The SARB 2019 sample was stratified according to the explicit variables of province, race and geographic area; and the implicit variables of “district and local municipality, main place and sub-place” (Potgieter, 2019:20). Additionally, the sample is also weighted according to Statistics South Africa’s 2019 midyear population estimates, and the final dataset was weighted in such a way as to correct any issues that may have falsely skewed the data, ensuring that national representation is maintained (Potgieter, 2019:20).

3.5 Validity and reliability

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the data is of utmost importance and forms an essential component of research design. Validity refers to the extent to which a chosen measure is appropriate and able to accurately represent the concept it intends to measure (Pierce, 2008:121; Babbie, 2016:148). The reliability of the data and measurement methods refers to the extent to which the measurements employed can be relied on to yield consistent results, such that the measurements would yield the same results if the study were to be repeated (Pierce, 2008:122; Babbie, 2016:147).

The SARB surveys and data undergo “extensive validity and reliability testing” (Potgieter, 2019:20). The survey questionnaires are continuously revised, updated and improved, both to capture changes and advances in public discourse as well as to improve the robustness of the various measures and question items (Potgieter, 2019:19). The question items are enhanced by using qualitative research conducted by the IJR in focus group discussions that took place in 2001 and again in 2011 (Potgieter, 2019:19). In addition, back-checks are conducted on the interviews to ensure the accuracy of the collected data (Potgieter, 2019:20). Furthermore, as demonstrated in the next section, the SARB questions closely resemble many of the well-established, tried and tested questions measuring the same concepts in the global academic literature. They therefore benefit from having had their validity and reliability continuously tested and improved over time. Thus the SARB serves as a reliable source of data that uses carefully considered and researched measures that ensure their reliability and validity.

3.6 Operationalisation of variables

A clear conceptualisation and operationalisation of the variables under study is essential for ensuring that the researcher conveys precisely what is meant by a specific term or variable and how that variable will be measured. Conceptualisation refers to the process of specifying exactly what is meant by the researcher's use of certain concepts and thus provides the working definition of the concept that the researcher will be using for the purpose of their study (Babbie, 2016:128). This is necessary because the concepts under investigation can have a variety of different meanings to different people, and therefore it is essential for the researcher to specify exactly what they mean when using a certain concept for the purpose of their study (Babbie, 2016:128). The operationalisation of a variable entails specifying exactly how the researcher will be measuring the concept in their research (Babbie, 2016:136). In quantitative research, making a social phenomenon quantifiable entails specifying exactly what is meant by a concept and how it will be measured while excluding other possible meanings and interpretations (Babbie, 2016:26). In survey research, the operationalisation of a variable will determine what survey questions are used to investigate and measure the concept of interest (Babbie, 2016:132).

All the operationalisations of the variables used in this study are based on the operationalisations and measures that have been used and proven to be valid and reliable in the global academic literature. The following sections will discuss the dependent, independent and demographic variables used in this study, with reference to the research questions they are associated with. This section will also discuss how the same variables have been operationalised in the global literature and will demonstrate how this study's selected choice of measurements are in line with the widely accepted and trusted measures used by researchers around the world. The exact SARB 2019 questions that will be used to measure the variables in this study can be found in the Appendix, as well as in Tables 3.1 to 3.5, which compare and demonstrate the similarity between the measures used in this study and the measures used in the international literature.

3.6.1 Dependent variable: Social trust

Social trust is the dependent variable of this study. Most of the global literature on social trust measures the concept using what is now known as "the standard trust question", which asks respondents: "In general, do you think that most people can be trusted, or can't you be too

careful in dealing with people?” (Almond and Verba, 1963; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:213; Bjørnskov, 2007; Newton, 2007:345; You, 2012:707; Newton *et al.*, 2018:39; Vallier, 2021:55). This survey question earned its title “the standard trust question” because it has been used for decades in countless studies on social trust. This question was first used in the United States as part of a battery of questions by Rosenberg (1956) and subsequently adopted in numerous large-scale research surveys, including the Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarometer, World Values Survey, and the General Social Survey (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Uslaner, 2012:74). The phrasing of the standard trust question differs very slightly across surveys, with some using the phrase “you must be very careful” instead of “you can’t be too careful”. The question is typically formatted as a dichotomy, with respondents reporting either that “most people can be trusted” or “you can’t be too careful” (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:213; You, 2012:708).

Despite the popular use of the standard trust question, this measure faces several critiques. Some scholars have argued that the trust question is too vague to be useful, contending that a person’s level of trust is dependent on the circumstances and people involved in a given situation, and therefore no single broad survey question can accurately capture levels of trust (Newton, 2007:345). The question has been criticised for being too ambiguous with regards to who “most people” refers to, and as such, respondents can respond to the same question with significantly different understandings of who they are describing, making the question less reliable (Bjørnskov, 2007:2; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:11). Another commonly raised concern is that respondents may misinterpret the question to be effectively asking about how trustworthy the respondent themselves is, rather than how trustworthy they deem “most people” to be (Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman and Soutter, 2000; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:214; Newton *et al.*, 2018:39). Scholars such as Reeskens and Hooghe (2008) raise concerns regarding the “cross cultural comparability” of the standard trust question, arguing that the meaning of trust can differ in various countries and cultures, and that certain phrases such as “you can’t be too careful” can be difficult to translate in various languages. The response options for the standard trust question have also been criticised, with people arguing that “you can’t be too careful” is ill-suited for measuring trust, as being careful is not the same as lacking trust (Yamagishi, Kikuchi and Kosugi, 1999; You, 2012:708). In addition, the use of the standard trust question is critiqued for usually being presented to respondents either as a binary variable, with responses either being that “most people can be trusted”, recorded as 1,

or “you can never be too careful” being recorded as 0, or as a 4-point scale (Zmerli and Newton, 2008:709; You, 2012:708). Several scholars argue that using scales of 7 to 11 points is far more accurate and reliable for recording attitudes and values than dichotomised or 4-point scales (Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Scherpenzeel and Saris, 1995; Cummins and Gullone, 2000; Scherpenzeel, 2002; Saris and Gallhofer, 2003; Kroh, 2005; Zmerli and Newton, 2008:714).

The use of the standard trust question has also been criticised because this measure is based on only one social trust question (Zmerli and Newton, 2008; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:11). Some scholars have opposed the use of the standard trust question and have instead favoured using Rosenberg’s misanthropy scale (1956), in which the standard social trust question is included as one of three questions relating to trust and misanthropy (Zmerli and Newton, 2008:714; Uslaner, 2012b:74; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:11). These scholars argue that using a battery of questions to investigate levels of social trust is a more valid and reliable measure of generalised social trust than a single trust question (Zmerli and Newton, 2008:714; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:11).

Scholars have rebutted these critiques, however. Uslaner (2012b:79) is a strong advocate for the use of the standard trust question and argues that Rosenberg’s (1956) misanthropy scale is inappropriate for measuring social trust and does not measure social trust, but rather misanthropy, as the name states. Uslaner (2002:72-75) argues that the dichotomy format of the trust question is not a problem as experiments have shown that respondents understand the trust question and are able to respond appropriately. Additionally, Uslaner (2012b:76) argues that using an 11-point rating scale has its own issues and introduces the risk that responses “cluster, perhaps artificially, at the extremes or in the middle”.

With regards to the risk of respondents misinterpreting the question to be asking about their own levels of trustworthiness, studies on this issue have found that people correctly interpret the question as asking about trust in strangers, making it a valid and accurate measure of social trust (Uslaner, 2000:575; 2002:54; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:11). Additionally, studies have found trusting attitudes and trustworthy behaviour to be highly correlated, and therefore argue that the risk of respondents misinterpreting the question does not have great implications for the accuracy of the results (You, 2012:708). Thus, despite scholars’ concerns, numerous studies demonstrate that the standard trust question accurately measures levels of social trust

and it remains the most popularly used measure in the social trust literature (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Uslaner, 2000:575; 2002:54; Glaeser *et al.*, 2000; Knack, 2001; Bjørnskov, 2007:3; Delhey, Newton and Welzel, 2011; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:11).

To measure South Africans' levels of social trust, the following question from the SARB 2019 survey is used:

Generally speaking, would you say that you are trusting or distrusting of people?
(1) Very distrusting (2) Distrusting (3) Neither trusting nor distrusting (4) Trusting (5)
Very trusting (IJR, n.d.).

This question closely resembles the standard trust question popularly used in the international academic literature. While the wording differs slightly, in that it asks whether the respondents themselves are trusting or distrusting rather than asking whether they feel others can be trusted, both questions enquire into the same matter, which is whether respondents feel they can trust other people. Table 3.1 demonstrates how the SARB survey question closely resembles the operationalisations found in the international literature and is a trusted measure widely used by other scholars.

Table 3.1: Operationalisation of the Dependent Variable- Level of Social Trust¹⁴

Sources	SARB 2019	World Values Survey (1981- 2020)	American National Election Study (1964- 2020)	General Social Survey (1972- 2021)
Questions Used	<p>Generally speaking, would you say that you are trusting or distrusting of people?</p> <p>1) Very distrusting 2) Distrusting 3) Neither trusting nor distrusting 4) Trusting 5) Very trusting</p> <p>(IJR, n.d.)</p>	<p>Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?</p> <p>or</p> <p>Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?</p> <p>1) Most people can be trusted 0) You can't be too careful</p> <p>or</p> <p>0) You need to be very careful</p> <p>(World Values Survey, n.d)</p>	<p>Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?</p> <p>(ANES, n.d.)</p>	<p>Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?</p> <p>(GSS Data Explorer, n.d.)</p>

3.6.2 Independent variables

Independent variable 1: Racial diversity

The following discussion identifies the independent variable used to answer sub-research question 1: *Do experiences of racial diversity, measured through the frequency of interracial interaction, increase or decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Studies on the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust utilise various different methods of measuring diversity, with the choice of measurement instrument dependent on the theoretical mechanisms thought to link diversity to social trust. The conventional approach to measuring diversity is to use a fractionalisation index, such as the Herfindahl-Hirschman Fractionalization Index, which is a standard diversity measure, or the ethnolinguistic fractionalisation index, which is one of the most popularly used measures of ethnic diversity in studies around the world (Easterly and Levine, 1997; Robinson, 2006:4; Uslaner, 2006:10; Dinesen and

¹⁴ Tables of operationalisations (Table 3.1-3.5) display question items quoted directly from the various survey sources.

Sønderskov, 2018:12). Other scholars argue in favour of rather using polarisation indices for investigating the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust, as these measure the probability that conflict will arise between two ethnic groups (Uslaner, 2006:10; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2007; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:13; Dražanova, 2020:2).

While fractionalisation indices measure how diverse a society is, and polarisation indices predict the potential risk of interethnic conflict, neither of these indices measure the extent of actual interethnic exposure, which is considered to be the key mechanism behind the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust (Uslaner, 2006:15; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2013:24). While the level of ethnic diversity in a chosen context increases the chances of interethnic exposure (in comparison to an ethnically homogenous area), it can only serve as a weak proxy for actual interethnic exposure. As such, measures of actual interethnic exposure and contact are better suited to measure the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust.

The SARB surveys were specifically designed to investigate the nature of race relations in South Africa. As such, the questionnaires include items specifically designed to measure the frequency of interracial interactions. Their inclusion is motivated by Allport's (1954) contact theory about the impact of interracial interactions on race relations (Potgieter and Moosa, 2018:13). The following SARB 2019 question is used to measure the effect of racial diversity on levels of social trust in South Africa for this study:

Thinking about a typical day in the past month, how often did you interact or talk to someone who is a different race to you? [INSERT LOCATION]

- a. At work/place of study*
- b. At home*
- c. At commercial or retail places (such as shops or malls)*
- d. At social gatherings and events*
- e. At public recreational places*
- f. On public transport (such as on a bus)*

(1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Always (IJR, n.d.).

This SARB question item is perfectly suited to study the effects of racial diversity on social trust as it measures the frequency of interethnic interactions instead of relying on a fractionalisation index as a proxy for exposure. Other studies use similar questions to measure interracial interactions, such as Hurtado, *et al.*'s (1995:38) study on interracial interactions in university environments, which asks respondents about the frequency of interracial interactions they have at various locations on campus, such as dining with someone from a different racial/ethnic group, having a roommate from a different racial/ethnic group, amongst others. Table 3.2 demonstrates how the SARB 2019 survey question used for this study closely resembles the operationalisations found in the international literature and is a trusted measure widely used by other scholars.

Table 3.2: Operationalisation of Frequency of Interracial Interaction

Source	SARB 2019	Hurtado <i>et al.</i> (1995)	European Social Survey (2014)	SARB 2017
Questions Used	<p>Thinking about a typical day in the past month, how often did you interact or talk to someone who is a different race to you? [INSERT LOCATION]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At work/place of study At home At commercial or retail places (such as shops or malls) At social gatherings and events At public recreational places On public transport (such as on a bus) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always <p>(IJR, n.d.)</p>	<p>Interacted Across Racial/ethnic Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dined with someone of a different racial/ethnic group Studied with someone of a different racial/ethnic group Had a roommate of a different racial/ethnic group Dated someone of a different racial/ethnic group <p>(Hurtado <i>et al.</i>, 1995:38)</p>	<p>How often do you have any contact with people who are of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people when you are out and about? This could be on public transport, in the street, in shops or in the neighbourhood ... Any contact should be included, whether verbal or non-verbal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Never Less than once a month Once a month Several times a month Once a week Several times a week Every day <p>(European Social Survey, 2014:25)</p>	<p>Thinking about a typical day in the past month, how often did you interact or talk to someone who is a different race to you? [INSERT LOCATION]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At work/place of study At home At commercial or retail places (such as shops or malls) At social gatherings and events At public recreational places (such as parks, stadiums and beaches) In public transport place (such as at taxi ranks, train or bus stations, airports) On public transport (such as on a bus, airplane, taxi or train) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always <p>Potgieter and Moosa (2018:13)</p>

Recoding the racial diversity variable

As shown in Table 3.2, the SARB 2019 survey measures respondents' interracial interactions using a battery of questions regarding the frequency with which respondents have interracial interactions in different locations on an average day. To simplify this question for the purpose

of analysis, the battery of questions is computed into a single scale variable that provides each respondent with one total score for the frequency of interracial interactions on an average day, irrespective of the location in which these take place. This total score scale is computed by adding the questions in the battery of questions and then recoding the new scale variable into a Likert scale variable. The total score scale runs from 2 to 30, meaning there are 29 response options in the scale. The Likert scale is computed by collapsing the 29 response options into the five response options originally used in the interracial interaction questions. Due to the number of response options in the scale, the 29 response options could not be divided into the five Likert response categories equally, and thus the third/ middle response category accounts for only five of the collapsed response options, while the remaining four response categories account for six of the collapsed response categories each. As such, the scale variable is collapsed and recoded into a Likert scale as follows: (1) Never (2-7), (2) Rarely (8-13), (3) Sometimes (14-18), (4) Often (19-24), and (5) Always (25-30).

Independent variable 2: Income distribution (inequality)

The following discussion identifies the independent variable used to answer sub-research question 2: *Do subjective perceptions of relative income distribution (inequality) decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Much of the literature on the effects of income inequality on social trust has been based on cross-national comparisons. A country's Gini coefficient, which measures the income distribution across the population of a country, is the standard measure used to assess and compare countries' levels of income inequality (Uslaner, 2002:181; Bjørnskov 2007:5). Countries are given a score ranging from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning a country has perfect equality (everyone has equal wealth) and 1 meaning a country has perfect inequality (one person has all the wealth) (Uslaner, 2002:181). An alternative method used in the literature on income inequality is to assess the standard deviation of income in a country to see how the incomes are dispersed (Uslaner, 2002:181).

This study, however, is concerned with the effects of income inequality on social trust at the individual level rather than the national level. Specifically, this study is concerned with the impact of subjective perceptions of income distributions and inequality, or how citizens perceive their own incomes relative to what they believe others in the country to be earning,

and the effect this has on social trust. This study adopts this approach to investigating income inequality because much of the literature on social trust has indicated that it is the sense of injustice and unfairness associated with income inequality that erodes social trust rather than individuals' objective incomes (Uslaner, 2002:189; Delhey and Newton, 2005:7; Newton, 2007:17; You, 2012:713).

To measure respondents' subjective perceptions of income distribution, or in other words, their income relative to what they believe other citizens to be earning, You (2012) uses the survey question that presents respondents with a scale of 10 income groups, with 1 being the "lowest income decile" and 10 being the "highest income decile" and asks respondents which group they think their household belongs to. Similarly, the General Social Survey measures respondents' perceptions of their incomes relative to others by asking: "Compared with American families in general, would you say your family income is..." with response options ranging from (1) "Far below average", to (5) "Far above average", as listed in Table 3.3 (GSS Data Explorer, n.d.).

Following from the global literature on how studies have measured perceptions of relative income and subjective income inequality, this study uses the following SARB 2019 question:

In relation to the rest of South Africa, your financial situation is...

(1) Much worse (2) Worse (3) The same (4) Better (5) Much better (IJR, n.d.).

Table 3.3: Operationalisation of Income Distribution (Inequality)

Sources	SARB 2019	World Values Survey (1981-2020), used by You (2012)	General Social Survey (1982-2021)
Questions Used	<p>In relation to the rest of South Africa, your financial situation is...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Much worse 2) Worse 3) The same 4) Better 5) Much better <p>(IJR, n.d.)</p>	<p>On this card is a scale of incomes on which 1 indicates the 'lowest income decile' and 10 the 'highest income decile' in your country. We would like to know in what group your household is. Please specify the appropriate number, counting all wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in.</p> <p>(World Values Survey, n.d.)</p>	<p>Compared with American families in general, would you say your family income is far below average, below average, average, above average, or far above average? (Probe: Just your best guess.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Far below average 2) Below average 3) Average 4) Above average 5) Far above average <p>(GSS Data Explorer, n.d.)</p>

Independent variable 3: Perceptions of government corruption

The following discussion identifies the independent variables used to answer sub-research question 3: *Do perceptions of government corruption decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Research on the relationship between social trust and corruption is typically conducted at the cross-national level and therefore utilises national-level corruption indicators, such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (Sapsford, 2019:4). This study, however, is concerned with the relationship between corruption and social trust at the individual level and therefore measures perceptions of corruption and the effect this has on social trust levels. The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, which analyses the quality of government and democracy in 129 developing countries, investigates the presence of corruption in different countries and whether corrupt officials are held accountable (Donner, *et al.*, 2022:4). Survey respondents are asked: "To what extent are public officeholders who abuse their positions prosecuted or penalized?" and presented with a scale ranging from (1) "Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption can do so without fear of legal consequences or adverse publicity", to (10) "Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption are prosecuted rigorously under established laws and always attract adverse publicity", with various other options in between (Donner, *et al.*, 2022:21). Similarly, the

World Values Survey (n.d.) measures perceptions of corruption at the individual level by asking respondents to rate “How widespread corruption is among the public officials”, on a scale of 1 to 4, meaning with (1) “Almost no public officials” and (4) “Almost all public officials”. Additionally, the European Values Study measures perceptions of corruption by asking respondents: “And in your opinion, about how many public officials in [Rs Country] are involved in corruption?” with response options ranging from (1) “Almost none”, to (5) “Almost all” (GESIS, n.d.). The variations in questions in the international literature are shown in Table 3.4.

Similarly to the questions used to measure the perceived extent of corruption in the global literature, this study uses the following SARB 2019 survey question:

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Corrupt government officials often get away with it.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree (IJR, n.d.).

This question closely resembles the items used in the global literature as it enquires into perceptions of the extent to which they believe government officials are taking part in and getting away with corrupt behaviour.

Table 3.4: Operationalisation of Perceptions of Government Corruption

Source	SARB 2019	World Values Survey (1995-2022), used by You (2012)	European Values Study (2004-2016), used by You (2012)	Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (2006-2022)
Question Used	<p>Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement:</p> <p>Corrupt government officials often get away with it.</p> <p>1) Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither agree nor disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly agree</p> <p>(IJR, n.d.)</p>	<p>How widespread do you think bribe taking and corruption is in this country?</p> <p>1) Almost no public officials engaged in it 2) A few are 3) Most are 4) Almost all public officials are engaged in it</p> <p>(World Values Survey, n.d.)</p>	<p>And in your opinion, about how many public officials in [Rs Country] are involved in corruption?</p> <p>1) Almost none 2) A few 3) Some 4) Quite a lot 5) Almost all</p> <p>(GESIS, n.d.).</p>	<p>To what extent are public officeholders who abuse their positions prosecuted or penalised?</p> <p>10) Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption are prosecuted rigorously under established laws and always attract adverse publicity.</p> <p>7) Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption generally are prosecuted under established laws and often attract adverse publicity, but occasionally slip through political, legal or procedural loopholes.</p> <p>4) Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption are not adequately prosecuted, but occasionally attract adverse publicity.</p> <p>1) Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption can do so without fear of legal consequences or adverse publicity.</p> <p>(Donner, <i>et al.</i>, 2022:21)</p>

Independent variable 4: Confidence in institutions

The following discussion identifies the independent variables used to answer sub-research question 4: *Do citizens with lower levels of confidence in South Africa's institutions have lower levels of social trust, while citizens with higher levels of confidence in South Africa's institutions have higher levels of social trust?*

When measuring institutional confidence, it is conventional to use question items that enquire into respondents' levels of confidence in a wide variety of different institutions and actors (Newton, 2007; Zmerli and Newton, 2008). While the choice of institutions may vary between studies, the survey items typically follow the same format of asking respondents to rate how much confidence they have in each different institution. These typically include options such as the national government, national legislature, political parties, parliament, police, courts, legal system and politicians, and can additionally be extended to include international organisations such as the United Nations (Easterly, 2000:372; Newton, 2007:354; Zmerli and Newton, 2008:709; You, 2012:708). In You's (2012) analysis of the effects of institutional confidence on social trust, he uses the World Values Survey question asking respondents how much confidence they have in "the armed forces, the legal system, the police, the central government, political parties, parliament, and the civil service", with response options ranging from (1) "Not at all", to (4) "A great deal" (World Values Survey, n.d.). Examples of questions from the World Values Survey and European Social Survey are shown in Table 3.5.

This study uses the SARB 2019 survey items asking respondents their levels of confidence in a variety of institutions and actors:

Please indicate how much confidence you have in each of the following institutions, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?

- a. The President*
- b. The Deputy President*
- c. National Government*
- d. Provincial Government*
- e. Local Government*
- f. Constitutional Court*
- g. Legal system in general*

- h. South African Police Service*
- i. Public Protector*
- j. The Hawks*
- k. Parliament*
- l. National Prosecuting Authority*
- m. South African Revenue Service*
- n. SABC media*
- o. African National Congress*
- p. Democratic Alliance*
- q. Economic Freedom Fighters*
- r. Religious leaders*
- s. Large corporations/ big business*

(1) Not at all (2) Not very much (3) Somewhat (4) Quite a lot (5) A great deal (IJR, n.d.).

Table 3.5: Operationalisation of Confidence in Institutions

Source	SARB 2019	World Values Survey (1990-2020)	European Social Survey (2002-2020)
Questions Used	<p>Please indicate how much confidence you have in each of the following institutions, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The President The Deputy President National Government Provincial Government Local Government Constitutional Court Legal system in general South African Police Service/ the Police Public Protector The Hawks Parliament National Prosecuting Authority South African Revenue Service SABC media (radio and TV) African National Congress Democratic Alliance Economic Freedom Fighters Religious leaders Large corporations/ big business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Not at all Not very much Somewhat Quite a lot A great deal <p>(IJR, n.d.)</p>	<p>I am going to name a number of organisations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?</p> <p>(World Values Survey, n.d.)</p>	<p>Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [country]'s parliament? The legal system The police Politicians Political parties The European Parliament The United Nations <p>(European Social Survey, 2014:7)</p>

Computing new variables for confidence in institutions

To analyse the effect of confidence in institutions on social trust, this study computes new scale variables from the SARB's battery of 19 questions to reduce the number of cases and aid the analysis. To compute the new scale variables for confidence in institutions, a factor analysis is

first conducted to assess whether the 19 questions on confidence in institutions measure the same underlying factor or phenomenon, and, therefore whether it is appropriate to group the items together when constructing a new variable. Details on how this factor analysis is conducted are discussed later in this chapter, in Section 3.7.2.

Independent variable 5: Perceptions of societal fairness

The following discussion identifies the independent variables used to answer sub-research question 5:

Research Question 5a: *Is there a latent variable that measures “perceptions of societal fairness” based on the combined effects of (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You’s (2012) argument?*

Research question 5b: *Do greater perceptions of societal fairness, measured by the composite scale variable constructed from the operationalisation provided by You (2012), increase levels of social trust among South Africans?*

To investigate the potential influence of perceptions of societal fairness on social trust, this study adopts You’s (2012) conceptualisation of societal fairness as a latent concept comprised of three key elements, namely, distributive justice, formal justice, and procedural justice, which You (2012) argues can be measured by income distribution (inequality), freedom from corruption, and confidence in institutions, respectively. By demonstrating the effect of these factors on levels of social trust in 80 countries, You (2012) argues that the influence of societal fairness on social trust is demonstrated.

You’s (2012) study thus only indirectly measures the influence of societal fairness by independently measuring the effects of income distribution (inequality), corruption and confidence in institutions on social trust. You (2012) does not, however, create a single composite variable to measure the impact of the latent variable of societal fairness itself. This study aims to develop on You’s (2012) study by constructing a composite variable to measure the influence of perceptions of societal fairness on social trust more directly.

It is worth noting that You (2012) measures countries’ levels of societal fairness at both the individual level, measuring perceptions of societal fairness, as well as at the national level, in

which he uses national-level indicators, such as Gini coefficients and corruption indexes. This study is concerned with measuring the impact of societal fairness at the individual level (as it is not a cross-national study) and therefore utilises You's (2012) operationalisation of societal fairness at the individual level, or rather *perceptions* of societal fairness, to measure this variable for this study. Thus, following from You (2012), perceptions of societal fairness is operationalised as a latent composite variable that is measurable through the three independent variables of perceptions of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption and confidence in institutions.

Before testing the influence of perceptions of societal fairness on social trust, this study first tests whether You's (2012) conceptualisation can be used to operationalise the latent variable of "perceptions of societal fairness". To do this, a factor analysis is conducted to test whether the three independent variables measure the same phenomena and thus can be computed into a single variable measuring perceptions of societal fairness. Further details on the factor analysis will be discussed later in this chapter, in Section 3.7.2.

3.6.3 Demographic variables

This study additionally investigates the possible effects of six key demographic variables on levels of social trust in South Africa. The choice of demographic variables included in this study has been guided by the theories and empirical findings presented in the international literature on social trust. The first of the demographic variables is age. While most studies have not found age to have any significant impact on social trust, some have suggested that older citizens tend to be more trusting than younger cohorts (Glaeser *et al.*, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Alesina and la Ferrara, 2000, 2002). This study therefore uses the SARB 2019 question: "What is your age?" to measure respondents' ages (IJR, n.d.). The SARB records respondents' ages as a continuous variable. To simplify the analysis of this variable in this study, this continuous variable is recoded into an ordinal variable by grouping respondents' ages into various age categories. Guided by the age categories used in the SARB 2019 report (Potgieter, 2019:57), the following age categories are used and are coded as: (1) 18-24, (2) 25-34, (3) 35-49, (4) 50-59, (5) 60 and older.

The second demographic variable is gender. While much of the research on social trust has not found gender to have a significant effect on levels of social trust, a few studies have still

produced results indicating that women have lower levels of social trust than men. Alesina and La Ferrara (2002) explain that this negative relationship results from women having been historically marginalised. The question “Gender” is used along with the response categories of (1) Male and (2) Female (IJR, n.d.). While the SARB 2019 survey includes an additional response option of (3) Other, none of the respondents selected this response option and thus this response option has been excluded from the analysis, leaving gender as a dichotomous variable.

The third variable is the respondent’s race. While many studies have found that respondents’ race or ethnicity do not have any significant associations with levels of social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:208), others have indicated that those of colour who have previously been oppressed and marginalised in society have lower levels of social trust, while white respondents have marginally higher levels of social trust. The SARB 2019 question used to record respondents’ race reads: “For statistical purposes I need to confirm which ethnic group you belong to. Is it...?” with the response categories of (1) Black, (2) White, (3) Indian/Asian, and (4) Coloured (IJR, n.d.).

The fourth demographic variable included in this study is whether respondents live in urban or rural areas, as some scholars have suggested this may affect levels of social trust (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton *et al.*, 2018). To measure the possible effects of urban-rural location, this study uses the SARB 2019 data which records respondents’ living environments as being either (1) Urban, (2) Farm, or (3) Traditional (IJR, n.d.). For the purpose of this study, the response options of (2) Farm and (3) Traditional are collapsed into one option of “Rural”, thus recoding this variable into a dichotomous variable with the options of (1) Urban and (2) Rural.

Respondents’ highest level of education achieved is included as the fifth demographic variable, as studies have indicated that respondents’ education levels can impact their levels of trust. However, studies from different countries have found conflicting results as to whether higher levels of educational attainment make individuals more trusting or less trusting. While most of the literature on Western countries indicates that education improves trust (Knack and Keefer, 1997:1279; Helliwell and Putnam, 1999; Putnam, 2000, 2007:152; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002:209; Knack and Zak, 2002; Uslaner, 2002, 2015), Mattes and Moreno’s (2018) study of various African countries finds that higher levels of education are associated with lower levels

of social trust among individuals. Education levels will be recorded using the SARB 2019 question asking: “What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?” with a list of nine options ranging from (1) “No schooling” to (9) “Postgraduate degree completed”. For the purpose of this study, these response categories are collapsed into a smaller number of response categories to make the data more suitable for cross-tabulations, with the new response categories being (1) No schooling, (2) Some primary school, (3) Some high/ secondary school, (4) Some tertiary education, (5) Completed tertiary education.

The sixth demographic variable included in this study is a respondent’s total monthly household income, as it is argued by some scholars to influence individuals’ levels of social trust, with wealthier members of society being suspected to have higher levels of social trust than poorer members of society (Newton, 1999; Patterson, 1999; Whiteley, 1999; Putnam, 2000, 2007; Stolle, 2001; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Uslaner, 2002:79; Delhey and Newton, 2003). The SARB 2019 question item asking: “Which of these best describes your total monthly household income before tax and deductions? (Please include all sources of income, i.e. wages, grants, piecemeal work, salaries, pensions, income from investments, etc. This includes all income generated by everyone in the household)” is used, with 13 response categories ranging from (1) “No income” to (13) “R40 000 or more” (IJR, n.d.). For the purpose of this study, these response categories are collapsed into a smaller number of categories suitable for cross-tabulations and can be viewed in the Appendix.

3.7 Methods of analysis: Statistical techniques

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is a statistical software platform that lends itself particularly well to the analysis of social science data and is popularly used by researchers to collect, organise and perform complex statistical analyses on their data. This section describes how this study conducts the data analysis and utilises SPSS to analyse the raw SARB 2019 dataset to respond to the study’s sub-research questions.

The data analysis begins by running a percentage frequency, a form of descriptive statistics, to see how social trust levels are dispersed among the general population. Next, bivariate analyses are performed to test for the relationship between the dependent variable, social trust, and the various independent and demographic variables investigated in this study. The method of bivariate analysis chosen to test the relationship between two variables is determined by the

nature of the variables involved. The dependent variable, social trust, and all the independent and demographic variables included in this study are categorical variables, as they are all either nominal¹⁵ or ordinal¹⁶ variables. Cross-tabulations are a form of descriptive statistics and are the most appropriate method of analysis for investigating the relationship between two categorical variables (De Vaus, 2002:241). Therefore cross-tabulations are used as the method of bivariate analysis to investigate the relationships between social trust and the independent and demographic variables.

Correlation coefficients serve as the appropriate summary static used to measure the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables in the cross-tabulations (De Vaus, 2002:259). Correlation coefficients produce a value ranging from -1 to 1, with -1 indicating a perfect negative relationship between the two variables, 0 indicating there is no correlation between the two variables, and 1 indicating a perfect positive correlation between the two variables (De Vaus, 2002:259). The minus sign or lack thereof indicates the direction of the relationship (whether the relationship is negative or positive), while the numerical value indicates the strength of the relationship, with the closer the value is to -1 or 1, the stronger the relationship, and the closer the value is to 0, the weaker the relationship. De Vaus (2002:259) provides a useful guideline by which the correlation coefficients can be interpreted, shown in Table 3.6:

¹⁵ Nominal variables are variables in which the response categories have no natural or assigned numerical values or order (De Vaus, 2002:205; Field, 2009:8).

¹⁶ Ordinal variables are variables in which the response categories are rank-ordered and thus can be arranged from lowest to highest (De Vaus, 2002:204). While these categories have a set order, there is no specific numerical measurement that can be given to measure the difference between the response categories, as demonstrated by response categories such as “approve” and “strongly approve” (De Vaus, 2002:204; Field, 2009:8).

Table 3.6: Guide to Interpreting Correlation Coefficients

Correlation Coefficient	Strength of the relationship ¹⁷
0.00	No (linear) association
0.01-0.09	Trivial/ extremely weak
0.10-0.29	Low to moderate
0.30-0.49	Moderate to substantial
0.50-0.69	Substantial to very strong
0.70-0.89	Very strong
0.90+	Near perfect

Guide from De Vaus (2002:259)

The correlation coefficient used to measure the relationship between the variables is determined by the measurement of the variables involved in the cross-tabulation. *Gamma* is the most appropriate correlation coefficient for measuring the strength and direction of relationships between two ordinal variables with relatively few categories (De Vaus, 2002:258). In cross-tabulations involving one nominal and one ordinal variable, it is appropriate to select the correlation coefficient based on the weaker level of measurement, which is the nominal variable (De Vaus, 2002:258). As such, *Cramer's V* is the appropriate correlation coefficient to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between one ordinal and one nominal variable (De Vaus, 2002:258).

Tests of statistical significance are used to determine whether the relationship detected between the two variables in the sample population would also be found in the larger population that the sample represents, or whether the relationship is likely the result of chance or a sampling error (De Vaus, 2002:263). The test of significance produces a p-value in the range 0 to 1. The p-value measures the probability that the relationship found between the variables is the product of a sampling error or chance, and thus the lower the p-value, the less chance there is that the relationship detected is the result of a sampling error (De Vaus, 2002:246). For the relationship to be considered statistically significant, the significance test needs to yield a p-value of equal to or less than $p=0.5$, which would mean that the probability that the relationship between the variables is caused by an error is less than .05% and therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected. One advantage of working with large sample sizes, such as that provided by

¹⁷ The interpretations of the coefficients' strengths applies irrespective of whether the value is positive or negative.

the SARB dataset, is that the chance of sampling errors influencing the results is much lower than it would be in a smaller sample size (De Vaus, 2002:264).

3.7.1 Bivariate relationships between social trust and demographic variables

The dependent variable, social trust, and the demographic variables of age, highest level of education received, and total monthly household income are all ordinal variables, as the response categories reflect a structured order of values. Therefore *Gamma* is used as the appropriate correlation coefficient for measuring the strength and direction of these relationships (De Vaus, 2002:258). The demographic variables of gender and urban/rural are both nominal variables, however, they are also dichotomous as they only have two response categories. When selecting the appropriate correlation coefficient for a bivariate analysis involving a dichotomous variable, it is appropriate to treat the dichotomous variable as if it were for the same level of measurement as the other variable in the cross-tabulation (De Vaus, 2002:262). Thus, the correlation coefficient is determined by the other variable in the cross-tabulation, social trust, which is an ordinal variable, therefore making *Gamma* the appropriate correlation coefficient (De Vaus, 2002:258). Race is a nominal variable, while the dependent variable, social trust, is an ordinal variable. As such, *Cramer's V* will be used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables.

3.7.2 Bivariate relationships between social trust and independent variables

Again, cross-tabulations are conducted as the appropriate form of bivariate analysis for testing the relationship between social trust and the different independent variables. Both the dependent variable of social trust and all the independent variables included in this study are ordinal variables measured with Likert response categories and thus *Gamma* is the most appropriate correlation coefficient to measure the strength and direction of the relationships, while the p-value determines whether the relationships are statistically significant (De Vaus, 2002:258). For the purpose of this analysis, all “Don’t know” and “Haven’t heard enough to say” response options are hidden response categories in the data.

Sub-Research Questions 1-3

The relationships between social trust and the variables of racial diversity¹⁸, income distribution (inequality), and perceptions of government corruption are analysed using cross-tabulations, with *Gamma* as the appropriate correlation coefficient for measuring the strength and direction of these relationships.

Sub-Research Question 4

Before conducting a cross-tabulation to analyse the relationship between social trust and confidence in institutions, a factor analysis is performed on the SARB's battery of 19 questions on institutional confidence and new scale variables are computed in order to reduce the number of cases and aid the analysis. The factor analysis is first conducted to assess whether the 19 survey questions measure the same underlying phenomenon and, subsequently, whether it is appropriate to group the items together when constructing a new variable. Factor analyses are used to reduce a set of variables into a smaller set of more significant underlying variables on which the broader set of variables cluster around (Field, 2009:628). Conducting a factor analysis allows this study to identify which of the question items on confidence in institutions are measuring the same or differing phenomena by seeing which items cluster together. Thus, a principal components analysis is conducted on the 19 questions measuring respondents' confidence in institutions using orthogonal rotation (varimax). For missing data, cases are excluded on a pairwise basis.

When conducting a factor analysis, it is important to ensure that the variables included in the analysis are adequately correlated with one another (Field, 2009:648). To ensure that the variables are adequately intercorrelated, a correlation matrix is used and scanned to assess the intercorrelations between the variables included in the analysis, and variables producing correlation values lower than .3 or values of .9 or higher are excluded from the analysis (Field, 2009:648, 660). Additionally, it is important to ensure the suitability of the sample for factor analyses, as sample size can significantly influence the reliability of the factor analysis (Field, 2009:645). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) is a statistic that ranges from 0 to 1 and is used to assess whether a set of variables is suitable for factor analysis. The closer the KMO value is to 1, the more suitable the variables are for factor analysis, and

¹⁸ View Chapter 3 Section 3.6.2 to see how the racial diversity variable is recoded for the analysis.

the closer it is to 0, the less suitable they are (De Vaus, 2002:188; Field, 2009:647). A KMO value of 0.5 means the variables are considered as “barely acceptable” for factor analysis, with any KMO lower than 0.5 indicating that the variables are not suitable for factor analysis (De Vaus, 2002:188; Field, 2009:647). A KMO value of 0.7 and above is ideal and means the variables are well-suited for factor analysis (De Vaus, 2002:188; Field, 2009:647). Bartlett’s test of sphericity is used to test for significance ($p =$ less than 0.5), and tests whether a “correlation matrix is significantly different from an identity matrix”. If Bartlett’s test is significant, the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and therefore relationships exist between the variables (Field, 2009:648, 660).

Various measures are used to guide the decision on which factors to extract from the factor analysis. Kaiser’s criterion, which is the argument that all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are important and should be retained from the analysis (Field, 2009:640), is used to guide the factor extraction for this analysis. Kaiser’s criterion has, however, been criticised for overestimating the number of factors that need to be retained (Field, 2009:641). Therefore, in addition to the use of Kaiser’s criterion, scree plots are used to determine which factors should be retained from the analysis (Pallant, 2016:524). Scree plots work by plotting the eigenvalues of each factor on a graph so that the relative importance of each factor can be easily visually identified (Field, 2009:639).

Before constructing the new scale items, Cronbach’s Alpha is used to assess the reliability of the scales. Cronbach’s Alpha is the most commonly used method for testing scale reliability (Field, 2009:674). As a standard rule, Cronbach’s Alpha should produce a result greater than .7 for the scale to be considered reliable. Additionally, the SPSS tool called “scale if item deleted” is used to produce the potential Cronbach’s Alpha that would be produced if any item on the scale were to be deleted, and thus helps to identify any questions that may detract rather than contribute to the scale’s reliability, allowing for these items to be excluded from the scale.

Sub-Research Questions 5a and 5b

Research question 5 consists of two parts. In a similar fashion to the previous research questions, research question 5b enquires into the strength of the relationship between perceptions of societal fairness and social trust. Before this relationship can be investigated, however, research question 5a aims to establish whether a variable can be built to measure the

latent variable of perceptions of societal fairness, based on You's (2012) argument that the effect of perceptions of societal fairness on social trust can be measured through the effects of perceptions of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, and confidence in institutions on social trust. To answer this research question, a factor analysis is conducted on the variables of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of government corruption, and the two measures of confidence in institutions (produced by factor analysis performed on the 19 question items on institutional confidence), namely, confidence in non-political institutions and confidence in political/government institutions)¹⁹, to establish whether these variables all measure the same factor of perceptions of societal fairness, as argued by You (2012). The procedure for the factor analysis is the same as described previously. If the factor analysis produces a single factor on which all of the variables heavily load, then a new variable of perceptions of societal fairness can be computed, and the analysis can proceed to address research question 5b, in which a cross-tabulation will be used to investigate the relationship between the newly computed variable of perceptions of societal fairness and social trust, with *Gamma* serving as the appropriate correlation coefficient.

3.8 Ethical considerations

This study has been conducted in compliance with Stellenbosch University's Code of Ethics. The research proposal was reviewed by Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) and granted ethical approval. The SARB data that this study uses is made available to the public upon request and has been collected in accordance with the IJR's strict code of ethics. Participation in the SARB surveys is fully voluntary and no incentives are provided for respondents' participation (Potgieter, 2019:20). Respondents' participation is based on fully informed consent and they are allowed to change their minds and "withdraw from the survey at any time during the interview" (Potgieter, 2019:20). Respondents' identities are kept anonymous and thus the participants' confidentiality is respected and maintained.

¹⁹ See Chapter 4 Section 4.4.3 to see how the two measures of confidence in institutions are produced from the factor analysis.

3.9 Limitations

One limitation of this study is its use of a quantitative-only research methodology, as opposed to a mixed methods approach. A quantitative research methodology allows researchers to accurately measure the dispersion of attitudes and opinions across a population using a nationally representative sample, thus lending itself well to the study of social dynamics and causal relationships within a population. However, combining this quantitative research methodology with a qualitative component, such as a focus group discussion, would allow greater depth and detail to be recorded and potentially promote a greater understanding of the relationship between social trust and the independent variables in this study. However, given the limitations placed on the length of this study, the inclusion of a qualitative component to the study for supplementary material is not feasible.

A second limitation of this study stems from the use of a cross-sectional research design, as cross-sectional designs are only able to describe the relationship between variables at one point in time and therefore cannot capture how these relationships may change over time (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:60; Babbie, 2016:106). Some researchers additionally argue that the adoption of cross-sectional designs, as opposed to longitudinal designs, can hinder the study's ability to draw causal inferences between variables with certainty as it cannot compare the variables and their relationship at different points in time (Neuman, 2014:44; Spector, 2019:125-126). However, this limitation is not applicable to this study as, given the closely related and frequently circular nature of the relationships between social trust and the various explanatory variables discussed in this study, a longitudinal design would not assist in establishing the direction of causality (Delhey and Newton, 2005:28). Additionally, the theoretical arguments regarding the relationships between the variables should allow the researcher to infer the direction of causality based on the theoretical mechanism thought to connect the variables (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005:42).

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the study's research design and methodology. It starts by outlining why a quantitative research methodology and survey research design are the most appropriate designs for this study. It then turns to the SARB 2019 dataset and explains why this dataset is uniquely suited to the purposes of this study. The chapter provides a

discussion of operationalisations of the variables and demonstrates how they closely resemble the widely used and accepted measures used in the global literature on social trust. Finally, the chapter discusses the statistical procedures that are conducted to test the various hypotheses and concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and some limitations of this study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to address the research questions posed by this study. A variety of statistical procedures are utilised to analyse the South African Reconciliation Barometer 2019 survey data to test the hypotheses associated with each research question. First, descriptive statistics are used to provide an overview of how levels of social trust are dispersed among the population and measure the influence of various demographic variables on levels of social trust. The chapter then proceeds to address the secondary research questions posed in this study by employing the appropriate statistical techniques to investigate the relationship between social trust and each independent variable. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the results and key findings.

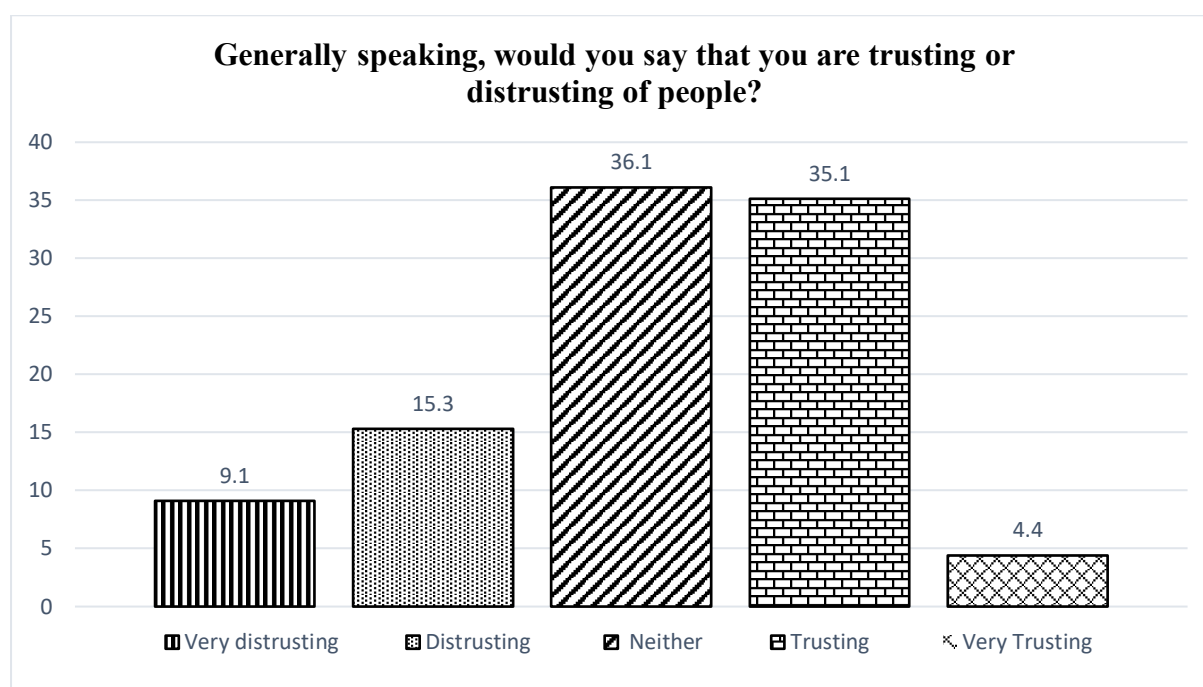
4.2.1 Descriptive analysis: Demographics

Descriptive statistics in the form of percentage frequencies are used to provide an overview of how levels of social trust are dispersed among the South African population. The frequency percentages for South Africans' levels of social trust are displayed in Table 4.1. As can be seen, only 39.5% of South Africans report that they are either trusting or very trusting of other people, 36.1% are neither trusting nor distrusting, while 24.4%, or almost a quarter of the population expressly distrust other people. These figures demonstrate South Africans' social trust deficit; 60%, or three in five South Africans, do not actively trust other citizens.

Table 4.1: Frequency of Social Trust in South Africans, 2019, Percentages

Generally speaking, would you say that you are trusting or distrusting of people?	Percentage (%)
Very distrusting	9.1
Distrusting	15.3
Neither trusting nor distrusting	36.1
Trusting	35.1
Very trusting	4.4
Total %	100

N=2400

Figure 4.1: Levels of Social Trust in South Africa, 2019, Percentages

4.2.2 Bivariate analyses: Demographics

This section describes the bivariate analyses used to measure how levels of social trust are dispersed in different social groups in the South African population.²⁰ Social trust and the demographic variables included in this data analysis are all nominal or ordinal variables. As such, cross-tabulations are the most appropriate form of bivariate analysis for investigating the relationship between these variables. Table 4.2 presents the correlation coefficients yielded from the relationships between social trust and the six demographic variables included in this study.

The dependent variable, social trust, and the demographic variables age, education level and total monthly household income, are all ordinal variables, and therefore *Gamma* is the most appropriate correlation coefficient for measuring the strength and direction of these relationships (De Vaus, 2002:258). The results of the bivariate analyses show that the

²⁰As discussed in Chapter 3, many of the demographic variables included in this study have been recoded and had their response categories collapsed to make the data more suitable for analysis. The recoding of the demographic variables can be seen in Section 3.6.3 in Chapter 3, as well as in the Appendix attached at the end of this study.

relationships between social trust and these three variables are all statistically significant, each yielding a p-value of .000, meaning that there is less than 1% chance that the relationship identified between the variables is the result of chance. These findings can therefore be generalised to describe the broader South African population. However, while these relationships are statistically significant, they are weak or “trivial” according to the classification system presented by De Vaus (2002:259)²¹, with each variable yielding correlation coefficients (*Gamma*) of .026, .012 and .026, respectively. Additionally, the correlation coefficients show that these relationships are positive, meaning that an increase in age, level of education or total household monthly income is associated with marginally higher levels of social trust.

Gender and urban/rural are both nominal dichotomous variables, and therefore it is appropriate to treat them as if they were the same level of measurement as the other variable in the cross-tabulation, social trust (De Vaus, 2002:262). As such, *Gamma* is the appropriate correlation coefficient (De Vaus, 2002:258). The results of the analysis show that the relationships between social trust and both variables of gender and urban/rural are statistically significant, yielding p-values of .000. Again, the results show a weak or “trivial” negative relationship between social trust and gender, with a *Gamma* of -.067. The negative relationship indicates that the variables are inversely related, meaning that as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variables decreases. Since the dichotomous variable of gender is coded as (1) Male and (2) Female, the negative *Gamma* score indicates that as the value increases or moves from (1) Male to (2) Female, the level of social trust decreases, therefore indicating that females are marginally less trusting than males. The results from the bivariate analysis investigating the relationship between social trust and urban/rural produces a *Gamma* of .001, meaning that this relationship is very weak.

Race is a nominal variable. In cross-tabulations involving one nominal and one ordinal variable, it is appropriate to select the correlation coefficient based on the weaker level of measurement, which is the nominal variable. As such, *Cramer's V* is the appropriate correlation coefficient to use for this analysis. The results show that the Chi-square statistic is greater than 0 (401759.84), which means the null hypothesis can be rejected. The p-value is .000 which

²¹ See Chapter 3 for a guide to interpreting correlation coefficients.

means the relationship is statistically significant and there is less than 1% chance that the relationship between the variables is due to chance. However, the *Cramer's V* correlation coefficient yields a result of .059 and therefore the relationship between social trust and race is also weak.

To conclude, the cross-tabulations and summary correlation coefficients show weak relationships between social trust and the demographic variables. These findings are in line with the international literature which has similarly failed to find important and consistent relationships between social trust and various demographic groups, as discussed in Chapter 2. Clearly, demographic identities, on their own, explain very little in terms of social trust.

Table 4.2: Correlations for Social Trust by Demographic Group, 2019

Demographic variable	Correlation coefficient	Statistical significance (p-value)
Age category	.026 (Gamma)	.000
Gender	-.067 (Gamma)	.000
Race	.059 (Cramer's V)	.000
Urban/rural	.001 (Gamma)	.000
Highest level of education	.012 (Gamma)	.000
Total monthly household income	.026 (Gamma)	.000

4.3 Bivariate analysis: Social trust and independent variables

This section of the data analysis addresses the various research questions posed in this study. To recap, the overarching research question and sub-research questions guiding this investigation are as follows:

Overarching research question: *Which factors strengthen or hinder social trust in South Africa's low-trust society?*

Sub-research questions:

Research Question 1: *Do experiences of racial diversity, measured through the frequency of interracial interaction, increase or decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Research Question 2: *Do subjective perceptions of relative income distribution (inequality) decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Research Question 3: *Do perceptions of government corruption decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Research Question 4: *Do citizens with lower levels of confidence in South Africa's institutions have lower levels of social trust, while citizens with higher levels of confidence in South Africa's institutions have higher levels of social trust?*

Research Question 5a: *Is there a latent variable that measures "perceptions of societal fairness" based on the combined effects of (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You's (2012) argument?*

Research Question 5b: *Do greater "perceptions of societal fairness", measured by the composite scale variable constructed from the operationalisation provided by You (2012), increase levels of social trust among South Africans?*

4.3.1 Interracial interactions and social trust

Research Question 1: *Do experiences of racial diversity, measured through the frequency of interracial interaction, increase or decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

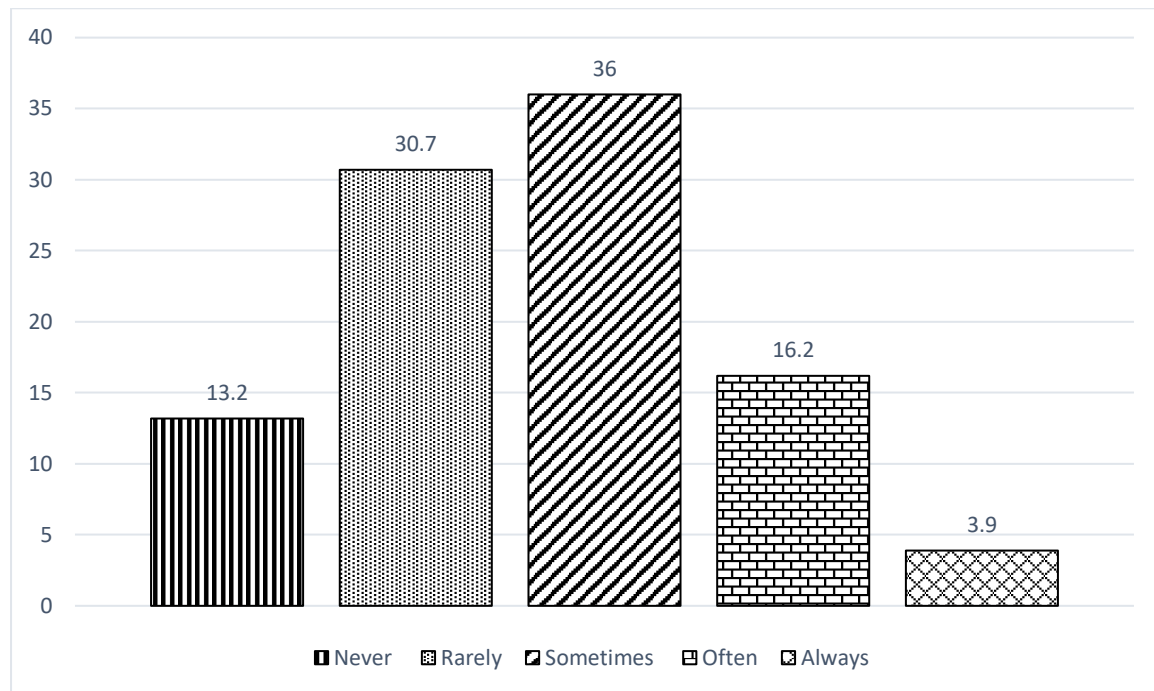
Hypothesis 1a: In line with the contact hypothesis, racial diversity and more frequent interracial interactions should increase social trust among South Africans.

Hypothesis 1b: In line with the conflict theory, racial diversity and more frequent interracial interactions should decrease social trust among South Africans.

Hypothesis 1c (null): There is no measurable association between racial diversity and interracial interaction and levels of social trust among South Africans.

Research question 1 investigates the relationship between racial diversity and social trust in South Africa. As described in the operationalisation provided in Chapter 3, the relationship between racial diversity and social trust is investigated by assessing the frequency with which a respondent has interracial interactions in an average day, and testing whether the frequency with which a respondent has interracial interactions has a relationship with the respondent's level of social trust.²² The frequencies of each response category are displayed in Figure 4.2.

²² To see how the SARB's 2019 battery of questions are computed and recoded into a single measure of frequency of interracial interaction, see Chapter 3 Section 3.6.2.

Figure 4.2: Frequency of Interracial Interaction in an Average Day, 2019, Percentages

To test this relationship, a bivariate analysis is conducted in the form of a cross-tabulation. *Gamma* is used as the appropriate correlation coefficient to measure the strength and direction of this relationship, as both social trust and frequency of interracial interaction are ordinal variables (De Vaus, 2002:258).

The results of the cross-tabulation are displayed in Table 4.3. The cross-tabulation shows that 30.2% of respondents who report “never” having interracial interactions in an average day are either distrusting or very distrusting of other people, while 20% of respondents who report “always” having interracial interactions in an average day are either distrusting or very distrusting of other people. Similarly, at the other end of the scale, 39.3% of respondents who report “never” having interracial interactions in an average day are either trusting or very trusting of others, while 45.9% of respondents who report “always” having interracial interactions in an average day are either trusting or very trusting of others. *Gamma*, the correlation coefficient which measures the strength and direction of this relationship, is .053, which means the relationship is weak. The direction of the relationship is positive, which means that as the frequency of interracial interaction increases, the level of social trust increases too. The p-value is .000, meaning the relationship is statistically significant. These results suggest that respondents who have a greater frequency of interracial interactions in an average day display

greater levels of social trust than respondents who have a lower frequency of interracial interactions in an average day. As such, these results lend more support to the contact hypothesis literature, which argues that greater interracial interactions lead to greater social trust and solidarity (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Hewstone, 2003; Marschall and Stolle, 2004). These findings fail to provide evidence for the commonly made argument that diversity and interracial interactions erode social trust (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Giles and Evans, 1986; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Brewer and Brown, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Barr, 1999; Bobo, 1999; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018). These findings therefore lend support to the contact hypothesis, as stated in hypothesis 1a, rather than the conflict or “aversion to heterogeneity” theory, stated in hypothesis 1b.

Table 4.3: Levels of Social Trust by Frequency of Interracial Interaction, 2019, Percentages

	Frequency of interracial interaction, Percentages				
Social Trust	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Very distrusting	10.4	8.9	9.8	6.4	10.8
Distrusting	19.8	16.2	14.1	14.1	9.2
Neither trusting nor distrusting	30.5	36	38.3	36.1	34.1
Trusting	35.3	35	33.2	38.4	40.1
Very trusting	4	3.9	4.6	5	5.8
Total %	100	100	100	100	100

Summary statistic: Gamma= .053 ***²³

4.3.2 Income distribution (inequality) and social trust

Research Question 2: *Do subjective perceptions of relative income distribution (inequality) decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

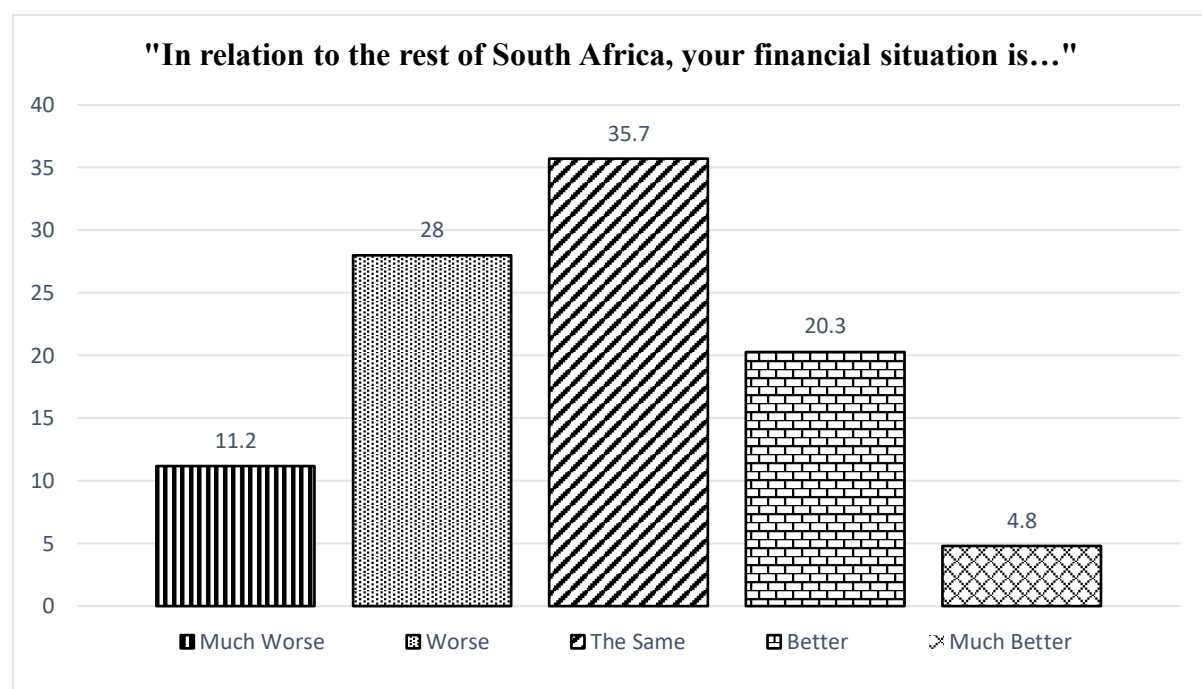
Hypothesis 2a: Citizens who perceive their monthly household income as being “worse” than the rest of South Africans should display lower levels of social trust in others, while those who perceive their monthly household incomes as being “better” than the rest of South Africans should display higher levels of social trust in others.

²³ Significance levels are indicated by the following system: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Hypothesis 2b (null): Citizens' perceptions of their monthly household income relative to what they perceive other South Africans' monthly household incomes to be have no effect on levels of social trust.

As described in Chapter 3, this study is interested in the influence of subjective perceptions of income distribution and income inequality, and therefore uses questions that tap into respondents' perceptions of their own household income relative to what they perceive other South Africans to be earning. As such, this study uses the SARB question asking respondents where on a 5-point scale they would place their financial situation relative to the rest of South Africans. The frequencies of each response category are displayed in Figure 4.3. Only 25.1% consider themselves to be financially better off than other South Africans.

Figure 4.3: Perception of Relative Income, 2019, Percentages



This relationship is analysed by conducting a bivariate analysis on the data in the form of a cross-tabulation and uses *Gamma* as the appropriate correlation coefficient to measure the relationship's strength and direction, as both variables are ordinal (De Vaus, 2002:258). Table 4.4 presents the results of the cross-tabulation. The analysis shows that respondents who perceive their total monthly household income to be worse than the rest of South Africans display lower levels of social trust than respondents who perceive their monthly household

income to be better than the rest of South Africans. The data shows that of the respondents who perceive their monthly incomes to be “much worse” than the rest of South Africans, 42.6% are either distrusting or very distrusting of others, while 32.9% are either trusting or very trusting. At the other end of the spectrum, of the respondents who perceive their total monthly household income to be “much better” than the rest of South Africans, only one-fifth of these respondents are either distrusting or very distrusting of others (21.8%), while roughly three-fifths of these respondents are either trusting or very trusting of others (58.4%).

The relationship is statistically significant and the *Gamma* summary statistic is .167 which means the relationship is fairly weak. The direction of the relationship is positive, suggesting that the better the respondents perceive their total monthly household income to be relative to the rest of South Africans, the greater their social trust. Thus, these findings lend support to hypothesis 2a; those who view their financial situation as being worse than other South Africans have lower levels of social trust while those who perceive their financial situation as better than others have higher levels of social trust. This finding conforms to much of the international literature which argues that income inequality has a negative relationship with social trust (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Zak and Knack, 2001; Knack and Zak, 2002; Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Putnam, 2007; Bjørnskov, 2007:5; You, 2012).

Additionally, the study finds support for Uslaner’s (2002:182) and You’s (2012) arguments that it is a person’s income relative to what they believe others to be earning, and their subjective perceptions of income inequality that matter in determining levels of social trust, rather than the individual’s objective income that matters. Support for the theory that relative income has a greater effect on social trust than objective income can be found by comparing the relationships between social trust and subjective perceptions of income distribution (inequality), as discussed here, and the relationship between social trust and one’s objective total monthly household income, as discussed previously in the demographics section of this chapter. As shown in the demographics discussion, the relationship between social trust and total monthly household income yielded a *Gamma* correlation coefficient of .026, indicating the relationship between social trust and objective income is very weak. The relationship between social trust and income distribution (inequality) yields a *Gamma* correlation coefficient of .167, thus showing that the relationship between social trust and income

distribution (inequality) is greater than the relationship between social trust and objective income. Therefore, this analysis demonstrates that South Africans' relative incomes and subjective perceptions of income distribution (inequality) have a greater effect on determining levels of social trust in others than South Africans' objective incomes.

Table 4.4: Levels of Social Trust by Subjective Income Distribution (Inequality), 2019, Percentages

Social trust	Relative subjective income distribution (inequality)				
	Much worse	Worse	The same	Better	Much better
Very distrusting	24.6	8.7	7.9	5	6.1
Distrusting	18	14.6	15	16.2	15.7
Neither	24.5	42.7	38.8	31.5	19.8
Trusting	27.5	30.8	35.3	41.4	43
Very trusting	5.4	3.2	3	5.9	15.4
Total %	100	100	100	100	100

Summary statistic: Gamma= .167***

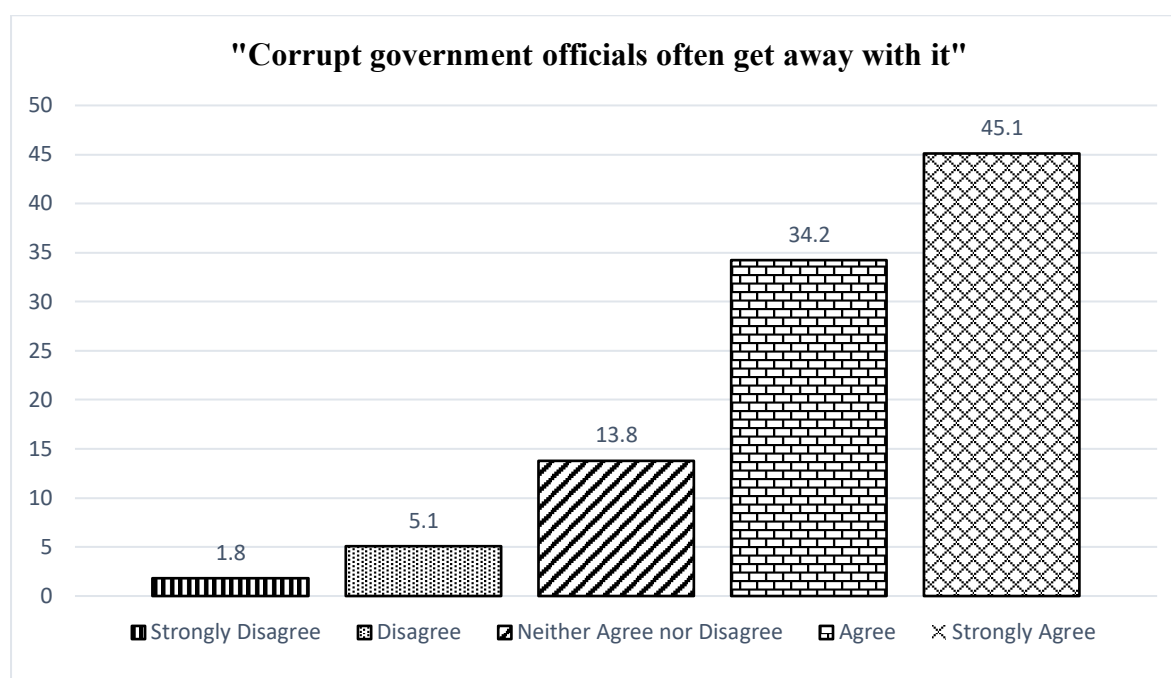
4.3.3 Perceived government corruption and social trust

Research Question 3: *Do perceptions of government corruption decrease levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Hypothesis 3a: Citizens who agree with the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it” should display lower levels of social trust towards other South Africans, while those who do not agree with this statement should display higher levels of social trust.

Hypothesis 3b (null): Citizens' opinions on the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it” have no association with their levels of social trust in others.

The relationship between social trust and perceived government corruption is measured using the SARB question item asking respondents whether they agree with the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it”, which taps into the extent to which they believe corruption can run unchecked in their political institutions. Figure 4.4 displays the responses to the survey question.

Figure 4.4: Perceptions of Government Corruption, 2019, Percentages

This relationship is analysed by conducting a bivariate analysis in the form of a cross-tabulation and uses *Gamma* as the appropriate summary statistic coefficient to measure the strength and direction of the relationship, as both of the variables are ordinal (De Vaus, 2002:258). Table 4.5 presents the findings of the cross-tabulation. The data shows that of the respondents who strongly disagree with the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it”, almost half are either distrusting or very distrusting (49.8%), while only 20.2% of these respondents are either trusting or very trusting. At the other end of the spectrum, of the respondents who strongly agree with the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it”, 28.7% of these respondents are either distrusting or very distrusting, while 41.1% of these respondents are either trusting or very trusting. This relationship is statistically significant, however, *Gamma* is .031 which suggests the association is weak or “trivial”. The *Gamma* value is positive, thus suggesting that the more respondents agree with the statement that “corrupt government officials often get away with it”, the greater their level of social trust.

The positive relationship between perceived corruption and social trust contradicts much of the literature, which typically finds corruption to either have an erosive effect on social trust or a limited influence on social trust, rather than having a positive relationship. There are a variety of possible reasons for this positive relationship, however. It could be that in societies with high levels of government corruption, citizens come to rely more heavily on one another as

they cannot rely on government officials and institutions, which could thus lead to greater levels of social trust between citizens. Irrespective of the explanation for the positive relationship detected by this analysis, the *Gamma* value of .031 indicates that this relationship is weak and as such, the finding that respondents who strongly agree that “corrupt government officials often get away with it” also have higher levels of social trust could be the result of other factors at play unrelated to the effects of corruption.

Table 4.5: Levels of Social Trust by Perceptions of Government Corruption, 2019, Percentages

	“Corrupt government officials often get away with it”				
Social Trust	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Very distrusting	29.9	13.2	7.4	5.5	11
Distrusting	19.9	13.2	13.5	13.5	17.7
Neither	30	42.4	49	37.6	30.2
Trusting	14.1	28.7	26.8	39.8	35.5
Very trusting	6.1	2.5	3.3	3.6	5.6
Total %	100	100	100	100	100

Summary statistic: Gamma= .031***

4.3.4 Confidence in institutions and social trust

Research Question 4: *Do citizens with lower levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions have lower levels of social trust, while citizens with higher levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions have higher levels of social trust?*

Hypothesis 4a: Citizens who hold lower levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions should display lower levels of social trust towards other South Africans, while those who hold higher levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions should display higher levels of social trust.

Hypothesis 4b (null): Citizens’ levels of confidence in South Africa’s institutions have no association with their levels of social trust.

Research question 4 explores the relationship between social trust and confidence in a range of institutions. As stated previously, confidence in institutions can be divided into two subgroups or types of institutions. The first is non-political institutions, which are typically deemed to be more neutral and impartial, and include institutions such as the legal system, the constitution,

and the judicial system. The second type is political or government institutions, and include institutions and actors such as the president and national and local government, amongst others (Newton *et al.*, 2018:40-41).

The SARB survey contains a battery of questions asking respondents their confidence levels in 19 different institutions (see Table 4.6 or the Appendix for the complete list of institutions). To analyse the effect of confidence in institutions on social trust, this study computes a new scale variable from the SARB's battery of 19 questions to reduce the number of cases and aid the analysis.

Factor analysis

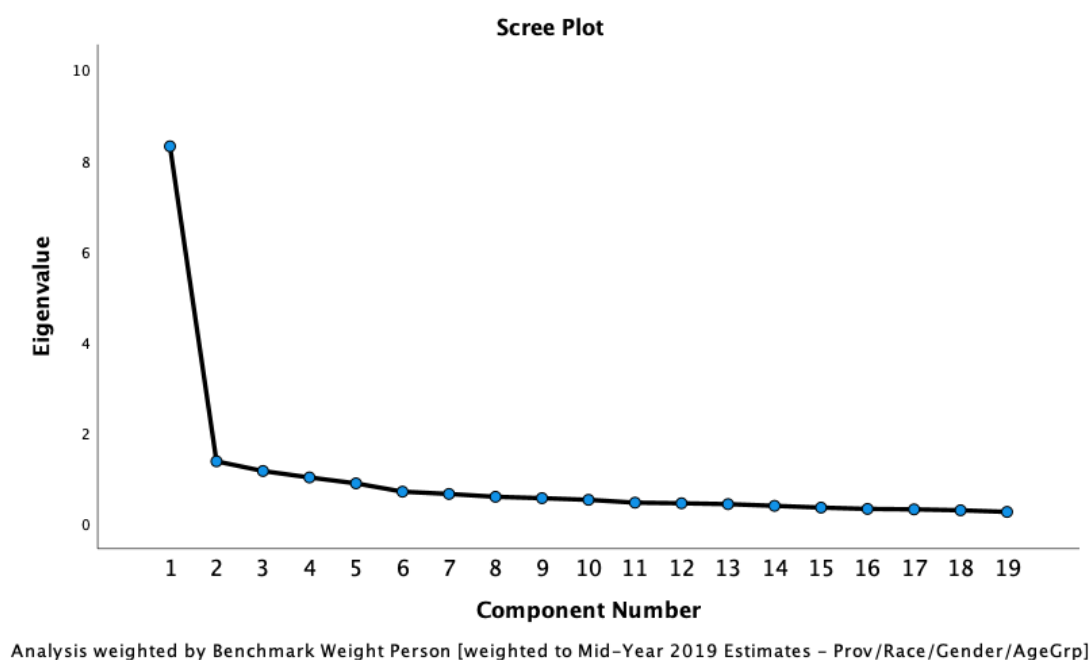
To compute a new scale variable for confidence in institutions, a factor analysis is conducted to assess whether the 19 question items on confidence in institutions measure the same underlying factor or phenomenon, and thus whether it is appropriate to group the items together when constructing a new variable. A correlation matrix ensures that the correlations between the variables included in the analyses are suitable for the factor analysis. The KMO statistic and Bartlett's test of sphericity ensure sample size adequacy and test for statistical significance. Kaiser's criterion and scree plots guide which factors should be retained for the analysis. Finally, once the items that will be included in the scales are identified, Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure the reliability of the new scale items.

A principal components analysis is conducted on the 19 question items measuring respondents' confidence in institutions using orthogonal rotation (varimax). For missing data, cases are excluded on a pairwise basis. Before embarking on the factor analysis, the suitability of the data for factor analysis is assessed. Upon conducting a factor analysis, SPSS produces a correlation matrix or R-matrix displaying the correlations between the different question items included in the analysis and the statistical significance of these relationships. This correlation matrix is scanned to ensure no variables have a correlation greater than .9 (which would indicate issues relating to multicollinearity) and to check for correlations weaker than .3, and these variables are subsequently excluded from the analysis. The KMO statistic is used to verify the sampling adequacy of the data. The KMO statistic yields a result of .945, which is greater than the cut-off point of .5 and Kaiser's recommended value of .6 (Pallant, 2016:544), and is considered to be "superb" according to Field (2009:659), meaning the sample size is

suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity yields a p-value which is statistically significant, which means the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and therefore the data is suitable for factor analysis (Field, 2009:660).

Given that the sample size is greater than 250 respondents and that, upon assessing the communalities table one can see that the average communality is greater than .6, Kaiser's criterion, which states all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 should be retained from the analysis, is therefore an appropriate guide for determining the number of factors to extract. The principal components analysis identified four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which cumulatively account for 62.38% of the variance. Therefore, according to Kaiser's criterion these four factors should be extracted. However, upon inspection of the scree plot, there is a sharp drop between factors 1 (eigenvalue= 8.312) and factor 2 (eigenvalue= 1.370), after which the factors tail off. It is advised that only the points before the "elbow" of the scree plot should be retained, and therefore the scree plot indicates that only the first factor, with an eigenvalue of 8.312 and accounting for 43.748% of the variance, should be retained. Kaiser's criterion and the scree plot are somewhat inconsistent in terms of which factors to retain from this analysis. Therefore, the content of the various factors are assessed for their theoretical relevance to provide clearer guidance on which factors should be retained.

Figure 4.5: SPSS Generated Scree Plot



Orthogonal rotation (varimax) is performed to aid further analysis of the extracted factors. This helps identify the extent to which the different variables or question items load on (are associated with) each factor. Based on the content of the variables associated with each factor, common themes can be identified and the content of the factor can be deduced. The rotated factor loadings are displayed in Table 4.6. Eight of the question items load heavily on factor 1, and consist of confidence in the legal system in general (.761), constitutional court (.736), public protector (.703), National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) (.634), the Hawks (.627), South African Police Services (SAPS) (.623), Parliament (.620) and South African Revenue Service (SARS) (.552). Based on the question items that heavily load on factor 1, it can be deduced that factor 1 represents confidence in mainly non-political institutions (with the exception, to some extent, being Parliament- although Parliament can be viewed as a non-partisan institution since its purpose is to represent partisan bodies in an unbiased manner). Seven of the question items load heavily on factor 2, and consist of confidence in the President (.798), the Deputy President (.746), the National Government (.735), the African National Congress (ANC) (.725), the Provincial Government (.657), Local Government (.540) and South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Media (.415). Based on the question items that heavily load on factor 2, it can be deduced that factor 2 represents confidence in political/government institutions. Only question two items load heavily on factor 3, namely, confidence in religious leaders (.755) and confidence in big businesses (.718). Thus, it can be deduced that factor 3 represents confidence in other salient non-political actors in society. Two question items load heavily on factor 4, namely, confidence in the Democratic Alliance (DA) (.834) and the Economic Freedom Front (EFF) (.772) and therefore factor 4 can be thought to represent confidence in the country's two main opposition parties.

As is evident, factors 1 and 2 account for substantially more of the question items than factors 3 and 4. Additionally, factors 1 and 2 represent confidence in non-political institutions and political/government institutions, and thus are highly related to the research question on confidence in institutions and are supported by the international literature. In contrast, factors 3 and 4, which represent confidence in other salient non-political actors in society and opposition parties, are less related to the research question and receive substantially less support in the global literature on institutional confidence and social trust. As such, only factor 1 (confidence in non-political institutions) and factor 2 (confidence in political/government institutions) are extracted from the factor analysis, based on their relevance to the research

question, their greater support from the global literature, and the substantially greater number of question items that they include. Thus, from the factor analysis, scale items are built to measure confidence in non-political institutions and confidence in political/government institutions. The factor analysis' distinction between non-political and political/government institutions is supported by the literature on confidence in institutions, which frequently distinguishes between confidence in non-political and political/government institutions (Newton *et al.*, 2018:40-41).

Before constructing the new scale items, Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the reliability of the scales. Cronbach's Alpha is the most commonly used method for testing scale reliability (Field, 2009:674). As a standard rule, Cronbach's Alpha should produce a result greater than .7 for the scale to be considered reliable. The question items loading on factor 1 yield a Cronbach's Alpha of .895, which indicates that the construction of a scale measuring confidence in non-political institutions using the eight questions loading on factor 1 would be reliable. Additionally, the SPSS tool called "scale if item deleted" is used to produce the potential Cronbach's Alpha that would be produced if any question item in the scale were to be deleted. These results show that the Cronbach's Alpha would decrease if any of the eight question items were deleted from the scale, and therefore indicates that the inclusion of each question positively contributes to the reliability of the scale.

The question items loading on factor 2 yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .887, which indicates that the construction of a scale measuring confidence in political/government institutions using the seven questions loading on factor 2 would be reliable. Testing the reliability of the seven question items with the "scale if item deleted" option, the results show that the question asking respondents for their confidence in SABC Media lowers the Cronbach's Alpha, as if this question item were deleted the new Cronbach's Alpha would be greater at .890. Therefore, because this question detracts rather than contributes to the reliability of the scale, as well as being the only item in the scale that does not ask about confidence in a political/government institution, this question item is removed from the scale. Cronbach's Alpha is also calculated for the items loading on factors 3 and 4, and yielded scores of .628 and .580 respectively, therefore failing to meet the required score of .7 to be considered reliable scales, thus confirming this study's choice to exclude these factors from analyses.

Table 4.6: Rotated Component Matrix

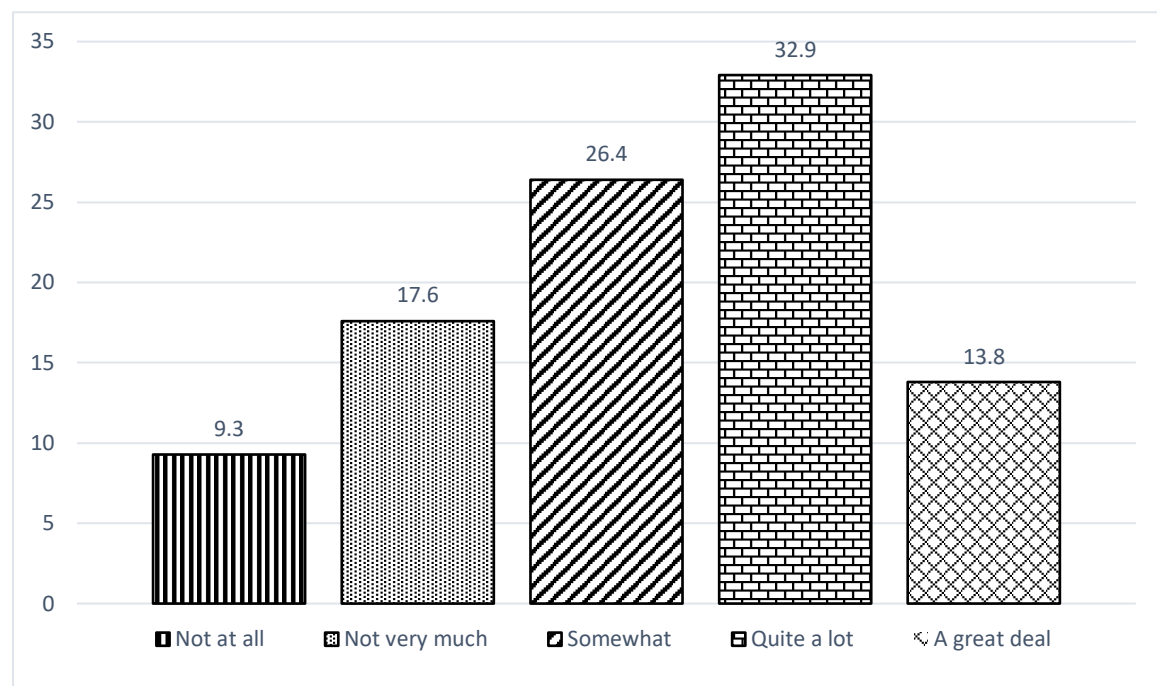
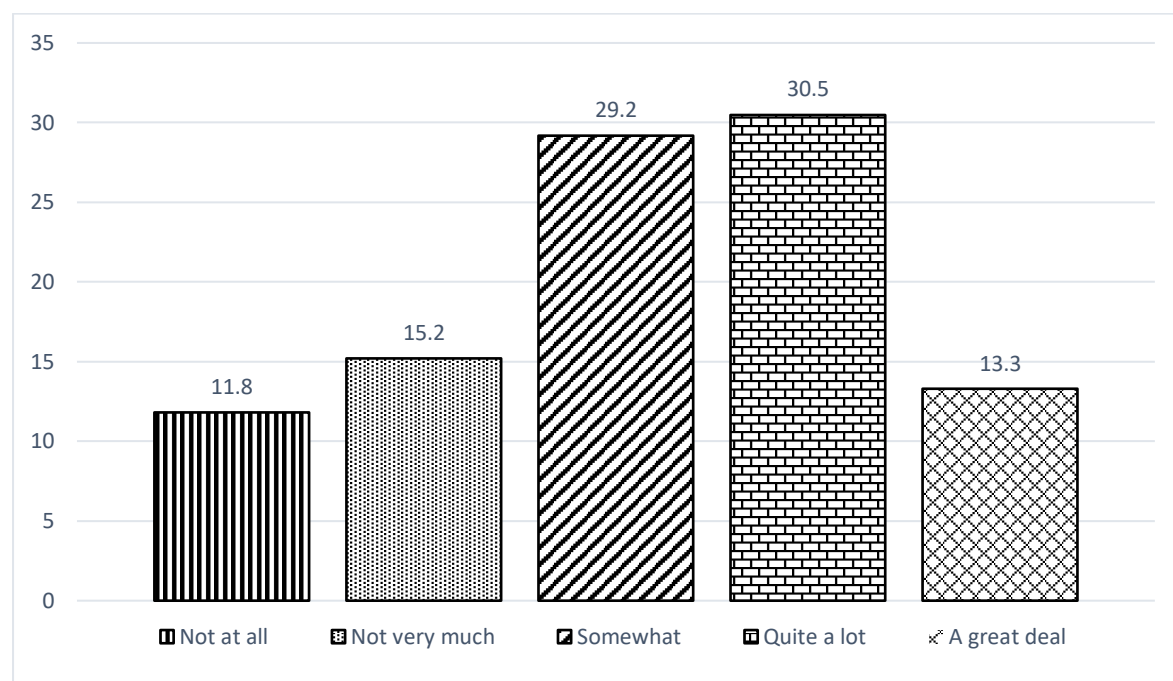
Rotated Component Matrix				
Please indicate how much confidence you have in each of the following institutions ...	Factors/ Components			
Variables	1	2	3	4
Legal system in general	.761	.248	.143	
Constitutional Court	.736	.262	.130	
Public Protector	.703	.297	.118	.103
National Prosecuting Authority (NPA)	.634	.209	.360	.151
The Hawks	.627	.133	.358	
South African Police Service (SAPS) / the Police	.623	.375		.185
Parliament	.620	.456	.234	.118
South African Revenue Service (SARS)	.552	.246	.347	
The President	.178	.798	.219	
The Deputy President	.264	.746	.231	
National Government	.396	.735	.150	
I National Congress (ANC)	.232	.725	.135	
Provincial Government	.434	.657		.153
Local Government	.510	.540		.262
SABC media (radio and TV)	.298	.415	.376	
Religious leaders	.153	.131	.755	.178
Large corporations / big business	.225	.204	.718	.112
Democratic Alliance (DA)	.176		.118	.834
Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)		.238	.163	.772
Eigenvalues	8.312	1.370	1.156	1.014
% of variance	43.748	7.210	6.084	5.338
Cronbach's Alpha	.895	.887	.628	.580

Scale development

After conducting the factor analysis to identify which items should be used for the development of reliable scales, two new scale items are computed to measure confidence in institutions. The first scale item measures confidence in non-political institutions and is computed using the eight question items loading on factor 1. The confidence in non-political institutions scale is created by first computing a total score scale variable by adding the eight question items, and then recoding the new scale variable into a Likert scale variable. The total score scale runs from 8 to 40, meaning there are 33 response options in the scale. The Likert scale is computed by collapsing the 33 response categories into the five response categories that were originally used in the SARB's institutional confidence questions. Due to the number of response options in the

scale, the 33 response options could not be divided into the five Likert response categories equally, and thus the third/middle response category accounts for only five of the collapsed response options, while the remaining four response categories account for seven of the collapsed response categories each. The scale variable is collapsed and recoded into a Likert scale as follows: (1) Very little (8-14), (2) Not much (15-21), (3) Somewhat (22-26), (4) A bit (27-33), and (5) A great deal (34-40). As demonstrated in the factor analysis, this newly computed scale item has a Cronbach's Alpha of .895 and therefore is highly reliable.

The second scale item measures confidence in political/government institutions and uses six of the seven question items loading on factor 2 (the question pertaining to confidence in the SABC Media is excluded from the scale for reasons explained previously). The confidence in political/government institutions scale is created by first computing a total score scale variable by adding the six question items, and then recoding the new scale variable into a Likert scale variable. The total score scale runs from 6 to 30, meaning there are 25 response options in the scale. The Likert scale is computed by collapsing the 25 response categories into the five response categories that were originally used in the institutional confidence questions. The 25 response options could be equally divided into the new scale item, with the new Likert scale reading as follows: (1) Very little (6-10), (2) Not much (11-15), (3) Somewhat (16-20), (4) A bit (21-25), and (5) A great deal (26-30). This new scale item has a Cronbach's Alpha of .890 and therefore is highly reliable. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 display the responses to the survey questions on confidence in political and non-political institutions.

Figure 4.6: Confidence in Non-Political Institutions, 2019, Percentages**Figure 4.7: Confidence in Political/Government Institutions, 2019, Percentages**

Bivariate analyses

To test the relationship between social trust and the two new scale variables measuring confidence in non-political institutions and political/government institutions, cross-tabulations are used as the appropriate form of bivariate analysis. In both analyses, both variables are

ordinal and therefore *Gamma* is the appropriate correlation coefficient for measuring the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables (De Vaus, 2002:258).

Social trust and confidence in non-political institutions

The results of the cross-tabulation involving social trust and confidence in non-political institutions are presented in Table 4.7. These results show that respondents with low levels of confidence in non-political institutions have lower levels of social trust while respondents with higher levels of confidence in the country's non-political institutions have higher levels of social trust. Of the respondents who responded "not at all" when asked how much confidence they have in the non-political institutions, 56% are either distrusting or very distrusting of others, compared to only 18.8% of respondents who were either trusting or very trusting of others. On the other end of the spectrum, of the respondents who reported having "a great deal" of confidence in the country's non-political institutions, 61.1% report having high levels of social trust and are either trusting or very trusting of others, while only 17.3% of respondents are either distrusting or very distrusting of others. The *Gamma* correlation coefficient is .325 and is highly significant, suggesting that the relationship between social trust and confidence in non-political institutions is moderate and positive. This indicates that the greater the level of confidence the respondent has in non-political institutions, the greater their level of social trust.

Table 4.7: Levels of Social Trust by Confidence in Non-Political Institutions, 2019, Percentages

Social Trust	Confidence in non-political institutions				
	Not at all	Not very much	Somewhat	Quite a lot	A great deal
Very distrusting	35.3	10.6	5.3	6	5.3
Distrusting	20.7	23.6	14.8	13.6	12
Neither	25.2	37.8	47.9	33.4	21.6
Trusting	14.6	25.6	29.8	43.8	48.7
Very trusting	4.2	2.4	2.2	3.2	12.4
Total %	100	100	100	100	100

Summary statistic: Gamma= .325***

Social trust and confidence in political/government institutions

The results of the cross-tabulation involving social trust and confidence in political/government institutions are presented in Table 4.8. Again, these results show that respondents

with low levels of confidence in political/government institutions have lower levels of social trust, while respondents with higher levels of confidence in the country's political/government institutions have higher levels of social trust. These results show that, of the respondents who responded "not at all" when asked how much confidence they have in various political/government institutions, 40.9 % are either distrusting or very distrusting of others, while only 28.1% are either trusting or very trusting. At the other end of the spectrum, of those respondents who reported having "a great deal" of confidence in political/government institutions, only 18.1% of these respondents reported being either distrusting or very distrusting of others, while 55.6% are either trusting or very trusting of others. The *Gamma* correlation coefficient is .269, which means the relationship between the variables is moderate in strength and highly significant. This indicates that respondents who have greater levels of confidence in political/government institutions also have higher levels of social trust.

Table 4.8: Levels of Social Trust by Confidence in Political/Government Institutions, 2019, Percentages

	Confidence in political/government institutions				
Social Trust	Not at all	Not much	Somewhat	Quite a lot	A great deal
Very distrusting	22.9	13.3	7.3	6.1	8.8
Distrusting	18.0	25.9	15.5	11.6	9.3
Neither	31.0	31.6	43.6	34.4	26.3
Trusting	25.5	27.6	31.0	43.9	42.9
Very trusting	2.6	1.6	2.6	4	12.7
Total %	100	100	100	100	100

Summary statistic: Gamma= .269***

The results of the bivariate analyses between social trust and confidence in these two types of institutions therefore indicate a moderate relationship between institutional confidence and social trust. While confidence in both types of institutions have a positive effect on social trust, confidence in non-political institutions has a greater effect. These findings support the arguments presented in the international literature that confidence in institutions is associated with greater levels of social trust (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Levi, 1998; Offe, 1999; Newton and Norris, 2000; Putnam *et al.*, 2000; Helliwell, 2003; Van der Meer, 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton, 2007; Neller, 2008; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1539; Newton *et al.*, 2018). Thus, these findings support hypothesis 4a, which states that

higher levels of confidence in institutions should be associated with higher levels of social trust.

4.3.5 Perceptions of societal fairness and social trust

Research Question 5a: *Is there a latent variable that measures “perceptions of societal fairness” based on the combined effects of (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You’s (2012) argument?*

Hypothesis 5a.1: “Perceptions of societal fairness” can be identified as an underlying mechanism driving the relationship between social trust and (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You (2012).

Hypothesis 5a.2 (null): “Perceptions of societal fairness” cannot be identified as an underlying mechanism driving the relationship between social trust and (1) perceptions of income distribution (inequality), (2) perceptions of government corruption, and (3) confidence in institutions, as suggested by You (2012).

As a follow-up research question:

Research Question 5b: *Do greater “perceptions of societal fairness”, measured by the composite scale variable constructed from the operationalisation provided by You (2012), increase levels of social trust among South Africans?*

Hypothesis 5b.1: Greater “perceptions of societal fairness” are associated with greater levels of social trust among South Africans.

Hypothesis 5b.2 (null): There is no association between “perceptions of societal fairness” and social trust among South Africans.

As described in Chapter 2, You (2012) argues that societal fairness is a key determinant of societies’ levels of social trust. You (2012) conceptualises and operationalises perceptions of societal fairness as a latent variable comprised of three key elements: distributive justice, formal justice, and procedural justice, which can be measured by perceptions of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, and confidence in institutions, respectively. Before a new variable measuring perceptions of societal fairness can be computed, a factor analysis is performed to identify whether these variables all measure a single underlying

variable that can be assumed to be the latent variable of perceptions of societal fairness. If the factor analysis produces evidence of the underlying, latent variable, then a scale variable can be constructed to produce a single measure of perceptions of societal fairness to explore the relationship between perceptions of societal fairness and social trust, and this analysis can proceed to address research question 5b.

Factor analysis

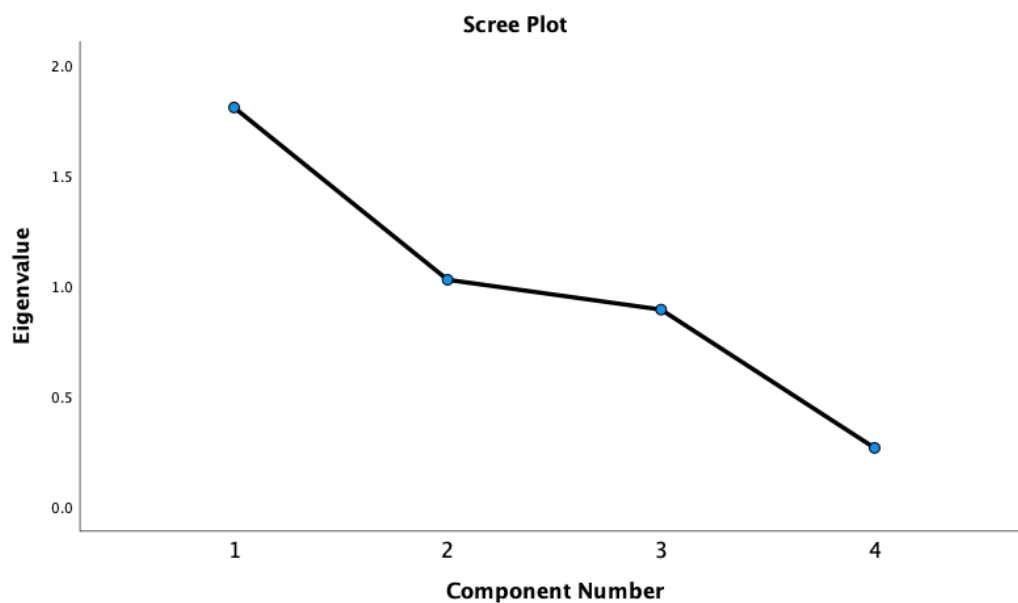
A principal components analysis is conducted using orthogonal rotation (varimax) on the four variables used to measure societal fairness, namely, income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, and the two newly constructed scale variables measuring institutional confidence (confidence in non-political institutions and confidence in political/government institutions). For missing data, cases are excluded on a pairwise basis. Before conducting the factor analysis, the suitability of the data for factor analysis is first assessed. The correlation matrix, which displays the correlations between the different questions in the analysis and the statistical significance of these relationships, is scanned to ensure no variables have a correlation greater than .9 (as this would indicate issues relating to multicollinearity) or weaker than .3, as there needs to be a certain amount of intercorrelation between the variables for factor analysis to be suitable.

The results of the correlation matrix can be viewed in Table 4.9. Based on the four variables included in the correlation matrix, only the two political confidence variables yield a correlation coefficient greater than .3 (.732), while the remaining variables fail to reach the .3 cut-off point. The KMO statistic used to verify the sampling adequacy of the data yields a result of .508, which only just meets Kaiser's minimum recommended value of .5, which is a result considered to be "barely acceptable" (Field, 2009:659) and fails to meet Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) minimum recommended value of .6 (Pallant, 2016:501). Bartlett's test of sphericity yields a p-value of .000 and is thus statistically significant, which means the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, and in this regard the data is considered suitable for factor analysis (Field, 2009:660).

Table 4.9: Correlation Matrix

	Confidence in political/ government institutions	Confidence in non-political institutions	Income distribution (inequality)	Perception of Government Corruption
Confidence in political/government institutions	1.000	.723	.149	-.104
Confidence in non-political institutions	.723	1.000	.198	.000
Income distribution (inequality)	.149	.198	1.000	-.088
Perception of Government Corruption	-.104	.000	-.088	1.000

Kaiser's criterion, which states one should retain all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, can be used as an appropriate guide for how many factors should be extracted from this factor analysis, given that the conditions of having a sample size greater than 250 respondents and an average communality score greater than .6 is met. The principal components analysis identified two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which cumulatively account for 70.98% of the variance. Additionally, a scree plot reveals a steep decline from factor 3 to factor 4, suggesting that factors 1 and 2 can be retained for the analysis.

Figure 4.8: SPSS Generated Scree Plot

Analysis weighted by Benchmark Weight Person [weighted to Mid-Year 2019 Estimates – Prov/Race/Gender/AgeGrp]

Orthogonal rotation (varimax) is performed to aid further analysis of the extracted factors. This enables us to identify the extent to which the variables load on (are associated with) each factor. Based on the content of the variables associated with each factor, common themes can be identified and the content of the factor can be deduced. The rotated factor loadings are displayed in Table 4.10. The variables measuring confidence in non-political institutions (.928) and confidence in political/government institutions (.9) load heavily on factor 1, indicating that factor 1 represents confidence in institutions. The variables measuring corruption (.884) and income distribution (-.541) load on factor 2. Due to the limited number of variables included in the factor analysis, it is difficult to accurately deduce what underlying variable factor 2 represents, but it could be hypothesised to be a sense of economic injustice or lack of economic fairness.

Table 4.10: Rotated component matrix

Variables	Component	
	1	2
Confidence in non-political institutions	.928	-.042
Confidence in political/government institutions	.900	-.130
Perceptions of corruption	.096	.884
Income distribution (inequality)	.261	-.541

This factor analysis shows that there is no single variable that underlies income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, and confidence in institutions, and therefore these separate variables cannot be computed into a single scale variable measuring perceptions of societal fairness. Rather than having one factor on which all the variables heavily load, the factor analysis produces two factors, on which two of the variables load on the first factor and the remaining two variables load on the second factor. Thus, the analysis produces no evidence for the existence of an underlying variable of perceptions of societal fairness, when conceptualised and operationalised as income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, and confidence in institutions. Additionally, the weak intercorrelations between the variables in the correlation matrix also demonstrate the lack of correlation connecting the variables, which raises further doubts about their ability to work together to reflect a measure of societal fairness.

Thus, this factor analysis provides support for the null hypothesis (hypothesis 5a (null)) as no single underlying variable of perceptions of societal fairness could be identified from the factor analysis. As such, research question 5b, which enquires into the nature of the relationship between the composite variable of perceptions of societal fairness and social trust, cannot be tested. It is worth emphasising that this study has only investigated the relationship between social trust and perceptions of societal fairness using You's (2012) conceptualisation and operationalisation of perceptions of societal fairness. Employing different conceptualisations and operationalisations of societal fairness may generate different insights and results and would be worth further investigation.

4.4 Discussion of findings

The statistical analysis begins by investigating the distribution of levels of social trust among the population and shows that roughly 60% of South Africans do not have trusting attitudes towards other citizens. The study then tests the relationship between social trust and six key demographic variables: age, gender, race, urban/rural location, highest level of education attained and total monthly household income. The results show that none of the six demographic variables has meaningful relationships with social trust, indicating the limited influence of demographics on South Africans' levels of social trust. Rather, social trust deficits appear to be shared relatively evenly across the country's major demographic groupings. These findings align with much of the global social trust literature, which also finds demographic variables to have little effect on social trust.

Next, the study tests the relationships between social trust and the key explanatory variables. The results show that, of all the independent variables, South Africans' confidence in institutions has the strongest relationship with social trust. This finding supports hypothesis 4a, which states that higher levels of institutional confidence should be associated with higher levels of social trust, and aligns with much of the global academic literature on this relationship (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Levi, 1998; Offe, 1999; Newton and Norris, 2000; Putnam *et al.*, 2000; Helliwell, 2003; Van der Meer, 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton, 2007; Neller, 2008; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1539; Newton *et al.*, 2018). The scale variables developed to measure respondents' institutional confidence show that non-political institutions ($\text{Gamma} = .325$) have the strongest association with social trust, while political/government institutions ($\text{Gamma} = .269$) have the second most powerful association.

Respondents' perceptions of income distribution (inequality) have the second strongest relationship with social trust out of the variables tested in this study, with a *Gamma* correlation coefficient of .167. Providing support for hypothesis 2a, the results show that respondents who perceive their monthly incomes as being lower than other South Africans have lower levels of social trust, while those who perceive their monthly incomes to be higher than other South Africans have higher levels of social trust. This finding aligns with much of the international social trust literature, which argues that income inequality has a negative relationship with social trust (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Zak and Knack, 2001; Knack and Zak, 2002; Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Putnam, 2007; Bjørnskov, 2007:5; You, 2012). Additionally, by comparing the strength of the relationships between social trust and objective incomes to the relationship between social trust and subjective perceptions of relative incomes, the results show that South Africans' perceptions of relative income or income inequality have a greater influence on their levels of social trust than the influence of their objective/real incomes and personal wealth. This finding aligns with much of the global academic literature highlighting the importance of relative wealth as opposed to objective wealth for social trust (Uslaner, 2002:189; Delhey and Newton, 2005:7; Newton, 2007:17; You, 2012:713).

The analysis shows that racial diversity (measured by a respondent's frequency of interracial interactions) only has a weak or "trivial" relationship with social trust, placing racial diversity as one of the weaker explanations for social trust out of the independent variables. Albeit weak, the relationship between social trust and racial diversity is positive, indicating that the greater the frequency of interracial interactions, the greater the respondents' social trust levels. It is particularly significant that this study finds that racial diversity has almost no effect on South Africans' levels of social trust, given the country's long history of racial segregation and discrimination, and also because this stands in contrast to the large body of literature finding that racial diversity erodes social trust. The findings of this study thus fails to meet the predictions posed by the conflict theory and contradicts much of the literature on developed countries, which find racial diversity to have an erosive effect on social trust (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Giles and Evans, 1986; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Brewer and Brown, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Barr, 1999; Bobo, 1999; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Bobo and Tuan, 2006; Putnam, 2007; Dinesen and Sønderskov, 2018). Instead, this study's finding

supports hypothesis 1a, which is guided by the contact hypothesis and states that frequent interracial interactions should increase social trust among South Africans. The contact hypothesis states that greater exposure to and interactions between people of different groups leads to greater social solidarity and social trust, as interracial interactions enable people to learn more about one another and break down previously held stereotypes and prejudices against members of outgroups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Hewstone, 2003; Marschall and Stolle, 2004).

While this study's finding is at odds with much of the literature from the global north, these results are in line with existing research on social trust in African countries. For instance, these findings are in line with Mattes and Moreno's (2018:364) study on social trust in sub-Saharan African countries, which also finds that ethnically diverse African countries are not associated with lower levels of social trust. These results are also in line with Robertson's (2016) findings that segregated or homogenous areas in African countries, wherein interracial interactions can be assumed to be more limited, are associated with lower levels of social trust, while more diverse areas, wherein interracial interactions can be assumed to be more frequent, are associated with higher levels of social trust. As discussed in Chapter 2, from the limited studies conducted on the causes of social trust in developing regions, one can see that these studies often produce findings that are inconsistent, if not contradictory, to those found in the research on developed Western nations. Thus, it is not surprising that the findings of this study are at odds with much of the findings and literature from developed Western nations.

The analysis also shows that perceptions of government corruption have a weak relationship with social trust. This relationship is marginally weaker than that of racial diversity, making this the weakest association of all the predictor variables. In contrast to this study's hypothesis (hypothesis 3a), this study finds that the relationship between perceptions of government corruption and social trust is positive, thus suggesting that citizens who agree that "corrupt officials often get away with it" have higher levels of social trust than those who disagree with the statement. While there are various possible explanations behind this positive relationship, the relationship detected is very weak and thus the finding that respondents who strongly agree that "corrupt government officials often get away with it" also have higher levels of social trust could be the result of other factors unrelated to the effects of corruption.

The factor analysis performed prior to investigating the relationship between perceptions of societal fairness and social trust found that a composite scale variable could not be constructed to measure a latent concept of perceptions of societal fairness when using You's (2012) operationalisation. The factor analysis conducted on income distribution (inequality), perceptions of government corruption, confidence in non-political institutions, and confidence in political/government institutions, showed there to be no single factor underlying all four variables. This indicates that these four variables together do not measure perceptions of societal fairness and cannot be used to compute a single measure of the latent variable. Thus, this study could not measure the relationship between a composite measure of societal fairness and social trust in South Africa.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter utilises various statistical procedures to analyse the SARB 2019 raw datasets to answer the primary and secondary research questions of this study. The results show that the two measures of institutional confidence (confidence in non-political institutions and confidence in political/government institutions) have the strongest influence on South Africans' levels of social trust, while perceptions of income distribution (inequality) have the second strongest influence. Additionally, these results show that subjective perceptions of relative income have a greater effect on South Africans' levels of social trust than the effect of objective incomes. Following this, the results show that racial diversity and perceptions of government corruption have limited influence on South Africans' levels of social trust, with the relationships between social trust and both of these variables being weak enough to be considered trivial. Lastly, the analysis showed that a composite scale variable could not be constructed to measure the impact of perceptions of societal fairness on social trust when using You's (2012) operationalisation. Additionally, the findings show that, in line with much of the international literature on social trust, the relationships between social trust and demographic variables are weak, indicating that demographic variables have little influence on South Africans' social trust levels.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

A large body of theoretical and empirical literature demonstrates the critical role that social trust plays in societies, influencing an extensive range of societal dynamics, from societies' economic, political, and social environments, to enhancing populations' general well-being. This study sought to investigate which factors influence levels of social trust in South Africa to gain greater insight into the causes of the country's well-documented trust deficit. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to conduct a variety of statistical analyses on the South African Reconciliation Barometer 2019 dataset, this study tests the relationship between South Africans' levels of social trust and five explanatory variables frequently identified in the global academic literature as key influences on social trust, namely, racial diversity, perceptions of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of government corruption, confidence in institutions, and perceptions of societal fairness.

5.2 Summary of findings

This analysis begins by investigating the relationship between social trust and six key demographic variables, namely, age, gender, race/ethnic group, urban/rural location, highest level of education received, and total monthly household income, and finds none of the demographics to have meaningful relationships with social trust. This finding conforms to much of the global literature on the relationship between social trust and demographic variables, which has largely found demographic variables to have little effect on social trust. The study then tests the relationships between social trust and the key explanatory variables. The results show that, of all the independent variables, South Africans' confidence in institutions has the strongest relationship with social trust. This finding supports hypothesis 4a, which states that higher levels of institutional confidence should be associated with higher levels of social trust, and thus aligns with much of the global academic literature on this relationship (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Levi, 1998; Offe, 1999; Newton and Norris, 2000; Putnam *et al.*, 2000; Helliwell, 2003; Van der Meer, 2003; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Newton, 2007; Neller, 2008; Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009:1539; Newton *et al.*, 2018). Respondents' perceptions of income distribution (inequality) have the second strongest relationship with social trust out of the variables tested in this study. The results show that respondents who perceive their monthly incomes as being lower than other

South Africans have lower levels of social trust, while those who perceive their monthly incomes to be higher than other South Africans have higher levels of social trust. In addition, by comparing the strength of the relationships between social trust and objective incomes to the relationship between social trust and perceptions of relative incomes or inequality, this study shows that subjective perceptions of relative income or income inequality have a greater effect on levels of social trust than South Africans' objective incomes. The analysis shows that both the variables of racial diversity (measured by a respondent's frequency of interracial interactions) and respondents' perceptions of corruption have weak or "trivial" relationships with social trust, indicating the limited influence of these variables on South Africans' social trust. Lastly, this study finds that a composite scale variable could not be constructed to measure a latent concept of perceptions of societal fairness when using You's (2012) operationalisation of societal fairness. This is because the factor analysis conducted on income distribution (inequality), perceptions of corruption, confidence in non-political institutions and confidence in political/government institutions did not reveal a single factor underlying these four variables. Thus, the relationship between South Africans' perceptions of societal fairness and social trust could not be investigated.

5.3 Implications of results

These findings provide greater insight into some of the key factors influencing South Africans' levels of social trust and thus have important implications for understanding how and whether the country's social trust deficit might change or be improved. This study's findings suggest that if appropriate changes were to occur, or if measures were implemented that increased citizens' confidence in the country's institutions and improved perceptions of income distribution and inequality, then levels of social trust would improve as a result. However, given the dire state of South Africans' institutional confidence and the country's extreme income inequality, it remains unlikely that levels of social trust will improve.

For decades, South Africans have had little confidence in the country's institutions as a result of citizens' consistently poor government performance reviews rooted in the country's growing unemployment rates, poor economic growth, poor service delivery and the government's frequent involvement in corruption scandals (De Jager and Steenekamp, 2019:161-162; Hofmeyr, Patel and Moosa, 2021:2; Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2022:5-6). While these confidence levels have fluctuated slightly over the years in response to the contemporary political climate and

changes in leadership, levels of institutional confidence have nonetheless remained low. In fact, research shows that institutional confidence levels have been steadily declining since 1995 (Schulz-Herzenberg and Gouws, 2016:223; Steenekamp, 2017:68; Potgieter, 2019:31; De Jager and Steenekamp, 2019:161-162). Between 2006 and 2019, the SARB reports reveal a significant decline in the percentage of citizens having “a great deal of confidence” in institutions including parliament (-15%), national government (-18.5%), provincial government (-13.8%), local government (-8%) and the constitutional court (-9.7%) (Potgieter, 2019:31). These numbers continued to drop in 2021 (Moosa, 2021).

South Africa’s declining voter turnout and voter registration rates further indicate citizens’ diminishing institutional confidence, demonstrated by the rising number of unregistered voters and the drop in voter turnout from 58% to 45% between the 2016 and 2021 national elections (Moosa, 2021:33). Similarly, the SARB 2021 report finds that the majority of South Africans (69%) feel they “can only rely on each other, rather than political elites” (Moosa, 2021:33). The same report finds that the majority of South Africans would prefer “a more direct form of democracy” wherein citizens have the final say on political decisions by voting in a referendum, instead of the current system in which representatives are elected to act on behalf of citizens. This further indicates South Africans’ lack of confidence in their political leaders to make decisions in their best interest and have their concerns represented and addressed (Moosa, 2021:33).

Given South Africans’ consistently low and declining levels of institutional confidence over the past decade, it is unlikely that an improvement in levels of institutional confidence will occur. The government’s and other important political and non-political actors’ consistent and continuous involvement in corruption scandals, as well as their weak performance reviews stemming from their failure to address long-standing issues (such as high unemployment rates and poor service delivery), suggests that confidence in institutions is highly unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa in 2020 placed additional strain on already low levels of institutional confidence. This strain is thought to reflect the corruption and mismanagement displayed by the government during the crisis (Hofmeyr *et al.*, 2021:3-4) and can be seen by the drop in confidence levels reported in the SARB 2021 report (Moosa, 2021:33). The health and economic crisis resulting from the pandemic will likely have lasting effects on low levels of institutional confidence.

The state of South Africa's income inequality is equally dire. Home to the highest level of inequality in the world (World Bank, 2022:1-3), South Africa has been plagued by extreme levels of inequality for decades, with research showing that levels of income inequality have only continued to deteriorate since the end of apartheid (Seekings and Nattrass, 2005:301). The World Bank's data on South Africa's level of inequality over the years shows that in 1993 South Africa had a Gini coefficient of 0.59, while in 2014 (the most recent record), levels of inequality had risen to a Gini coefficient of 0.63 in 2014 (World Bank, n.d.). South Africa's long history of colonialism and apartheid left a legacy that "continues to reinforce inequality" as it has had a lasting impact on access to education, jobs, resources and land (World Bank, 2022:3). As such, the country's wealth divides largely coincide with the country's racial divides, with poverty and unemployment being largely experienced by black South Africans (Seekings and Nattrass, 2005:300; Bornman, 2016:1). Despite consecutive governments prioritising the need to address the extreme levels of inequality, the policies and measures implemented have yet to succeed in closing the gap. South Africa's low and declining levels of institutional confidence and extreme levels of inequality, therefore, present a significant challenge and obstacle in the way of achieving greater social trust and cohesion among its citizens.

To determine what measures and policy choices would be appropriate for addressing South Africans' low institutional confidence and severe income inequality are matters that require further in-depth investigation and fall beyond the scope of this study. As this study highlights, the trends and dynamics identified in much of the social trust literature differ between countries. As such, it is critical that the approaches taken to address issues such as income inequality and low confidence in institutions are based on and guided by research on the specific country for which they are intended, and that the characteristics and dynamics specific to the country are taken into consideration. For instance, some of the literature on the effects of equality and policy choices on social trust in Western countries argues that universal welfare policies are better suited for enhancing social trust than targeted welfare policies, as the latter is thought to erode social trust by dividing the population into those who benefit from these policies and those who do not (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). In contrast, studies on Brazilian institutions have shown that the adoption of universal welfare policies, which were intended to increase the representation of previously disadvantaged Brazilians, appeared to

disproportionately benefit already advantaged Brazilians rather than the disadvantaged Brazilians whom the policies were intended to benefit (Appiah and Gutmann, 1998:141; Vieira and Arends-Kuenning, 2019:2). This demonstrates that universal welfare policies are not appropriate for every context. Thus, it is crucial for the measures designed to increase social trust in South Africa to be guided by research on the impact of policies and the characteristics specific to the South African context.

A broader implication of this study stems from its demonstration that the dynamics around social trust in developing countries differ from those of developed Western nations, from which the majority of social trust research stems. While much of the international academic literature predominantly identifies racial diversity and income inequality as being the two key determinants of countries' social trust levels (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Zak and Knack, 2001; Knack and Zak, 2002; Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Bjørnskov, 2007:5; Putnam, 2007; You, 2012), this study finds that it is rather South Africans' confidence in institutions that have the greatest effect on social trust levels. Similarly, another pertinent finding of this study is that, in contrast to what has frequently been found to be the case in the global north, racial diversity does not appear to have a negative effect on South Africans' levels of social trust. This study's findings highlight the importance of conducting further research into the determinants of countries' levels of social trust in the developing world, as the theories and hypotheses developed in the literature on Western nations cannot be assumed to accurately describe or predict the social trust dynamics found in developing nations.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

A drawback experienced in this study stemmed from the application of You's (2012) operationalisation of perceptions of societal fairness when investigating its relationship with social trust. This operationalisation proved to be unsuitable for capturing perceptions of societal fairness in the South African context, and thus this study was unable to investigate the relationship between this variable and social trust in South Africa. Perceptions of societal fairness will likely play a role in determining South Africans' social trust levels, given the influence of institutional confidence and income distribution (inequality) on social trust, as well as the prominence of debates over what citizens perceive as fair with regards to matters such as the country's redistribution and transformation policies. Thus, it would be worthwhile for future research to investigate how perceptions of societal fairness should be conceptualised

and operationalised specifically for the South African context. For instance, a more suitable operationalisation could include attitudes towards South Africa's redistribution and transformation policies. These policies are a source of controversy and cause substantial debate regarding what policies and measures citizens deem to be fair, equal and appropriate, and are found to have a divisive effect on the population.

As discussed in Chapter 2, a challenge present in almost all studies on social trust is the inability of the research to provide definitive and indisputable evidence of the direction of causation (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Newton, 2007; You, 2012; Newton *et al.*, 2018). While this study, and much of the literature, posits that greater levels of institutional confidence lead to increased social trust, one could also argue that the direction of causality might be reversed and that South Africans with higher levels of social trust are more likely to have greater confidence in political institutions. Part of the difficulty in establishing clear cause and effect relationships in social trust research stems from the mutually interdependent relationships that frequently underlie societal characteristics, as well as their tendency to be largely circular in nature, commonly being linked to either virtuous circles or vicious cycles (Newton, 2007: 356; Newton *et al.*, 2018:41). In the case of confidence in institutions and social trust, it is often argued that a virtuous circle is created in trusting populations, as political institutions that inspire confidence lead to increased social trust among the population; and increased social trust is thought to contribute to the ability of governments to effectively perform their roles, which in turn invokes greater political confidence (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Newton *et al.*, 2018:49). Thus, it is challenging to clearly disentangle the causes from the effects and indisputably establish the direction of causality.

However, various social trust scholars dismiss this issue. Rothstein and Uslaner (2005:42) argue that the sheer volume of theoretical and empirical studies identifying relationships between social trust and various desirable features of society have led scholars to believe social trust plays an important role in bringing about these benefits. Meanwhile, other scholars simply consider the matter to be inconsequential because of the closely intertwined and frequently circular nature of the relationships between social trust and the variables of interest (Delhey and Newton, 2005:28). Similarly, the difficulty of establishing the direction of causality is not a significant concern for this study. The closely intertwined and circular relationships that exist between social trust and the variables under investigation in this study render the precise causal

direction of the relationship inconsequential, as the variables have an effect on levels of social trust regardless of causal direction.

Further research into the factors influencing the social trust deficit in the South African context could also benefit from adopting a mixed methodology approach to investigating the influence of various societal characteristics on levels of social trust. The inclusion of qualitative elements in the research design could provide further insight and greater detail into the complex relationships between social trust and the explanatory variables. However, the restrictions placed on the length of this study meant that the inclusion of additional qualitative research was not feasible.

5.5 Conclusion

To better understand South Africa's social trust deficit, this study asks which potential factors influence levels of social trust in South Africa. Using the SPSS to conduct a variety of statistical analyses on the SARB 2019 data, this study investigates the relationship between South Africans' levels of social trust and five explanatory variables identified by the sub-research questions of this study, namely, racial diversity, perceptions of income distribution (inequality), perceptions of government corruption, confidence in institutions, and perceptions of societal fairness. From the statistical analysis, this study finds that South Africans' confidence in institutions has the strongest relationship with their levels of social trust, while perceptions of income distribution (inequality) has the second strongest influence on social trust. Significantly, this study finds racial diversity and perceptions of government corruption to have little influence on South Africans' social trust levels. The finding that racial diversity has little influence on South Africans' social trust is especially noteworthy, given the country's history of racism and racial segregation. Furthermore, this finding stands in contrast to the large body of literature which argues that racial diversity has an erosive effect on social trust in many Western nations. Instead, this study finds that although the relationship is very weak, it is positive, suggesting that the more interracial interactions South Africans have, the greater their levels of social trust. While this study was unable to test the influence of perceptions of societal fairness on levels of social trust when using the SARB 2019 data and You's (2012) operationalisation of the concept, it suggests that an operationalisation that is more relevant to the South African context should be developed and investigated in future research as it could provide interesting further insight into the determinants of South Africans' social trust.

These findings indicate that efforts towards addressing South Africa's social trust deficit should incorporate measures designed to increase confidence in institutions and address the high levels of income inequality experienced in South Africa, as these two factors have the strongest influence on social trust levels. However, given the steady deterioration in institutional confidence and rising levels of inequality experienced during the last two and a half decades, it is more likely that these levels, and subsequently, social trust levels, will continue to deteriorate rather than improve. Greater research into the potential measures and reforms that could address these issues will be vital for improving social trust and remain matters for future research.

References

- Abascal, M., Xu, J. and Baldassarri, D. 2021. People use both heterogeneity and minority representation to evaluate diversity. *Science Advances*, 7(11): 1-9.
- Alesina, A. and La Ferrara, E. 2000. Participation in heterogeneous communities. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115(3): 847–904.
- Alesina, A. and La Ferrara, E. 2002. Who trusts others?. *Journal of Public Economics*, 85: 207-234.
- Alesina, A., Devleeschauwer, A., Easterly, W., Kurlat, S. and Wacziarg, R. 2003. Fractionalization. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 8: 155–194.
- Allport, G. W. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. New York: Basic Books.
- Almond, G. A. and Verba, S. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Alwin, D. and Krosnick, J. 1991. The Reliability of Survey Measurement: The Influence of Question and Respondent Attributes. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 20:139– 81.
- Anderson, C. J. and Paskeviciute, A. 2006. How ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity influence the prospects for Civil Society: A comparative study of citizenship behavior. *Journal of Politics*, 68(4): 783-802.
- ANES Question Search* [Online]. [n.d.]. Available: <https://electionstudies.org/data-tools/anes-question-search/> [2022, June 22].s
- Ansell, A. 2013. *Race and Ethnicity: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.
- Appiah, K. A. and Gutmann, A. 1998. *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Arrow, K. J. 1972. Gifts and Exchanges. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1(4): 343- 362.
- Arrow, K. J. 1974. *The Limits of Organization*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.
- Babbie, E. R. 2016. *The practice of social research*. 14th edition. Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Bargsted, M., Ortiz, C., Cáceres, I. and Somma, N. M. 2022. Social and Political Trust in a Low Trust Society. *Political Behavior*. 1-20.
- Barr, A. 1999. Familiarity and Trust: An Experimental Investigation. Working Paper No. 23. Oxford: Centre for the Study of African Economies Department of Economics, University of Oxford.
- Bartlett, R. 2001. Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31(1): 39–56.
- Begue, L. 2002. Beliefs in justice and faith in people: Just world, religiosity and interpersonal trust. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 32(3): 375–382.
- Bjørnskov, C. 2007. Determinants of generalized trust: A cross-country comparison. *Public choice*, 130(1): 1-21.
- Blalock, H. M. 1967. *Toward a Theory of Minority-Group Relations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Blumer, H. 1958. Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position. *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 1(1): 3-7.
- Bobo, L. D. and Hutchings, V. L. 1996. Perceptions of racial group competition: Extending Blumer's theory of group position to a multiracial social context. *American Sociological Review*, 61: 951-972.

- Bobo, L. D. 1999. Prejudice as Group Position: Microfoundations of a Sociological Approach to Racism and Race Relations. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(3): 445–472.
- Bobo, L. D. and Tuan, M. 2006. *Prejudice in politics: Group position, public opinion, and the Wisconsin treaty rights dispute*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Bornman, E. 2016. Intergroup contact experience and frequency as predictors of cross-racial attitudes. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 26(1): 63-69.
- Brewer, M. B. 1979. In-group bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 86(2): 307-324.
- Brewer, M. B. and Brown, R. J. 1998. Intergroup Relations, in D. T Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, and G. Lindzey (eds.). *Handbook of Social Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. 554-594.
- Burnham, P., Lutz, K.G., Grant, W. and Layton-Henry, Z. 2008. *Research methods in politics*. 2nd edition. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burns, N. and Grove, S.K. 2001. *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, Critique, and Utilization*. 2nd edition. Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Clack, B., Dixon, J. and Tredoux, C. 2005: Eating together apart: patterns of segregation in a multi-ethnic cafeteria. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 15(1): 1–16.
- Coleman, J. S. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods*. London: Sage.
- Cummins, R. and Gullone, E. 2000. Why We Should Not Use 5-Point Likert Scales: The Case for Subjective Quality of Life Measurement, in *Proceedings of the Second International*

Conference on Quality of Life in Cities. Singapore: National University of Singapore: 74-93.

Dalton, R.J. 2002. *Citizen Politics*. 3rd edition. New York: Chatham House Publishers.

De Jager, N. and Steenekamp, C. 2019. Political Radicalism: Responding to the Legitimacy Gap in South Africa, in U. van Beek (ed.). *Democracy under Threat: A Crisis of Legitimacy?*. Springer. 147-169.

De Vaus, D. A. 2002. *Surveys in Social Research*. 5th edition. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.

Delhey, J. and Newton, K. 2003. Who trusts?: The origins of social trust in seven societies. *European Societies*, 5(2): 93-137.

Delhey, J. and Newton, K. 2005. Predicting cross-national levels of social trust: Global pattern or Nordic exceptionalism?. *European Sociological Review*, 21(4): 311-327.

Delhey, J., Newton, K. and Welzel, C. 2011. How general is trust in “most people”? Solving the radius of trust problem. *American Sociological Review*, 76(5): 786–807.

Dinesen, P.T. and Sønderskov, K. M. 2013. Ethnic diversity and social trust: The role of exposure in the micro-context, in *Ethnic Diversity and Social Capital*. Berlin, Germany: Wissenschaftszentrum (WZB).

Dinesen, P. T. and Sønderskov, K. M. 2018. Ethnic Diversity and Social Trust: A Critical Review of the Literature and Suggestions for a Research Agenda, in E. Uslaner (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook on Social and Political Trust*. New York: Oxford University Press. 175-204.

Dollar, C.B. 2014. Racial Threat Theory: Assessing the Evidence, Requesting Redesign. *Journal of Criminology*, 2014:1–7.

- Donner, S., Hartmann, H., Schwarz, R. and Steinkamp, S. 2022. *BTI 2022: Codebook for Country Assessments*. [Gütersloh, Germany]: Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Dragolov, G., Z. Ignácz, J. Lorenz, J. Delhey, K. Boehnke and K. Unzicker. 2016. *Social Cohesion in the Western World. What Holds Societies Together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*. Heidelberg & New York: Springer.
- Drazanova, L. 2020. Introducing the Historical Index of Ethnic Fractionalization (HIEF) Dataset: Accounting for Longitudinal Changes in Ethnic Diversity. *Journal of Open Humanities Data*, 6(6).
- Durrheim, K. and Dixon, J. 2005. *Racial Encounter: The Social Psychology of Contact and Desegregation*. London: Routledge.
- Easterly, W. and Levine, R. 1997. Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112: 1203-1250.
- Easterly, W. 2000. The middle class consensus and economic development. *Journal of economic growth*, 6(4): 317-335.
- Easton, D. 1965. *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Easton, D. 1975. A re-assessment of the concept of political support. *British Journal of Political Science*, 5(4): 435–457.
- Eek, D. and Rothstein, B. 2005. Political Corruption and Social Trust: An Experimental Approach. *Rationality and Society*, 21(1): 81–112.
- European Social Survey. 2014. *ESS Round 7 Source Questionnaire*. London: ESS ERIC Headquarters, Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London.
- Fearon, J. D. 2003. Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 8(2): 195-222.

Field, A. 2009. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. 3rd edition. London: Sage.

Forbes, H.D. 1997. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Freitag, M. and Bühlmann, M. 2005. Politische Institutionen und die Entwicklung generalisierten Vertrauens: Ein internationaler Vergleich. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 46(4): 575-601.

Freitag, M. and Bühlmann, M. 2009. Crafting Trust: The Role of Political Institutions in a Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(12): 1537–1566.

Fukuyama, F. 1995. *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. New York: Free Press.

GESIS: Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences [Online]. [n.d]. Available: https://search.gesis.org/?source=%7B%22query%22%3A%7B%22bool%22%3A%7B%22must%22%3A%5B%7B%22query_string%22%3A%7B%22query%22%3A%22And%20in%20your%20opinion%20%20about%20how%20many%20public%20officials%20%22%2C%22default_operator%22%3A%22AND%22%7D%7D%5D%2C%22filter%22%3A%5B%7B%22term%22%3A%7B%22type%22%3A%22variables%22%7D%7D%5D%7D%7D%7D&lang=en [2022, June 14].

Giles, M. W. and Evans, A. 1986. The Power Approach to Intergroup Hostility. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 30(3): 469–485.

Glaeser, E., Laibson, D., Scheinkman, J. and Soutter, C. 2000. Measuring Trust. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115(3): 811-846.

GSS Data Explorer [Online]. [2020]. Available: <https://gssdataexplorer.norc.umd.edu/variables/vfilter#> [2022, July 05].

- Hamilton, W. D. 1964. The Genetical Evolution of Social Behavior. *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 7(1):17–52.
- Helliwell, J. 2003. Immigration and social capital: Issue paper, in *Conference on The Opportunity and Challenge of Diversity: A Role for Social Capital*. Montreal, Canada.
- Helliwell, J. and Putnam, R. 1995. Economic growth and social capital in Italy. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 21(3): 295 – 307.
- Helliwell, J. and Putnam, R. 1999. Education and Social Capital. Working Paper No. 7121. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Helliwell, J. and Putnam, R. 2007. Education and Social Capital. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 33(1): 1-19.
- Hewstone, M. 2003: Intergroup contact – panacea for prejudice?. *The Psychologist*, 16(7): 352–355.
- Hofmeyr, J., Moosa, M., Patel, J. and Murithi, T. [2022]. State of the Nation: South Africa 2022. IJR Policy Brief, (38) [Online]. Available: <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/state-nation-south-africa-2022/> [2022, March 17].
- Hofmeyr, J., Patel, J. and Moosa, M. [2021]. State of the nation: Insights on South African society, economy and politics. IJR Policy Brief, (30) [Online]. Available: <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/state-nation-insights-south-african-society-economy-and-politics/> [2022, March 17].
- Hooghe, M., Reeskens, T., Stolle, D. and Trappers, A. 2009. Ethnic Diversity and Generalized Trust in Europe: A Cross-National Multilevel Study. *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(2): 198-223.
- Horowitz, D. L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. California: University of California Press.

- Hurtado, S., Carter, D. F. and Sharp, S. 1995. Social Interaction on Campus: Differences Among Self-Perceived Ability Groups, in *Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research*. Boston: University of Michigan.
- Inglehart, R. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Institute of Justice and Reconciliation. [n.d.]. *SARB ODA Analysis* [Online]. Available: <https://www.ijr.org.za/resources/sarb-oda-analysis/> [2022, June 12].
- Santos, D., Palomares, N., Normando, D., Cardoso, C. and Quintão, A. 2010. Race versus ethnicity: Differing for better application. *Dental Press Journal of Orthodontics*, 15:121–125.
- Kaufmann, E. and Goodwin, M. 2016. The diversity wave: A meta-analysis of ethnic diversity, perceived threat and native white backlash. Unpublished Paper delivered at the 112th American Political Science Association Annual Conference. 1-4 September, Philadelphia.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., and Mastruzzi, M. 2003. Governance matters III: governance indicators for 1996- 2002. Policy Research Working Paper 3106. Washington: World Bank Institute.
- Khaile, T., Roman, N.V., October, K.R., Van Staden, M. and Balogun, T.V. 2022. Perceptions of Trust in the Context of Social Cohesion in Selected Rural Communities of South Africa. *Social Sciences*, 11(359):1-16.
- Key, V.O. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. New York: Random House.
- Knack, S. and Keefer, P. 1997. Does Social Capital have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112(4): 1251-88.

- Knack, S. and Zak, P. J. 2002. Building trust: public policy, interpersonal trust, and economic development. *Supreme Court Economic Review*, 10: 91-107.
- Krieg, E. J. 2014. *Statistics and data analysis for social science*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Kroh, M. 2005. Surveying the Left-Right Dimension: The Choice of a Response Format. Discussion Paper 491. Berlin: German Institute for Economic Research.
- Kumlin, S. and Rothstein, B. 2005. Making and breaking social capital: The impact of welfare-state institutions. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(4): 339–365.
- La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., Shleifer, A. and Vishny, R. W. 1997. Trust in large organizations. *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 87: 333–338.
- Laurence, J. and Bentley, L. 2018. Countervailing contact: Community ethnic diversity, anti-immigrant attitudes and mediating pathways of positive and negative inter-ethnic contact in European societies. *Social Science Research*. 69:83–110.
- Leigh, A. 2006. Trust, inequality, and ethnic heterogeneity. *Economic Record*, 82(258): 268-280.
- Lerner, M. J. 1980. *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. New York: Plenum.
- Levi, M. 1998. A state of trust, in V. Braithwaite and M. Levi (eds.). *Trust and governance*. New York: Sage Foundation. 77-101.
- Liu, X. 2016. A Literature Review on the Definition of Corruption and Factors Affecting the Risk of Corruption. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(6):171–177.
- Margolis, J.E. 2010. Understanding political stability and instability. *Civil Wars*, 12(3): 326-345.

- Marschall, M. J. and Stolle, D. 2004. Race and the city: Neighborhood context and the development of generalized trust. *Political Behavior*, 26(2): 125–153.
- Masters, R. D. 1989. *The Nature of Politics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Mattes, R. and Moreno, A. 2018. Social and political trust in developing countries: Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, in E. Uslander (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*. New York: Oxford University Press. 357–382.
- Messick, D. M. and Brewer, M. B. 1983. Solving Social Dilemmas: A Review, in L. Wheeler and P. Shaver (eds.). *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Mill, J. S. 1848. *Principles of Political Economy*. London: John W. Parker.
- Mmotlane, R., Struwig, J. and Roberts, B. 2010. The glue that binds or divides: social trust in South Africa. *HSRC Review*. 8(3): 4-5.
- Montalvo, J. and Reynal-Querol, M. 2007. Ethnic Polarization and the Duration of Civil Wars. Working Paper No. 4192. The World Bank.
- Moosa, M. 2021. *SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2021 Report*. [Cape Town]: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.
- Mouton, J. 1996. *Understanding social research*. 3rd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Neller, K. 2008. What makes people trust in their fellow citizens, in H. Meulemann (ed.). *Social capital in Europe: Similarity of countries and diversity of people. Multi-level analyses of the European Social Survey*. Boston: Brill Academic Publishers. 103-133.
- Neuman, W. L. 2014. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 7th edition. Essex: Pearson.

- Newton, K. 1999. Social capital and democracy in modern Europe, in J. van Deth, M. Maraffi, K. Newton, and P. Whiteley (eds.). *Social Capital and European Democracy*. London: Routledge. 3-24.
- Newton, K. 2007. Social and Political Trust, in R. J. Dalton and H. Klingemann, (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 342–361.
- Newton, K. and Norris, P. 2000. Confidence in Public Institutions: Faith, Culture, or Performance?, in S. Pharr and R. Putnam (eds.). *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 52-73.
- Newton, K., Stolle, D. and Zmerli, S. 2018. Social and Political Trust, in E. Uslaner (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*. New York: Oxford University Press. 37–56.
- Offe, C. 1999. How Can We Trust Our Fellow Citizens, in M. E. Warren (ed.). *Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 42-87.
- Pallant, J. 2016. *SPSS Survival Manual*. 6th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Patterson, O. 1999. Liberty against the democratic state: on the historical and contemporary sources of American distrust, in M. E. Warren (ed.). *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 151-207.
- Pettigrew, T. F. 1998. Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49(1): 65–85.
- Pettigrew, T. F. and Tropp, L. R. 2006. A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5): 751–783.
- Pierce, R. 2008. *Research Methods in Politics*. London: SAGE.
- Potgieter, E. 2019. *SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2019 Report*. [Cape Town]: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

- Potgieter, E. and Moosa, M. 2018. *More than a space for interracial contact: Exploring the importance of the workplace for social cohesion and reconciliation in South Africa*. [Cape Town]: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.
- Putnam, R. D. 1993. *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. 2000. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Putnam, R. D., Pharr, S. J. and Dalton, R. J. 2000. Introduction: What's troubling the trilateral democracies?, in S. J. Pharr and R. D. Putnam (eds.). *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 3–27.
- Putnam, R. D. 2007. E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century: The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30(2): 137-174.
- Quillian, L. 1995. Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat: Population Composition and Anti-immigrant Racial Prejudice in Europe. *American Sociological Review*, 60: 586–611.
- Radu, M. 2015. Political stability-a condition for sustainable growth in Romania?. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 30: 751-757.
- Rawls, J. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Reeskens, T. and Hooghe, M. 2008. Cross-cultural measurement equivalence of generalized trust: Evidence from the European Social Survey 2002 and 2004. *Social indicators research*, 85(3): 515–532.
- Richey, S. 2009. The Impact of Corruption on Social Trust. *American Politics Research*. 38(4): 676–690.

- Robinson, A. L. 2016. Ethnic diversity, segregation, and ethnocentric trust in Africa. Working Paper No. 166. Afrobarometer [Online]. Available: <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/ethnic-diversity-segregation-and-ethnocentric-trust-in-africa/> [2022, February 21].
- Rosenberg, M. 1956. Misanthropy and Political Ideology. *American Sociological Review*, 21(6): 690-695.
- Rothstein, B. and Stolle, D. 2003. Social capital, impartiality and the welfare state: An institutional approach, in M. Hooghe and D. Stolle (eds.). *Social Capital: Civil Society and Institutions in Comparative Perspective*. Basingtoke: Palgrave. 191-209.
- Rothstein, B. and Uslaner, E. M. 2005. All for all: Equality, corruption, and social trust. *World Politics*, 58(1): 41–72.
- Sapsford, R., Tsourapas, G., Abbott, P. and Teti, A. 2019. Corruption, Trust, Inclusion and Cohesion in North Africa and the Middle East. *Applied Research Quality Life*, 14(1): 1–21.
- Saris, W. E. and Gallhofer, I. 2003. *Report on the MTMM Experiments in the Pilot Studies and Proposals for Round 1 of the ESS*. [London]: University of Amsterdam.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2012. *Research methods for business students*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Schaeffer, M. 2013. Can competing diversity indices inform us about why ethnic diversity erodes social cohesion? A test of five diversity indices in Germany. *Social Science Research*, 42(3): 755–774.
- Schaeffer, M. 2014. *Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion: Immigration, Ethnic Fractionalization and Potentials for Civic Action*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

- Scherpenzeel, A. and Saris, W. E. 1995. The Quality of Indicators of Satisfaction Across Europe: A Meta-Analysis of Multitrait-Multimethod Studies, in A. Scherpenzeel (ed.). *A Question of Quality: Evaluating Survey Questions by Multitrait-multimethod Studies*. Nederland: KPN Research.
- Scherpenzeel, A. 2002. Why Use 11-Point Scales?. *Swiss House Panel*, 9:1-6.
- Schulz-Herzenberg, C. and Gouws, A. 2016. Does political trust lead to reconciliation?, in K. Lefko-Everett, R. Govender, and D. Foster (eds.). *Rethinking Reconciliation: Evidence from South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. 201-227.
- Seekings, J. and Nattrass, N. 2005. *Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Seligson, M. A. 2002. The impact of corruption on regime legitimacy: A comparative study of four Latin American countries. *Journal of Politics*, 64(2): 408–433.
- Spector, P.E. 2019. Do not cross me: optimizing the use of cross-sectional designs. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 34:125–137.
- Spencer, S. 2006. *Race and Ethnicity*. New York: Routledge.
- Statistics South Africa. 2019. *Inequality Trends in South Africa: A multidimensional diagnostic of inequality*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Statistics South Africa. 2021. *Mid-year population estimates 2021* [Online]. Available: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022021.pdf> [2022, April 19].
- Statistics South Africa. 2022. *Media Release: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)-Q4: 2021* [Online]. Available: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media%20release%20QLFS%20Q4%202021.pdf> [2022, May 12].

- Steenekamp, C. 2017. Democratic Political Community in South Africa: Elusive or Not?. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 13(1): 59-76.
- Stockemer, D. 2019. *Quantitative methods for the social sciences: a practical introduction with examples in SPSS and Stata*. Cham: Springer Publishing.
- Stolle, D. 2001. Clubs and Congregations: The Benefits of Joining an Association, in K. Cook (ed.). *Trust in Society*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 202–244.
- Stolle, D., Soroka, S. and Johnston, R. 2008. When Does Diversity Erode Trust?: Neighborhood Diversity, Interpersonal Trust and the Mediating Effect of Social Interactions. *Political Studies*, 56(1): 57–75.
- Stolzenberg, L., D'Alessio, S. and Eitle, D. 2004. A Multilevel Test of Racial Threat Theory. *Criminology*, 42(3): 673–698.
- Tabachnick, B.G. and Fidell, L.S. 2013. *Using multivariate statistics*. 6th edition. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Tanzi, V. 1998. *Corruption Around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope, and Cures*. Working Paper 98/63. France: International Monetary Fund.
- Taylor, M. 1998. Local racial/ethnic proportions and white attitudes: numbers count. *American Sociological Review*, 63(4): 56-78.
- Tolbert, C. and Grummel, J. 2003. Revisiting the Racial Threat Hypothesis: White Voter Support for California's Proposition. *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 3(2): 183–202.
- Tolsma, J., Van der Meer, T. and Gesthuizen, M. 2009. The impact of neighbourhood and municipality characteristics on social cohesion in the Netherlands. *Acta Politica*, 44(3): 286–313.

- Trivers, R. L. 1971. The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46(1): 35-57.
- Uslaner, E. 1999. Democracy and social capital, in M. E. Warren (ed.). *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 121-150.
- Uslaner, E. 2000. Producing and consuming trust. *Political Science Quarterly*, 115(4): 569-590.
- Uslaner, E. 2002. *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E. 2004. Trust and corruption, in J. G. Lambsdorff, M. Taube, and M. Schramm (eds.). *The new institution economics of corruption*. London: Routledge. 76-92.
- Uslaner, E. 2005. The bulging pocket and the rule of law: Corruption, inequality, and trust, in *Conference on the Quality of Government: What it is, how to Get it, Why it Matters*. Göteborg: Göteborg University. 1-80.
- Uslaner, E. 2006. Does diversity drive down trust?, in *First EURODIV Conference "Understanding diversity: Mapping and measuring"*. Milan: Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei. 1-55.
- Uslaner, E. 2012a. *Segregation and Mistrust: Diversity, Isolation, and Social Cohesion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E. 2012b. Measuring generalized trust: In defense of the 'standard' question, in F. Lyon, G. Möllering and N. K. Mark (eds.). *Handbook of research methods on trust*. Cheltenham : Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. 72-82.
- Uslaner, E. 2015. The roots of trust, in Y. Li (ed.). *The Handbook of Research Methods and Applications on Social Capital*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. 60–75.
- Vallier, K. 2021. *Trust in a Polarized Age*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Van der Meer, J. 2003. Rain or fog? An empirical examination of social capital's rainmaker effects, in M. Hooghe and D. Stolle (eds.). *Social Capital: Civil Society and Institutions in Comparative Perspective*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 133-151.
- Van der Meer, T. and Tolsma, J. 2014. Ethnic diversity and its effects on social cohesion. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40(1): 459–478.
- Verba, S. and Nie, N. H. 1972. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Vieira, R. S. and Arends-Kuenning, M. 2019. Affirmative action in Brazilian universities: Effects on the enrolment of targeted groups. *Economics of Education Review*, 73:1-12.
- Vogt, W. P. 2007. *Quantitative research methods for professionals*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Wessel, T. 2009. Does Diversity in Urban Space Enhance Intergroup Contact and Tolerance?. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 91(1): 5-17.
- Whiteley, P. F. 1999. The origins of social capital, in J. van Deth, M. Maraffi, K. Newton, and P. Whiteley (eds.). *Social Capital and European Democracy*. London: Routledge. 25-44.
- World Bank. 2022. *New Bank Report Assesses Sources of Inequality in Five Countries in Southern Africa* [Online]. Available: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/09/new-world-bank-report-assesses-sources-of-inequality-in-five-countries-in-southern-africa> [2022, April 21].
- World Bank. [n.d.]. *Gini-index - South Africa* [Online]. Available: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2014&locations=ZA&most_recent_year_desc=false&start=1993 [2022, April 21].

World Values Survey. [n.d.]. *Online Data Analysis* [Online]. Available: <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp> [2022, June 21].

Yamagishi, T., Kikuchi, M. and Kosugi, M. 1999. Trust, gullibility, and social intelligence. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 2(1): 145-161.

You, J. 2012. Social Trust: Fairness Matters More Than Homogeneity. *Political Psychology*, 33(5): 701-721.

Zak, P.J. and Knack, S. 2001. Trust and Growth. *The Economic Journal*, 111(470): 295-321.

Zimring, F.E. and Johnson, D.T. 2005. On the Comparative Study of Corruption. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 45(6): 793–809.

Zmerli, S. and Newton, K. 2008. Social Trust and Attitudes Toward Democracy. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72(4): 706–724.

Appendix: Question Items and Coding of Variables

Dependent Variable:

DV: Generalised Social Trust

Generally speaking, would you say that you are trusting or distrusting of people?	
Very distrusting	1
Distrusting	2
Neither trusting nor distrusting	3
Trusting	4
Very trusting	5

Independent Variables:

IV 1: Frequency of Interracial Interaction (recoded)

Thinking about a typical day in the past month, how often did you interact or talk to someone who is a different race to you?	
Never	1
Rarely	2
Sometimes	3
Often	4
Always	5

IV 2: Perceptions of Income Distribution (Inequality)

In relation to the rest of SA your financial situation is...	
Much worse	1
Worse	2
The same	3
Better	4
Much better	5

IV 3: Confidence in Institutions (recoded)

Confidence in Non-Political Institutions

Please indicate how much confidence you have in each of the following institutions, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?	
Not at all	1
Not very much	2
Somewhat	3
Quite a lot	4
A great deal	5

Confidence in Political/Government Institutions

Please indicate how much confidence you have in each of the following institutions, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?	
Not at all	1
Not very much	2
Somewhat	3
Quite a lot	4
A great deal	5

IV 4: Perceived Extent of Corruption

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Corrupt government officials often get away with it.	
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

Demographic Variables

Age (recoded)

What is your age?	
18-24	1

25-34	2
35-49	3
50-59	4
60 and older	5

Gender (recoded)

Gender	
Male	1
Female	2

Race

For statistical purposes I need to confirm which ethnic group you belong to. Is it...?	
Black	1
White	2
Indian/ Asian	3
Coloured	4

Urban/ Rural (recoded)

EA - GType - GTI - based on StatsSA Geotype which is enhanced according to GTI land use classification and updates	
Urban	1
Rural	2

Education Level (recoded)

What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?	
No schooling	1
Some primary school	2
Some high / secondary school	3
Some tertiary education	4
Completed tertiary education	5

Total Monthly Household Income (recoded)

Which if these best describes your total monthly household income before tax and deductions? Please include all sources of income, i.e. wages, grants, piecemeal work, salaries, pensions, income from investments, etc. This includes all income generated by everyone in the household.

No income	1
R1-R5999	2
R6000-R11 999	3
R12 000- R24 999	4
R25 000- R39 999	5
R40 000 or more	6